

Matthew 24: Prophecy Update

“Motivation not Speculation”

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1Jn.3:1-3 prophecy is to stir us to be prepared and purifies

I. Israel – God’s timepiece: return of Israel in the Promised Land:

A. Sign of your coming and the close of the age Mt.24:3-35 [v.8 “birth pangs”]

1. False prophets [4-5] since 1900 dozens, e.g. Sun Myung Moon, Jim Jones, David Koresh

2. Wars, rumors of wars, nation against nation [6-7] 20th Cent.(2) World Wars, more than 50 mil. deaths WWII alone, unheard of in human hx, war v. terror

3. What does the fig tree represent [32-35]? fig tree is likely restored Israel May 1948 [Jer.24:10, Is.43:5-7] > return of Lord [v.34] [Ezek.37 vision of dry bones renew

4. Who is this generation? I say to you this generation will by no means pass away: ref Hebrew people, or generation alive at return of Israel as a nation? Israel restored 1948 + 70-80 yrs [before 2018-2028]

II. Conflict in the Mid-East that sets the stage for a 7-yr. peace treaty brokered by the Antichrist, & includes provision for Israel to rebuild the Temple [Dan.9:27, 2Th.2:4, Ezek.42:20] Sufficient tension in the region that effects other nations > catalyst for peace. [Cf. Simply an overview of very complex issues militarily, politically, and spiritually].

Note: The price of oil has arguably the greatest impact on global economics. When the price dropped below \$38 a barrel in early December it caused huge sell offs in global markets re fear of recession [last time the price dropped below \$38 was in 2008 and the great recession]. Similarly, if the price escalates radically due to instability in the region it can cripple the world economies leading to chaos.

A. Islamic State [aka ISIS, ISIL] Rise of sophisticated, ruthless, and organized Muslims seeking to establish Sharia Law on the planet has destabilizing impact in the region as well as

fueling a global Jihad. Israel is between Syria and the Mediterranean and is only 25 miles wide.

B. Iran's Nuclear Status: Wash. Post 12.20.15 Iran keeps testing the resolve of the U.S. & global community as it appears to continue to develop nuclear weapons. The International Atomic Energy Agency [IAEA] notes that IRAN has failed to cooperate with investigations. Missile launches contra U.N. resolution and nuclear accord

i. Apocalyptic Islam and imminent coming of 12th Imam to est. global Islamic kingdom. Iran believes it must pave the way for a world without Christians or Jews.

C. The Palestinian State: a U.N. resolution to establish a Palestinian State preempts Palestinian Authority from having to negotiate directly with Israel. A U.N. resolution would require U.S. support, and the U.S. has historically stood with Israel. Obama administration is 1st to threaten to support a UN res to pressure Israel.

D. The Temple Mount: The number of Jews going to the Temple Mount (35 acre complex) has doubled in the last 5 years. In 1967 Israel had military & political control over the area [following 6 Day War]. Allowed Muslims to retain spiritual control. Since 1967 Jews have been allowed to enter as tourists but not to pray. The increasing numbers concern Muslims that the Jews want to build their temple on the site.

III. Revived Roman Empire: Daniel 2; 7:23-25 describe a world power in Europe from the area previously within the Roman Empire. 10 leaders will grant sovereign authority to a charismatic powerful leader who is later revealed to be Antichrist. **Current pressure to consolidate :**

A. EU proposed army [10.15] to enforce border control and to protect against Russian aggression. *Troops would swear allegiance to the EU rather than their own country*

B. Russian military influence is a great concern for Europe and NATO's ability to limit Russia has certainly been questioned since the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula at the end of last year.

IV. The Gog/Magog War: Ezek.38-39 nation of Israel surrounded by coalition of nations led by Russia (Magog, Meshech & Tubal), Iran (Persia), Turkey & Syria (Beth-togarmah), Libya (Put) [Ezek. 38:1-6]

A. Russia's military build-up in Syria: Russia was the first world power with ground forces in Syria. Opposed to ISIS but also supporting the regime of embattled Syrian President Bashar al-Assad in Syria's civil war [10.15]

1. Russia has established missile interception platforms that could threaten Israel's national defense. Russian anti-missile defenses may nullify Israel and NATO's air superiority in region.

2. Israel's Prime Minister Netanyahu met with Russian President Putin re concerns about risks of accidental fire at one another in confronting ISIS, ensuring recognition of Israel's airspace, and concerns about Lebanese based Hezbollah obtaining weapons.

V. False Teachers & Apostate Christians [Mt. 24:11-12, 2Tim. 3:1-7] falling away

1. Group of 15 ministers bless a Cleveland abortion clinic [10.28.15]

2. Pope Francis is suggesting that Muslims & Christians worship the same God. The new pope has authorized prayers and readings from the Quran at the Vatican

3. Protestant pastors finding common ground with Islam: Lifeway research 2010 9% of Protestant pastors found common ground with Islam, in 2015 17%

4. "I am a Christian but" Viral video and related hashtag abandons any reference to Christ and Christian theology and adopts a cultural expression of love.

5. A United Church of Christ church promotes a transgender God [11.11.15]

a. FYI – this was first American Christian denomination to ordain homosexuals.

Vi. Other World Events To Watch

A. The gospel shall be proclaimed to all nations: Matt.24:14 "This gospel of the kingdom will be preached to all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come" Christ shall return once the gospel message has been proclaimed in the whole world, to all "nations" [ethnos: ie. people groups vs. nation states. Nigeria is one "nation" but consists of 500+ people groups]

1. The gospel is now being presented in more than 900 languages and dialects; and an estimated 95% of the world's population has access to the gospel message [Issachar Initiative, Joshua Project 12.16.15]. Estimated 6,000 unreached people groups (less than 2-5% Christian pop.) and 3,000 unengaged (No missionaries, outreach, church, or gospel in native tongue) [IMB – International Missions Board of Southern Baptist Conference]. *Estimated mission can be accomplished before 2025*

B. Persecution of Christians [Mt.24:9-10] Christians around the world are experiencing various forms of persecution: beatings, physical torture, confinement, isolation, rape, severe punishment, imprisonment, slavery, discrimination in education and employment, and even death - on a daily basis. (opendoorusa.org)

i. 75% of the world's population lives in areas with severe religious restrictions (the pew research center). Christians in more than 60 countries face persecution from their govt. or surrounding neighbors simply because of faith in Christ (US Dept of State) - At least 100 million Christians suffer persecution (Open Doors USA + Reuters). More Christians were martyred in the 20th century than in all previous centuries combined (the ethics & religious liberty commission).

ii. 2014 322 killed each month + 722 forms of violence (beating, rape, abduction, forced marriage). 2015 is projected to be the worst in modern era

C. One-world Government [Rom. 13:1, Dan. 7:16-24, 2:41-42] U.N. 9.25.15 launched a list of 17 global goals representing a “New Universal Agenda” for humanity. Citizens of all nations will be expected to participate.

Conclusion: what should we do with this information? Awareness that Christ can return for His church at any time [Rapture 1 Th. 4:13-18] but likely prior to (and possibly near) 2nd Coming. So, if Christ’s return is sooner than it’s ever been -> live on mission to proclaim the gospel – know Him & make Him known!