

Mid-East Prophecy Update – New Years Eve – December 31st, 2016

- I've really been looking forward to what the Lord has for us as we devote our time to Bible prophecy questions and answers.
- I spent a considerable amount of time sorting through all the questions and I hope you understand I couldn't get to all of them.
- What follows in no particular order are Biblical answers to the questions that everyone asked about many of which were similar.

- As you might imagine, one of the first questions that many are asking about is concerning the UN Security Council Resolution.
- Specifically condemning Israel and what many fear will be the unthinkable when on January 15th, 70 nations convene in France.
- This because, the stated goal of this unprecedented global conference will be to promote, even force the "two-state solution."

I do not know if it's possible to overstate the prophetic significance of these recent developments for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that all Israeli settlements in the West Bank and in East Jerusalem are now illegal. If this weren't bad enough, the Resolution, which was unanimously adopted vis-à-vis the Obama administration obtaining the U.S. vote, has set the 1967 ceasefire lines as the border between the Israelis and the Palestinians, as one source said it, "granting every single inch of East Jerusalem to the Palestinians." However, it stopped short of giving official UN Security Council recognition to a Palestinian state, and that is why this conference on January 15th is so important, and this, just five days before Barak Obama leaves office and Donald Trump is inaugurated, and to add insult to injury, Israel has "ironclad" proof that Obama engineered said UN Security Council Resolution.

On Tuesday, Fox News published an Op Ed piece by Todd Starnes, titled, "Obama Stabbed Israel in the Back." Here's some of what he had to say. "While Christmas carolers were proclaiming Joy to the World - President Obama was backstabbing Israel. The United States refused to veto a United Nations resolution that condemned Israel's settlements on the West Bank. The Simon Wiesenthal Center named the Obama Administration's move as the worst case of anti-Semitism in 2016. ...It reversed decades-long US policy of vetoing such diplomatic moves against the Jewish State," the Jewish human rights organization wrote. And honestly - it's not all that surprising. ...Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says there is proof - ironclad proof - that President Obama was behind the resolution. "We have rather ironclad information from sources in both the Arab world and internationally that this was a deliberate push by the United States and in fact they helped create the resolution in the first place," ...The White House strongly denied the accusation. But let's be brutally honest, folks. Who do you believe - Prime Minister Netanyahu or the man who pals around with the Ayatollahs? If, in fact there is ironclad proof, Congress needs to take immediate action against the president. At the very least a public censure would be in order. To be clear, such action by Congress would be unprecedented. But an unprecedented act of betrayal demands an unprecedented rebuke.

<http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2016/12/27/obama-stabbed-israel-in-back.html>

Speaking of unprecedented, Wednesday morning we woke to a one hour and thirteen minute speech by John Kerry, a speech so despicable, I just cannot bring myself to quote from it. What I will quote is Benjamin Netanyahu's response to it as reported by YNet News on Wednesday with the headline, Netanyahu tells Kerry: Israel doesn't need to be lectured about peace by foreign leaders. Quoting the report, Netanyahu expressed his "deep disappointment" with the speech. ...During his speech, Kerry staunchly defended the Obama administration's decision to allow the UN Security Council to declare Israeli settlements illegal, rejecting accusations that the White House was the driving force behind the resolution and stressing that Washington "did not draft or originate" the wording of the resolution. But Netanyahu was unconvinced. "The US organized, advanced and brought this resolution to the UN Security Council," the prime minister insisted. "We will share this information with the incoming administration." ...Netanyahu went on to ask, "How can you make peace with someone who rejects your very existence?"

<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4900047,00.html>

In addition to the Prime Minister's response, there was also the Education Minister's response, which according to Arutz Sheva was Kerry needs to pick up his Bible and read it. Education Minister and Jewish Home Party head Naftali Bennett responded Wednesday to Secretary of State Kerry's call for a "viable two state solution." Bennett who said that Kerry quoted him three times anonymously in his speech ...sent a sharp message to Secretary of State Kerry on the eve of his policy speech regarding the Arab-israeli conflict. "A few days ago the UN Security Council voted for a shameful resolution stating that Jerusalem is occupied territory," the minister said. "Jerusalem has been the Jewish capital for 3,000 years. That is in the Bible, open it and read. We, the Jews, have been lighting the menorah for 2170 years in Jerusalem. We say 'Next year in Jerusalem' every Passover. We lit the menorah 1,000 years ago in Russia and Morocco and said 'Next year in Jerusalem.' We lit the menorah 72 years ago near the Auschwitz crematoria and said 'Next year in Jerusalem.'"

<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/222438>

I want to share one more interesting article on this because I think it will be germane to answering the question of the prophetic significance of this. It was published by The Times of Israel on Wednesday, in which they quote Israel's Chief Rabbi Yitzhak Yosef as saying that the US has forsaken Israel, and the Jewish state can now place its trust only in God, ... "Sometimes, we need to be reminded from above that we can count on no one but our Father who art in heaven," Yosef told followers at the Western Wall. "Even America... forsook us last week at the UN." He added: "We mustn't forget that the hearts of kings and captains are in the hands of the Lord, and we can count on no one but (the Lord)."

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/chief-rabbi-us-has-forsaken-israel-we-can-trust-only-in-the-lord/>

This brings us to our first question, which is a combination of similar ones basically asking, what are the prophetic implications of all this? Well, I would suggest that there are several prophecies in play by way of this recent development, the first of which is that of Ezekiel's and Zechariah's prophecy, namely, that Israel will turn to God, and the nations against Israel will know it's God, when Israel is victorious by the hand of God.

Zechariah 12:1-3, 9-10 (NKJV) — 1 The burden of the word of the LORD against Israel. Thus says the LORD, who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him: 2 "Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples, when they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem. 3 And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it. ...9 It shall be in that day that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. 10 "And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.

Ezekiel 38:16 - You will come up against My people Israel like a cloud, to cover the land. It will be in the latter days that I will bring you against My land, so that the nations may know Me, when I am hallowed in you, O Gog, before their eyes."

This is probably a good time to answer a good question from several online members, who ask, In the Ezekiel war it talks about swords, bows, and arrows as well as horses and other primitive weapons what do you make of this? Are such passages to be taken literally, or is the prophet speaking using vehicles typical to the period (horses and chariots). This question can be answered with an understanding of the original Hebrew words for horses, which is literally translated as "Leapers," and it's also translated as a swallow, which is a bird. It's important to understand that in the 1600's, when Ezekiel was translated, they had soldiers on horses, which were leapers. In our day, it could be understood as soldiers in tanks or aircraft. Another example of this is the words "Sword" and "Bow." Sword in the Hebrew is literally translated "weapons for laying waste," and bow is literally translated "launcher," which carries with it the idea of an arrow that pierces and comes like a thunderbolt. Clearly this could be understood as nuclear or even chemical weapons of mass destruction.

A second prophecy in play by way of the aforementioned developments is 1 Thessalonians 5:3, While they are saying, "Peace and security," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. I lost count of how many times I heard those two words in all the speeches prior, at the time of, and subsequent to the UN Resolution.

In the interest of time I want to move on to the one question that far and away was asked more than any other, and it has to do with the Revelation 12 sign that will appear in the heavens next September 23, 2017, specifically as it relates to the rapture of the church. Revelation 12:1-6 - 1 Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. 2 Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth. 3 And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. 4 His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. 5 She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne. 6 Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days. Numerous people provided me with graphics and descriptions of this, which is that on this day the sun will be in the upper third of Virgo/the woman (clothing her) and the moon beneath her feet. The nine stars of the constellation Leo, which is above Virgo's head will be accompanied by three planets which could represent the crown with 12 stars. Jupiter which at that time has been in the womb of Virgo for 41 weeks (period of normal gestation) will then depart from there, thus Virgo gives birth. I first became aware of this a number of years ago, when someone brought it to my attention. While I haven't spent a great deal of time doing research on it, I have to confess that I'm very intrigued by it. However, let me hasten to say that when we don't know, we would do well staying with what we do know, and what we do know is that no man knows the day or the hour of the rapture. That said, it will certainly be a high watch time by virtue of the fact that the Feast of Trumpets, also known as Rosh Hashanah begins three days earlier on September 20th. Now I am keenly aware of those who believe that the rapture has to happen on this particular Feast, however, I think it would behoove those who hold to this belief hold it loosely, lest the doctrine of immense is disturbed. By that I mean, the only time we should be watching and ready for the rapture is once a year during this Feast.

This brings us to another very good question: Recently I have heard many prophecy teachers talking about a huge revival. They are saying it could start very soon and those talking about it all seem to believe it will happen before the rapture. I thought there was supposed to be a falling away in end times and not a revival. I would love your take on this. I'm going to answer this with the presupposition that she's referring to 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4 - 1 Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, 2 not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. 3 Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

Please know that I realize my answer to this is controversial, but I am personally of the belief that the “falling away” is actually the rapture, and this for a number of reasons, chief of which is that ...the Greek noun *apostasia*, usually translated “apostasy,” should be translated “departure.” The truth of the matter is, the first seven English translations of *apostasia* all rendered the noun as either “departure” or “departing.” Unfortunately, the translators of the King James Version were the first to introduce the new rendering of *apostasia* as “falling away.” It’s for this reason that I see neither a revival nor a pronounced falling away as a marker for the revealing of the antichrist. That’s not to say that there won’t be a final gathering for the fullness of the Gentiles to come in. I’ll take it a step further and say that there has already been a “falling away” in the sense that the church today is lukewarm, if you will, which is how Jesus describes the seventh church of Laodicea in Revelation chapter three.

Let’s move on to another controversial question while we’re at it, this one having to do with Matthew 24 being about the rapture. Specifically Matthew 24:36–44 (NKJV) — 36 “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. 37 But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. 38 For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, 39 and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. 40 Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. 41 Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. 42 Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. 43 But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. 44 Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

Here again, I realize that my answer has the potential of being controversial because I believe that Jesus is speaking about the rapture in these verses. One of the main reasons is because were Jesus referring to the second coming, it’s virtually impossible to reconcile a world doing business as usual at the end of the seven-year tribulation. Moreover, the second coming would not only be at an hour one could expect, it certainly wouldn’t be as a thief in the night. A second reason I believe Jesus is referring to the rapture and not the second coming is because Luke 21 is not a parallel account, such that in Luke, Jesus is teaching in the temple to the people and the disciples, whereas in Matthew 24, Jesus is teaching about the temple, but not to the people, and only the disciples. Also, the parables that follow are all about being ready for the rapture at a time that no one knows.

I’m hoping you’ll kindly indulge me as I tackle the rest of the questions in a rapid fire manner, so as to get to as many of them as possible. First, what is the timing of the rapture as it relates to Isaiah 17 and Ezekiel 38? I’ll also add to that other questions like does the temple have to be rebuilt before the rapture? The short answer is that nothing needs to happen before the rapture, which is the doctrine of imminence. Now, could Isaiah 17 happen before, yes, does it have to, no. I don’t know that I could say the same about Ezekiel 38 and especially the temple, which I believe happens subsequent to the rapture by virtue of Daniel 9:27. This also speaks to another questions about Israel dwelling safely in un-walled villages, such that the temple goes up and the walls, bars and gates come down at the time 7-year peace agreement is enforced, which commences the 70th week of Daniel.

The next question has to do with Psalm 83, specifically whether I still believe it’s a prophecy that has yet to be fulfilled. I have to confess that I am still revisiting Psalm 83 because there is merit to the idea that it may not be fulfilled as an event as much as it has and is being fulfilled over a period of time. In other words, ever since May of 1948, and more say in June of 1967, the countries and people groups have been conspiring to wipe Israel off the map even as they are to this day.

For this next question, you need to bear with me because it’s about whether or not pets go to heaven. The reason I ask you to bear with me is because I am extremely allergic to cats and dogs and as such, we currently have no pets. Please know that I have nothing against them, and in fact I do hope pets go to heaven because if they do, I won’t be allergic to them anymore. That said there is a case that could be argued from scripture that supports pets going to heaven. Conversely, it could also be argued that scripture is silent concerning any specificity in this regard. Here again, we need to stay with what we do know, and what we do know is God is good, and glory of heaven is indescribable here on earth. In other words, nobody will have sorrow in heaven.

I saved this question for last and I think you’ll see why as I read it to you. “Is it ‘too late’ in the game, to learn how to do a Prophecy Update for my local church? The answer is, absolutely not! In fact, now is the time before it is too late, and I would encourage anyone who longs for the rapture, and has a passion for Bible prophecy to go for it, whether it’s on social media, at your church, in your home, or even at your workplace.

- In closing, let me say, if you’ve never called upon the name of the Lord Jesus to be saved, I would implore you to do so today.
- I’ll explain how, by sharing with you what one has called the ABC’s of Salvation. The A is for Admit. Admit that you’re a sinner.
- The B is for Believe. Believe in your heart that Jesus is Lord. The C is for Call. Call upon the name of the Lord; you’ll be saved.