

## Special Mid-East Prophecy Update – Thursday, December 20<sup>th</sup>, 2018

- After seeking the Lord early this morning, I made the decision to do a Mid-East Prophecy Update tonight instead of the Psalms.
- This for two reasons the first of which is that this Sunday, December 23<sup>rd</sup>, we'll have our Christmas services at 8:30 & 10:45am.
- The second reason is that just within the last 48-hours, there has been some very significant breaking news concerning Syria.

- Doubtless you heard the stunning news from President Trump that the America will swiftly and completely withdraw from Syria.
- As you might imagine, this development has profound implications for a number of reasons not the least of which is prophetic.
- This because, of what those of us who are students of Bible prophecy know to be true about both Isaiah 17:1 and Ezekiel 38.

What's interesting about the breaking news that the US is withdrawing from Syria is that just days prior, the Sudanese President became the first Arab leader to visit Syria since the civil war began back in 2011. The reason this is significant is that Sudan is one of the nations listed in Ezekiel 38 that allies with Russia, Iran and Turkey when they invade Israel from the north vis-à-vis Damascus. On Monday, The Jerusalem Post published a report in which they ask the question of, "What's behind Sudanese President al-Bashir going to meet Syria's Assad?" In it they suggest that one of the reasons for the surprising visit was to express support for Syria... Here's some of what the report had to say, "Qatar's Al-Jazeera and Iran's Press TV both highlighted the visit... Press TV emphasized that Sudan and Syria both oppose the West's interference in the region, and that Sudan and Syria should concentrate on "Arabism" and "Arab causes." Iran's media tried to argue that Saudi Arabia was at fault for "arming militants seeking to overthrow the government of Assad." The meeting came as Assad also met Hossein Jaber Ansari, an advisor to Iran's foreign minister. The coincidence should not be overlooked that a Sudanese delegation was in Damascus just when the Iranians were. Syria is trying to show it is not isolated and that it can defeat "foreign interference," which increasingly is the way Damascus refers to the role of the US in eastern Syria and Turkey in the north. ...they went on to suggest another reason, namely that the visit is part of growing discussions about the Yemen war where the Saudi-backed alliance has been discussing a ceasefire with the Iranian-backed Houthis? The rhetoric from the Sudanese visit is decidedly anti-Western, whereas Saudi Arabia is still in the western camp. That would appear to indicate the real story behind Bashir's visit is about Sudan working with Syria and Turkey, not part of a Saudi agenda.

<https://www.jpost.com/printarticle.aspx?id=574558>

I suppose it should come as no surprise that Israel will need to regroup and re-strategize, as it were, in light of the US absence in Syria. Yesterday, The Times of Israel published a report about how Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is saying he will "study" the US pullout from Syria, this opposition slams him for failure. Quoting the Times, "Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu gave his cautious imprimatur [guarantee] to the US decision to pull its forces out of Syria Wednesday, saying US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo had assured him that the US will continue to influence events in Syria. But opposition leaders warned that the US departure would undermine Israel's efforts to prevent Iran deepening its presence across the northern border, and said President Donald Trump's decision to leave marked a diplomatic failure by the prime minister. The surprise announcement of the US pullout Wednesday will seriously impact America's role in the region, including its capacity to support Israeli efforts to keep Iran from deepening its foothold in the war-torn country. "I spoke with US President Donald Trump [on Monday] and yesterday with US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, who told me that it was the president's intention to withdraw their forces from Syria and made it clear that they had other ways to express their influence in the arena," Netanyahu said in a statement. "This is, of course, America's decision," he added. "We will study the timetable, the mode of operation, and of course the implications for us. In any case, we will take care to protect Israel's security and to protect ourselves from that arena." Israel's Channel 10 news reported that Netanyahu tried in vain to persuade Trump to change his mind, and that there was tremendous "disappointment" in Jerusalem over the pullout, which is regarded as a victory for Russia, Iran and Hezbollah. The TV report described the US move as "a slap in the face" for Israel, noting that the US presence in Syria was "the only bargaining chip" in Israel's efforts to persuade Russia to prevent Iran deepening its entrenchment in Syria. ...The Times goes on to say that, "In April, two US officials told the Associated Press that a phone call at the time between Trump and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu grew tense over Israeli objections to US plans to leave Syria within six months."

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/netanyahu-gives-cautious-backing-to-us-troop-withdrawal-from-syria/?fbclid=IwAR1pmjZi4xpQos3tJvUuOslis3yRKUjrBTPs0R-hPY0OG7rMCQY14J4HZE>

Perhaps it goes without saying but the objections to Trump's decision are based on what many believe is the signing over of Syria, to Russia, Iran and Turkey. According to Al Arabiya the Syrian opposition co-chair is citing the US withdrawal as a loss against Russia, Iran and Turkey. In it they quote Riad Darar, the co-chair of the Syrian Democratic Council as saying that the US's withdrawal from Syria will be at the expense of their future presence in the Middle East, and they will declare their loss in the face of the pact consisting of Turkey, Russia and Iran. ... "The Americans originally came to confront ISIS in the region, then they started to escalate their stances on the situation with Iran and the political solution in Syria. In any case, the political solution in the country will not happen soon, because the problem of Syria has not even started yet in my opinion," he said. ... He pointed out that the conflict is no longer between Syrians, but has become an international conflict, starting with the Turkish intervention in some areas of Syria. ... He also saw that Washington's recent statements do not have a clear strategic calculation, expressing his belief that "the Russian party, is the only one who knows what it wants."

<https://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2018/12/19/Syrian-opposition-co-chair-US-withdrawal-a-loss-against-Turkey-Iran-Russia.html>

Russia being the only one who knows what it wants is why many are concerned that subsequent to the U.S. Syria withdrawal the region could be thrown into chaos. According to The Jerusalem Post, "The U.S. decision now throws into question everything that has been done in the past four years." Quoting the Post, "Turkey has grown closer to Russia and Iran over the last several years. It began to work with Russia and Iran to discuss the future of Syria, sidelining the US. Turkey also increasingly threatened an operation into Manbij and northern Syria. ...MEANWHILE, THE Trump administration is isolated. While Turkey and Qatar have become close allies, the US was embarrassed by its ally Saudi Arabia, after the Jamal Khashoggi murder in October. ... Now Trump wants to leave Syria. He wanted to do so before, but was convinced to stay. The problem is that this will now weaken the US's hand against Iran and will throw eastern Syria into chaos. Turkey will launch an operation if the US leaves, and the Kurdish fighters who helped defeat ISIS will likely have to fight a new war and perhaps sign a deal with Damascus. This will involve Iran and the Syrian regime entering eastern Syria. A new conflict could result. ...Russia will help broker a deal, as it has before with Turkey over Idlib, making Russia the senior broker of the future of Syria. ...For Israel, it is also a potential threat, as Iran's "corridor to the sea" that runs through Syria will expand. Iranian influence will grow. If the US officials have put this up to test reactions, it will weaken faith in the US.

<https://www.jpost.com/printarticle.aspx?id=574897>

- Suffice it to say, it's going to be interesting to see how this plays out in the days and weeks ahead, especially here in the U.S.
- Dare I say that it seems the plausible scenario we talked about on Sunday, has arguably inched even closer to now playing out.
- The reason being is that all the players are lining up exactly as we're told they would, and it's taking place at a break neck pace.

- It's for this reason that we end our weekly prophecy updates with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the simple ABC's of Salvation.
- The Gospel, or good news is that Jesus was crucified, buried, rose again on the third day, and is coming back for us one day.
- That's the Gospel, and the ABC's of Salvation is a simple childlike explanation of how to respond to the Gospel and be saved.

**The ABC's of Salvation** - The A is for Admit you're a sinner and your need for the Savior, (Romans 3:10, 23 – 6:23).

- The B is for Believe in your heart that Jesus is Lord and God raised Him from the dead, (Romans 10:9-10).
- The C is for Call upon the name of the Lord and confess with your mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord, (Romans 10:9-10, 13).