

AI and the Great Deception

Elon Musk, probably one of the most powerful personalities in the world of technology, paused for a moment of reflection as he sat before an auditorium filled with people. He took a long, deep breath before making this profoundly prophetic statement: "With AI, we are summoning the demon."

When I heard this quote myself, it felt less like a metaphor and more like a prophetic utterance. This technological genius, who does not profess to be a Christian, compared artificial intelligence to "summoning the demon," and went on to suggest that we might be conjuring something that we think we can control, only to find that it will turn against us. Stephen Hawking also had chimed in, "The development of AI could spell the end of the human race."

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These statements serve as a disturbing reminder of the potential Pandora's box that has already been opened. We are now burdened with the responsibility of heeding this warning and exercising judgment as we stand on the brink of a brave new world. During times of great darkness, it is not uncommon for the church to bury its head in the sand and hope that the storm will blow over. However, we cannot risk letting others seize control of the levers of power because the stakes are too high. We must not remain ignorant or uninfluential in this oncoming AI arms race.

Are We Headed for Singularity Oblivion?

Much like the scientists who worked on the Manhattan Project, AI research centers around the world are trying to understand

the implications of what's being created. They are working on developing artificial general intelligence (AGI), which refers to robots or programs that are able to acquire and grasp any intellectual endeavor that a human being is capable of, but with exponentially greater efficiency and capacity.

Technological Singularity is the hypothetical future point in time at which technological growth becomes uncontrollable and irreversible, resulting in unforeseeable changes to human civilization. The term *singularity* is also used to describe what happens when you cross the threshold into a black hole. All of the known laws of nature break down or even disappear. Sound mystical? It should! This is the realm we're stepping into with AI. With each breakthrough and advancement, the boundaries of human achievement expand, blurring the line between science fiction and reality.

Are We Creating a Modern Day Golem?

The golem, a creature deeply rooted in mystical Jewish folklore and mythology, has long captured the imagination of believers and skeptics alike. The origins of this belief can be traced back to ancient Jewish texts, which gradually gained prominence during the Middle Ages. Legend has it that the golem, a creature fashioned from clay or mud, was said to have been animated through enigmatic rituals and inscriptions. The creation of such artifacts was traditionally entrusted to esteemed rabbis or mystics who possessed deep knowledge and understanding of the sacred name of God.

This demonic portrayal of the golem as a formidable but devoid-of-thought servant, dutifully following the commands of its maker, is both captivating and unsettling. The primary objective for this creature was to safeguard and shield the Jewish community from imminent threats and relentless persecution. In certain renditions of the ancient legend, the golem is said to have been conjured forth in moments of dire peril and turmoil, assuming the role of a stalwart protector

against adversaries and tyrants.

Nevertheless, the golem's remarkable strength coupled with its dearth of human intellect presented a perilous predicament. In the absence of adequate control or limitations, the golem possesses the potential to spiral into an uncontrollable force, unleashing catastrophic havoc upon its surroundings. The narrative surrounding the golem delves into profound themes of authority, accountability and the ethical ramifications inherent in assuming the role of a deity.

AGI poses a similar threat as the golem and even the atomic bomb. These are comparisons that top tech executives are making. If artificial intelligence were to get into the wrong hands or to get out of control, the repercussions may be catastrophic, far exceeding the harm that could be caused by a bomb or a mythical monster. The development of this kind of AI could result in:

- Economic disparities on a scale never seen before
- The loss of the right to privacy with mass surveillance
- Deepfake scams that defrauded both individuals and nations
- Unprecedented national security breaches
- Election tampering
- The complete breakdown of interpersonal relationships in society
- The collapse of how we define reality
- The hacking of the human mind
- A dystopian future in which humans are no longer the dominant species.

The last one may seem like a stretch, but in a recent survey of 4,000 AI researchers, nearly half of them acknowledged that they believed there was a 10% chance that this tech could result in human extinction.

That's not very comforting.

What does the Bible say about AI? "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased," (Dan. 12:4). Is Daniel predicting an explosion of knowledge? If so, we are sitting right in the middle of the fulfillment of this prophecy! Consider this:

- In the 1950s, knowledge was doubling every 20-30 years; today knowledge is doubling every 15 months
- Your phone has more tech on it than the first space shuttle
- The average newspaper today has more information than the average person living in the 17th century would come across in their lifetime.

During this knowledge explosion, the Bible speaks of a coming figure who will seek to dominate the world and will perpetuate the greatest deception known to man. The antichrist will attempt to seize the reins of power by specifically controlling the world economy. For centuries there has been a great deal of speculation as to how he would be able to accomplish this. How could someone control who buys and sells *and* how would one monitor this? Today the answer is simple: A digital currency with a powerful AI superintending over it.

"And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed," (Rev. 13:15). Here the Bible says that this end-time leader will possess an "image", icon or idol that he will "give life" to. Could this be a reference to an automaton powered by a demonically inspired AI?

It's interesting to note that the first characteristic of the image is that it could "speak." The breakthroughs that we have

seen in recent months are in the area of AI language models. Everyone is shocked at how it's able to speak and some are even asserting sentience.

How Should the Church Respond?

Recently a Lutheran church in Germany hosted an AI worship service with four different AI ministers. The sermon lasted about 40 minutes and hundreds lined up to hear it. Though we should not be running to line up and hear an AI preacher, we should also not be running from the technology we've seen so far. We need to be as involved as we can be in this process. We must pray that within these tech companies, God will raise up Spirit-filled programmers to insert truth into these algorithms. We should also help train these modules by using them and inputting as much gospel as we can.

Understanding AI is part of the end-time stewardship Jesus commissioned us to walk in. We must help to ensure, to the best of our ability, that such powerful tools are used ethically and responsibly in ways that glorify God.

We're not in the antichrist system yet, but it is fast approaching. The scaffolding for the great deception is already in place. Some have suggested that we will cross over into the Technical Singularity by 2045. Others think we could have AGI within the next two years. Ultimately, believers must be ready. "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man," (Luke 21:36, KJV).

These are exciting times! As we see these prophecies being fulfilled, we must see them as an invitation to engage the world around us, increase our influence for the kingdom and occupy till He comes, (see Luke 19:13).

Maranatha!

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