

PostExilicProphets 22-03-16a

Good evening. This is the 16th day of March, 2022, and we continue our look at the times of the end and current events in their light. This is a bit of a departure because I don't usually spend too much time talking about current events.

However, given the unusual alignment of what is happening in the world today with the end of the book of Zechariah and our upcoming study in Matthew 24, it seemed a good idea to look at world events in the biblical context. People have been doing this forever with varying degrees of success, but I'm going to point out a few things tonight in current events, and then we will be back in the scriptures to ask and answer the question, how should we then live? To me, it's one thing to watch the news, it's something else to turn the TV off and go out and do something useful. So we'll try to do both things tonight, but let's begin by asking God's blessing on our fellowship, on our study, and especially during this first portion, by the way, if anyone has a question, just turn your microphone on and interrupt me and ask it because it's going to be less formal.

It's one thing when we're in the word of God and I'm trying to keep my thoughts straight, but when we're talking about more mundane affairs, why just chime right in, pipe right up, don't be bashful. We're, as Red Green used to say, we're all in this together. So that having been said, let's go to the Lord in prayer.

Father, what a blessing and a privilege it is to share fellowship and a common goal, common faith, common standing before you in the Lord Jesus Christ. We're grateful to be together as a group and to have the opportunity to pursue a better understanding of the meaning of the truth of your word and how we should live in its light. We pray that our investigations this evening will contribute toward that goal, that in all things, the Lord Jesus Christ will be glorified and that we can represent him as effectively as possible in the time that remains to us on this earth.

We pray it in Jesus' name, amen. I want to begin by addressing some issues related to the strategic factors in the Middle East and the situation North and East of that that are pertinent and have not been widely covered in the news. And this unsurprisingly, because I'm not a big news watcher, but there is something that completely escaped my notice.

I didn't even know about it until today, but it pertains to what we have just reviewed in the outline of the situation in the 70th week of Daniel and the last three and a half years, which is the Great Tribulation, the factors that might motivate the invasion from the North, the alliance with Put, which is Libya, and with potentially Turkey and Iran and so on. And I had not really seen much connection between those entities in earlier times, but I am beginning to see it now. And what I am referring to specifically is a development and undertaking in Israel.

And this is the Israel to Europe gathering gas pipeline. Has anybody heard of this? Israel to

Europe gas pipeline. The thing is huge.

Let me show you something. This is from the Gatestone Institute. Russia, of course, is one of the main suppliers or was until the sanctions of energy to Europe.

And their pipeline has been a big deal and a big factor in recent machinations. Well, Israel in partnership with Cyprus and Greece has been developing a pipeline project. Let me show it to you here.

This is a map and you can see Israel in green at the lower right. If you can't see the picture, this would be where Israel is relative to the Mediterranean Sea. Then our map has the Med all in the middle of it.

Cyprus is north on the right-hand side. You got Turkey directly north of that. And then you've got Greece over on the left-hand side, east, I'm sorry, west-northwest of Israel.

And you can see these dotted lines. This is the Israel to Europe gas pipeline. It's been underway for some time and was a wonderful undertaking.

Israel has enormous gas reserves, huge, so much so that they could be a strategic target. I was reading an article talking about how in the Jerusalem Post and the name of this article is, it is time for Israel to leverage or to play its energy hand to become a player in this whole situation. And here is that article.

And what they're talking about here is energy. Who has it? Who needs it? How can we secure it? Again, this is in the Jerusalem Post, so their we is Israel. Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine has been all over the place.

40% of European gas was supplied by Russia. It follows that since the energy flow has stopped, prices have surged to record levels in Europe and the United States. I only put a half a tank of gas in the piano truck yesterday because if you're buying 100% gas, you're paying about \$4.25 per gallon for it.

And that's pretty rich. Energy is the new global currency. Is it then no wonder why Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan or Tayyip Erdogan, undeniable Israel hater, welcomed with full ceremonial pomp the president of Israel in Ankara last week.

Erdogan has many things, but he is no fool. He can see what everyone can. Israel, if it chooses, could become the nexus point for an energy-hungry Europe desperately searching for alternatives.

Interesting, no? This is not merely a question of supplying Europe the energy Israel possesses, estimated reserves of 800 billion cubic meters of gas. This is why Israel, Cyprus, and Greece were working on this pipeline because they could be a playa and a huge alternate source of energy to Europe. So what's particularly interesting about this to me, and you know that I am

not interested in being political.

I'm not trying to pick a side, but I want to show you something else that also escaped my radar and I think probably the radar of most Americans. I didn't hear about this at all. This is an article from the Gatestone Institution.

It's the same article where I showed you the map of the pipeline. And the Biden administration kills Israel to Europe gas pipeline. Let me skip down past the summary bullet points.

The Biden administration has abruptly withdrawn American support for the Eastern Mediterranean Pipeline. East Med is what it is called. A project aimed at shipping natural gas from Israel to European markets.

The White House appears to have caved to pressure from Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan who has vociferously opposed the underwater pipeline because it would bypass Turkey. Many European leaders have argued that this decision will effectively give Moscow a stranglehold over European gas supplies and opening the continent to Russian blackmail. Biden's decision was coordinated with Turkey but reached without consulting Israel, Greece or Cyprus.

By the way, this cancellation variously described as a disastrous decision, a strategic mistake and an act of appeasement of Erdogan represents a major geopolitical victory for the Turkish strongman. Analysts worry that he will be emboldened to continue escalating tensions in the Aegean and the Eastern Mediterranean in his quest to expand Turkish control over energy supply routes to Europe. Now, look at this.

The East Med Pipeline has been in the works for more than a decade. The Israel, Greece, Cyprus project joined by Bulgaria, Hungary, North Macedonia, Romania and Serbia has long been seen as a way to diversify natural gas supplies to Europe. Diversity is good.

Having eggs in several baskets is good. Whether it's your investments, whether it's your plan B backup in almost any area, diversity is always a good idea. This \$6.8 billion project envisaged the construction of a 1,900 kilometer, 1,180 mile undersea pipeline that would carry up to 20 billion cubic meters of gas annually from Israel and Cypriot waters to Crete and then on to the Greek mainland.

From there, the gas would be transported to Italy and other countries in Southeastern Europe. Here's your map again. Makes beautiful sense, doesn't it? In January, 2020, the leaders of Israel, Greece and Cyprus with strong support from the Trump administration signed the East Med Intergovernmental Agreement aimed at reaching a final investment decision by 2022, completing the pipeline by 2025.

2025, remember we're thinking the anniversary, the 2000 year anniversary of the crucifixion is circa 2027, give or take. But you can imagine if this pipeline goes ahead and is completed despite the U.S.'s non-support, thanks to our current administration, where the previous

administration was strongly supporting it because there were some strategic thinkers in places of power last time around. The East Med project could eventually have supplied up to 10% of Europe's natural gas needs.

At that time, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said, we are free countries, free market countries working together, working to create energy infrastructures. This is when better security follows. If we do it properly, we will attract investment and maximize these resources.

In November, 2021, the European Commission, administrative arm of the EU included the East Med pipeline in its list of so-called projects of common interest, priority cross-border projects, energy projects aimed at integrating the EU's energy infrastructure. But on January 9, 2022, in a sharp reversal of previous U.S. policy, the Biden administration announced that it no longer supports East Med. I didn't hear word one about that any place.

No journalist talked about it. It just flew straight under the radar. But you think about the centrality of Turkey in this whole calculation.

That's the reason the U.S. withdrew its support is Turkey. Think about that. Furthermore, let me see if I can offer you another thought having to do with the geopolitics of that region.

This is also from the Jerusalem Post and on a slightly different subject, the headline is Iran is being played by Russia as Moscow tries to take over the nuclear deal. You know how our current administration is trying to enter back into the Iran nuclear limitation deal that Mr. Trump trashed. The Kremlin has been using Iran as a nuclear blackmail piggy bank against the U.S. and the West.

Now, to be fair, this is an opinion piece. This is not hard news and it's in the Jerusalem Post and of course, they've got a viewpoint. The U.S. administration wants to re-enter a deal with Iran that won't last more than another few years or a decade.

Toward that end, the Biden administration coordinated with Russia. Moscow works closely with Tehran. Do you remember in our Ezekiel 38 and 39 study that Gog is in league with Persia, i.e. Iran, in the invasion from the North into Israel halfway through the 70th week.

Moscow works closely with Tehran. As the U.S. was coordinating with Russia, Moscow was planning the invasion of Ukraine, which gave Russia a golden hand to play at the negotiating table. Once it invaded Ukraine, Moscow could present itself as holding the deal discussions hostage by claiming that the U.S. must agree to Russia's terms in order to get a new deal.

Washington, meanwhile, was close to giving away the store anyway. Russia is now trying to drive up the price. The Iran deal has now become the Russia deal as Russia swoops in at the end to reveal that it controls the talks.

And Iran has been played by Moscow. Iran has discovered too late that Russia could sabotage the deal so that Russia can escape sanctions. Now Iran is running into the arms of China and

Russia is now using Iran.

So, you know, the details might be a little fuzzy here, but just notice the implications, the entanglements between Russia, Iran, Turkey, China. And there is also an involvement even with Libya in these machinations. And Libya is starting to flex its muscles as well.

So I say that to say without, you know, belaboring or getting too entangled in details, the Bible 2,500 years ago foresaw power alignments and entities that for centuries and for well over a millennium did not exist, but have suddenly emerged and are on your TV set and in your internet feed or whatever. And it's exciting. Having said that, and my suggestion is if you can dig deep enough past all of the froth and fluff that search engines and the big tech tries to slather on top and whitewash and plaster over what's really going on in the world, if you can dig, endeavor to keep an eye on Turkey.

It is no accident, as I said, when Jesus said twice, that that's where Satan's seat is. You think about the centrality of Turkey. If you want to coordinate and keep an eye on what is in the East with China and the Asiatic Confederation, what is in the North with Russia coming down through Ukraine, Hal Lindsey thinks Ukraine will be a part of Russia when it invades.

And I have no reason to argue with him. By the way, I'll show you real quickly. I'm not going to quote or cite this, but there is an article coincidentally from just the last few days.

I believe this is from March the 6th, 2022 on Hal Lindsey's website. I don't follow Hal Lindsey. I hadn't thought about him in years, but I thought, well, old Hal's a prophecy guy.

Just wonder what he thinks. And so here is an article that he has just posted within the last week or so. And this is titled Gog, Magog and You.

And this is a quote from a recent article featured right on his homepage. In a recent column entitled Rumors of War, I explained why the Russian led invasion of Israel detailed in Ezekiel 38 and 39, which we just looked at, will include Ukraine. I haven't read that article.

These passages give the leader of the coalition the symbolic name Gog. Could Putin be Gog? He sure could. Is he? We simply don't know some believe that he is the choice to go into Ukraine was not really his at all They say God is compelling him.

You remember the hooks in the jaws. I will turn him to the south. I Don't think that's true Nor does how? Ukraine is not Israel.

God did not put hooks in Putin's jaws forcing him to attack Ukraine still the prophetic significance of Russia's move into Ukraine cannot be denied and it does not end with the fact that Ukraine will join Russia as part of the Ezekiel 38 coalition the war is also impelling Europe to arm itself and Remember this this I think is a really good point the EU has always been an economic and political entity, but as it begins to intertwine and coalesce with NATO It could easily become military as well as economic and political and What is currently under NATO in

terms of defense and and military? could Could merge so As Hal says here In recent years at the urging in the United States Europe's NATO nations made token increase in their defense budgets They clearly preferred for u.s. Taxpayers to shoulder the cost of their defense that changed with mr. Trump Who said they need to pay their fair share? You cannot believe how many things mr. Trump said Policy wise that are being roundly trashed around the internet and and that what he said were lies and that they were Paying their fair share. Sorry. No, they weren't and and just bald-faced lies being Being Put for fact in news media you have to dig and you have to do your own research You cannot take almost anything at face value But here's here's the point Putin changed that today Europe is looking to arm itself Previously neutral countries are suddenly hoping to join NATO during the Cold War Finland and Sweden were famously non-aligned Even Soviet atrocities were not enough to get them to stand with other Western nations against the Soviet Union Now they see Putin as willing to attack any non-aligned non-nuclear power by joining NATO They would instantly put themselves under the protection of American French and British nukes Putin's action in Ukraine also puts pressure on the EU to arm itself for years key leaders have wanted to make it a military power now with Putin's help that idea has new momentum a Central command and control over all the armies of Europe would in an instant make the EU a global military power The Bible says that such a power will one day be handed over to Antichrist.

I think that's a fair point Has not happened yet. This is why I think there's there's still a bit of a gap. We still got a little bit of time Which I personally am grateful for I'd really like a little more time to you know Generate my my sprint to the tape Expend all remaining get get my get my spiritual fruit as maximum Run with patience the race that is set before me.

Anyway, I thought you might find those developments interesting and I'd like to Open the floor to any questions or comments that people have our Bible study proper is going to come right after the break We're 25 minutes in now. So we've got about 10 minutes for questions and comments or whatever you'd like to Contribute on this right? You might have heard as I say, I don't follow the news all that close You might know more than I do about some of these developments. I know Ken keeps keeps an eye on things and I think some of the others of you may May as well or do you have a question about one thing or another while you're thinking about that I'm going to look for the What I found about Libya I was I was astonished to find something on Libya in the recent news Yes, it's considered that I don't think that because they are the source that it's necessarily You know the the source neither augments nor detracts on its face But yeah, they're they're obviously they're very very pro-israel You know, I just I really don't know that's good question.

I don't know where they're where they're rated. Hey Troy Personal note of mine In my Bible, that's at least 10 years old and you feel 38 for some of the possible hooks That got to be using during that time to lure the northern kingdom down to Israel was Warm water port. They've got that's very valuable They have lots of oil and gas reserves And I was aware of that pipeline, but I had totally forgotten in the last few years and Then also the Dead Sea is just loaded up with It's a chemical rich Place is you've got gold and all kinds of stuff.

So any of those kind of resources might be Might be something that God could use to say hey, we you know the northern kingdom Good point good point and there's multiple Reasons energy resources their strategic location control over the Mediterranean Sea and you know the Suez Canal situation is still nearby and That pertains into the end of the North Africa idea And Let me also Show you this You see if I can find my my gate stone thing again Maybe I'll just get this here and put it here I found the reference to Libya that I was looking for Thanks, I just gotta go down a lot further this is a long article There it is Turkey has challenged the East Med project by attempting to expand its claims over gas rich areas of the Mediterranean Sea in November 2019 Turkey and Libya reached a bilateral agreement on Maritime boundaries in the southeastern Mediterranean Sea the deal signed by Erdogan and the UN backed leader of Libya Fayed al-sarraj Attempted to redraw existing sea boundaries so that Libya ostensibly can claim rights over 39,000 square kilometers of maritime waters belonging to Greece See that on the map You would think what would Libya have to do with anything what would North Africa have to do with anything but Turkey and Libya are now claiming the waters between those two dotted lines No just it just in there But what that does The bilateral agreement establishes a new Turkey Libya economic zone That the East Med pipeline would now have to cross Appeared aimed at giving Turkey more leverage over the project Referring to the Turkey Libya. Did you hear anything about Turkey Libya deal? I didn't Erdogan said other international actors cannot conduct exploration activities in the areas marked in the Turkish Libyan memorandum Greek Cypriots Egypt Greece and Israel Cannot establish a natural gas transmission line without Turkey's consent and in back as far as December 2019 the Turkish Foreign Ministry Summoned Israel top diplomat in Ankara to inform him that Israel's plan to lay down a natural gas pipeline to Europe would require Turkey's approval and There's no need to build it because the trans Anatolian natural gas pipeline already exists the most economical and secure route to utilize natural resources in the Eastern Med Deliver them to consumption markets in Europe including our country is Turkey so once again what we led with The the modern-day currency in the world is energy Energy and who controls it. That's the that's those are the levers of power anymore But energy and by extension as Troy mentioned other natural resources the tech Monopolies if you're making circuit boards and you need gold for traces if you need and there are other rare metals That are in in some of these quote, you know, no-name nations, but they wind up being Essential to the supplies.

They've talked about some of these that come from Ukraine itself Also the crisis In Anywhere from 10 to 50 percent of the world's wheat coming from Ukraine and There was an article published Recently that in just the last few days the advisor to Ukrainian president wrote an article talking about The first 10 days of March are when the wheat crop in Ukraine is planted and every single day that goes by and They're using their tractors to haul away stalled and destroyed Soviet equipment instead of plowing and planting wheat The the wheat crop from Ukraine is already gone for this year. There will be no wheat from there So That's going to drive prices up a lot of the poor of the world a lot of charities that rely on Staples like that to to supply the poor That's off the table all of it that comes from Ukraine. Hey Kenny, what you got? What Saudi Arabia and China are are doing and that is Detaching themselves from the the

petrodollar established in Bretton Woods In the I think in the 50s That established the United States.

Everybody everybody had to go through the United States to buy their oil using Using American dollars and that's been established for you know decades And it happened after World War two and and right now there's a crack in that in that The you know, the petrodollar if if nations begin to trade oil in other currencies Are the then our dollar goes away And We used to be fine with that because we were not the largest debtor nation You know on the planet and now we are we're the largest debtor nation. So That that would go You know our our dollar would change and I and I I believe now they want our dollar to change Now are you know our government does so they can so they can issue Programmable digital currency There was something else. I'll make it a second, but That that that's that's just happened along along those lines But the the you know, the loss of the loss of the US dollar Globally is Is a bad thing, although our dollar is still the cleanest Dirty shirt in the hamper, right, but it's it's it's beginning to you know to Yeah, it's it's it's beginning to turn dirty dirtier Because of the just the incredible amount of debt and currency printing that that we do The the other the other thing is Russian wheat and Russian oil is is a commodity and all the worst the worst thing now that's going to Make this dollar hegemony of ours go away is the fact that Russia owes You know many many hundreds of billions of dollars To other countries and they they can't pay it.

Yeah, they also they also need their payments for their their goods and They they they can't get that get that money Well, well, why is that bad for the rest of the world because remember debt obligations? collateralized debt Obligations are what crashed the housing market in 2008 and what? nations and and Pension funds and you know for the state local and oh, yeah National wealth in all these countries they bet on the debt payments Right and you can see this this article on the screen another thing you don't hear about Russia's Russia has 30 days, but they they are due to make two interest payments on their dollar bonds today It is unclear whether Western investors would actually receive their cash Will they pay their schedule to hand investors a total of? 117 million dollars in interest payments on two of their bonds. They have a 30-day grace period I haven't heard today if they if they paid or not, they say they're going to but here's the here's what's happening to the Russian bond market and and the value of their bonds and And Markets already priced in a default their foreign bonds are trading at about 20% of their face value Credit ratings which up until late February awarded Russia investment grade status have slashed them to the very lowest junk ratings With them saying that default is imminent. So now they're thinking Russia may decide to pay in rubles to your point Why are going to be a domino and it's going to be I mean If ten trillion dollars was on the line in 2008 with all the all the betting on the debt payments through the collateralized debt Obligations and all those other instruments.

None of that has gone away They just changed the names, but those those those risk Those risks against all the bonds and all the debt are still there. Oh, yeah 2008 it's 200-300 trillion dollars now so what they start the domino by not being allowed to pay or having to pay in rubles then Everybody is everybody is going to crash and The Well, and what they're saying is

that that if they default normally there's restructuring and alternate ways of paying and so on but that all of that is out the window because of the sanctions and So investors are going to have to write off their Russian ponds basically and a wait for a de-escalation According to this article, but this Yeah, this is an article in the Financial Times and It's it's worth looking at because this is another thing you don't hear about in The media our media all it wants to do is show people with their apartment buildings collapsing in Ukraine, but the rest of the world is getting very Precarious and what we're going to begin to look at In our second session because we'll break off for now. I appreciate Troy and and Ken contributing in there, but we're going to get back into our Bible and When it says that in the latter days perilous times will come Okay, so if we're living in perilous times What should we then do and the Bible has plenty to say about that so we'll pause here and take our break we'll enjoy our special music then we'll Crack open our Bibles.

There's nothing better than the rustling of pages in the scriptures and See what God would have us focus our primary attention on it is good to read the signs of the times It's good to have awareness But ultimately all of that should contribute to our motivation to Represent the Lord Jesus Christ as his body on this earth. So that having been said let's pause here and take our break