

Mid-East Prophecy Update – June 4th, 2017

- I've really been looking forward to today's prophecy update because it actually ties into our celebration of the communion table.
 - As such, I'd like for us to take a step back from the proverbial forest of Bible prophecy, so as to better see the tree, as it were.
 - I'm hoping that you'll kindly allow me to share with you the bigger picture of why it is that we do these weekly prophecy updates.
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- Back in 2006, the Lord had impressed upon me that we were entering a period of time in human history unlike any other time.
 - It was at this time, I commenced with brief prophecy updates, which at the time was prior to expositionally teaching the Bible.
 - Since that time, the significant prophetic developments were such that, the weekly prophecy updates increased in their scope.
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- Now, over eleven years later and we're witnessing key prophecies in the Bible beginning to come to pass at break neck speed.
 - So much so, teachers and students of Bible prophecy find it increasingly more difficult just to keep up with all that's happening.
 - To put it into perspective, back in 2006, George W. Bush was President, and Ariel Sharon then Ehud Barak were Israel's PM's.
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- Fast forward to today, and now Donald Trump is president and Benjamin Netanyahu is once again the Prime Minister of Israel.
 - The point being is that what's on the table of Bible prophecy today, was not on the table ten years ago, let alone five years ago.
 - Specifically, that of the president's campaign promise to move the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Israel's capitol of Jerusalem.
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- I don't know if it's possible to overstate the geopolitical and prophetic significance of relocating the US embassy to Jerusalem.
 - As I'm sure you're aware president Trump renewed the waiver for yet another six months keeping the US embassy in Tel Aviv.
 - I find it interesting that while there is some disappointment in Israel, they remain hopeful that it's not if, but when, it happens.
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- On Thursday, Ynet News published an article about Israel's disappointment and in it they quote a statement issued by the White House saying, "While President Donald J. Trump signed the waiver under the Jerusalem Embassy Act and delayed moving the US Embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, no one should consider this step to be in any way a retreat from the President's strong support for Israel and for the United States-Israel alliance. "President Trump made this decision to maximize the chances of successfully negotiating a deal between Israel and the Palestinians, fulfilling his solemn obligation to defend America's national security interests. But, as he has repeatedly stated his intention to move the embassy, the question is not if that move happens, but only when." The article goes on to say that a senior Israeli official expressed disappointment over Trump's decision and is accusing the US of caving in to Arab pressure. Cabinet Minister Yuval Steinitz said the refusal to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital makes no sense. Steinitz is a confidant of Prime Minister Netanyahu. ...When told that Trump said he will move the embassy later, Steinitz said: "I hope that happens before the Messiah comes."
- <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4970185,00.html>
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- Relocating the US embassy is just one example of the swiftness with which everything is increasing in frequency and intensity.
 - One need look no further than to the increase of Islamic terrorist attacks blanketing our news feeds seemingly on a daily basis.
 - It seems that the UK is once again the target of the most recent attacks, and I suppose it shouldn't come as any surprise to us.
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- Here's why I mention this, and here's where I'm going with this, the world today, like never before, is ready for the antichrist.
 - Please know that I in no way am suggesting anyone presently on the scene today is the antichrist. No it's not president Trump.
 - I still hold to the belief that the antichrist cannot be revealed until the church of Christ is removed at the rapture of the church.
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- 2 Thessalonians 2:6–12 6 And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. 8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. 9 The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, 10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, 12 that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.
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- I believe that because the mystery of lawlessness is already at work according to the working of Satan, it's just a matter of time.
 - It's not a matter of if; it's only a matter of when the antichrist is revealed he will be seen as the savior of all the world's problems.
 - However, what comes packaged with the working of Satan, are the attacks from Satan, who knows he hath but a short time.
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- If you were to ask me what one of the main reasons I believe that we're in the last moments of human history, this would be it.
 - Namely, the satanic attack causing division within the body of Christ, specifically as it relates to the teaching of Bible prophecy.
 - I have to confess, that in the 35+-years of walking with the Lord, I have never seen it as bad as it is today in the Body of Christ.
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- Enter the Apostle Paul's first epistle to the church in Corinth, and with it our partaking together of the Lord's communion table.
 - It's believed the early church partook together of the communion table on a weekly basis, and it was likely a Sunday afternoon.
 - However, before they partook of the communion, they had what was known as an Agape Feast, or if you prefer a "Love Feast."
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- I suppose you could liken their Love Feasts to what we do when we eat together as a church both on Thursday's and Sunday's.
 - Actually, eating together is very important in the Middle-Eastern culture to this day because of the intimate bond that is formed.
 - Culturally, the belief is eating together makes you one with those whom you break bread with, whether you were rich or poor.

- Sadly, however, there were serious problems developing because of these love feasts, which is why Paul bluntly rebukes them.
- In 1 Corinthians 11:17 Paul tells them it was so serious it was doing more damage than good whenever they met as a church.
- Moreover, the factions and divisions among them were exacerbating this problem, which in turn exposed those causing them.

- While these Love Feasts were meant to bring the church together in fellowship, it seems they were doing the exact opposite.
- Instead of drawing them closer together as a body of believers the communion table was driving them further apart as a church.
- So much so that some of them were turning the Love Feasts and the Lord's Supper into a drunken party together in cliques.

- It's for this reason that this problem had become so serious such that the Corinthian Christians were profaning the Lord's Table.
- I suppose this may explain why there were so many factions and divisions amongst them surrounding, of all things communion.
- That which was to be a commemoration of unity in Christ and the humility of Christ had become riddled with pride and divisions.

1 Corinthians 11:23–33 (NKJV) — 23 For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; 24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." 25 In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. 27 Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. 29 For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30 For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world. 33 Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another.

- In order to understand what Paul is saying about partaking in an unworthy manner, we must first know what he's not saying.
- He is not saying that if we sinned last night or this morning we can't partake because if that were the case, none of us would.
- That would be like saying that, you need to clean up before you take a bath, or else you would do so in an unworthy manner.

I like how one commentator explained it, On the basis of this passage, many think they are unworthy to partake of Communion if they are struggling with a certain sin or wrestling with a particular temptation. Yet this reasoning would be equivalent to — a doctor saying to a sick person, "Get well, and then come and see me," or a loan officer saying to a poor person, "You need a loan? Get some money, and then I can help you"...

- So what does it mean to partake unworthily? There are two ways, the first of which is when one is not a born again believer.
- However, if they call on the Lord and are saved, then they are worthy to partake by virtue of they're righteousness in Christ.
- The second way one can partake unworthily is to do so as a born again believer and yet not be discerning of the body of Christ.

- The question becomes, what does not discerning of the body of Christ mean, answer, to sow discord within the body of Christ.
- In other words, to not discern the body of Christ, is to mistreat, attack, divide, and sow discord within the body of Christ instead.
- This was such a serious problem that it actually rose to the level of God putting some on a bed of sickness and some to death.

- The reason those in Corinth had come under such judgment was because of the threat that they posed to the body of Christ.
- And, if being on a bed of sickness wasn't enough for God to get their attention, then God would have to just take them home.
- Lest we misunderstand what is happening here, let me hasten to say that sickness is not usually a result of God's judgment.

- Often times, sickness and especially death are the result of living in a fallen world, and not because God is judging us for a sin.
- However, there does come a time when God will deem it necessary to take someone home if they pose a threat to His church.
- I say that to share this, I liken all the divisions and factions within the body of Christ today, to the Corinthian church in that day.

- Before we partake together, I think it would behoove all of us to examine ourselves concerning how we treat the body of Christ.
- Perhaps, in the quietness of our hearts, we can ask the Lord to search our hearts as we celebrate the Lord's Table together.
- Lastly, if you've never called upon the name of the Lord to be saved, I would encourage you to do so today before partaking.