

Lord, Deliver Us from Evil

In November 2023, a high school teacher in Queens, New York, was forced to hide in her office because rampaging students attacked her. What made the students so angry? The woman, who has been a teacher for 23 years, had posted a picture of herself on social media. She was holding a sign that said, "I STAND WITH ISRAEL."

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Because of her stance, the students—who were waving Palestinian flags and calling for a riot—wanted to lynch her. New York City's mayor, Eric Adams, called the incident "a vile act of anti-Semitism." The incident forced authorities to close the school for a few hours.

What's happening in our country? What would radicalize teenagers to the point that they would riot in the halls of a school?

Welcome to America in 2024

Forbes magazine announced two years ago that organized retail theft is currently costing retailers \$100 billion in losses. The trend is so bad that Walmart announced in late 2022 that the rise in theft will result in higher prices and that some stores will close. The CFO of Target, Michael Fiddelke, said a 50% rise in theft in 2022 has resulted in a \$400 million loss for his company.

Beyond The Article With J. Lee Grady

In California, where shoplifting has been rising dramatically, thieves who steal \$950 or less in merchandise are only guilty

of a misdemeanor—and they are rarely charged. This is why we now see videos of people brazenly walking into stores, filling garbage bags with merchandise and walking out without paying.

What would make thieves so brazen that they would empty store shelves in the sight of cashiers? This is the world we live in now. Up is down, wrong is right, good is evil and evil is good.

Hamas terrorists who decapitate babies and rape and butcher women are viewed as the good guys. Israel, the only true democracy in the Middle East, is viewed as an enemy of freedom.

Parents who want to protect their children from transgender ideology are called “hateful,” or even “Nazis.” Meanwhile, teachers who believe it is their right to show kids pornographic books in class are portrayed in the media as “inclusive.”

Pro-life activists who say it is wrong to abort a baby during the third trimester are often called “fascists” or worse.

Citizens, including African-Americans, who believe repeat criminals should be reported to police are called “white supremacists.”

Isaiah 5:20 says: “Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!” This verse helps me understand what is happening in our culture today. Words have been weaponized. Definitions have been changed to manipulate and control.

What’s behind this? It is the spirit of Lucifer himself, who comes to “steal and kill and destroy.” We may not think of theft as being as serious as murder or mayhem, but Jesus listed stealing as a violent and diabolical act that the devil inspires.

Jesus also warned us that people won't respect the enforcement of laws in the last days. He said in Matthew 24:12: "Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold." Satan uses lawlessness to spread chaos, confusion and hopelessness. Lawlessness is what unravels a culture until it collapses.

What should our response be? Conservative Americans say we must stop being soft on crime, and elect leaders who believe in strict law enforcement. On the flip side, liberal Americans say we must apply compassion by addressing the problems of poverty and family breakdown that lead youth into crime.

The truth is we must address this problem from both sides of the political divide. But we will not solve our crime problem until we pray and work for a spiritual revival. America is unraveling because we need Jesus. The spirit of lawlessness will only be defeated when the Holy Spirit changes hearts from the inside.

We need some desperate prayers. I'm praying like this: "Lord Jesus, our nation seems to be slipping into an abyss. Forgive us for our rebellion against You. Deliver us from the evil of lawlessness. Let Your justice roll down like waters, and let it touch every community and every race. Send a visitation of Your Holy Spirit to awaken us. Instead of hatred, racism, cruelty, crime, violence, sexual immorality and family breakdown, give us peace in our streets, love in our homes and the healing of families. Amen."

Identifying the Anti-Christ Spirit

Back in the 1940s, people believed Adolf Hitler was the Antichrist because he twisted words and definitions in such a way that people actually accepted the genocide of Jews. Then in 1976, the popular movie *The Omen* fueled the idea that the Antichrist might emerge from the United States.

I've never believed the Antichrist is just one man. That's

because I know from history that Christians have suffered under evil dictators since the first century. In fact, early Christians believed the Roman emperor Nero was the Antichrist.

One verse in the Bible gives us a clue that the Antichrist shouldn't be viewed as one individual. The apostle John wrote: "Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour," (1 John 2:18, NASB).

This verse indicates that a spirit of antichrist has been working in the world from the beginning, manifesting in various eras. And throughout the book of Revelation we see that this Antichrist figure works in tandem with the devil and the false prophet to wage war on God and His people.

The Antichrist is part of a demonic trinity—a counterfeit of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The spirit of antichrist works inside certain people to carry out Satan's mission. The devil has been working overtime because he's furious that his days are numbered. He is mustering all his forces because he knows heaven is about to unleash the greatest outpouring of the Holy Spirit in all of history.

We shouldn't focus our attention on the devil, but the Bible says clearly that we should not be ignorant of his crafty schemes (see 2 Cor. 2:11). The fingerprints of the Antichrist are everywhere around us today, and if you aren't aware of his strategies, you could come under his influence. Here are six ways to identify the antichrist spirit:

The antichrist spirit hates God. The devil hates all righteousness and goodness. He wants evil to triumph. This is why people who hate God celebrate sin. And this is why we see in our own educational system a systematic attempt to replace Christian values with atheism.

The antichrist spirit hates life. The devil doesn't have the

power to create because he himself was created. No wonder the devil loves it when people abuse alcohol and drugs; he fuels hatred in people so they will kill others. Isn't it obvious that only Satan would convince people that killing an unborn child, even up until the moment of birth, is acceptable?

The antichrist spirit hates the family. Not long ago, secular psychologists would have all agreed that children thrive when they have a mother and a father. Today our universities have become breeding grounds for hostility to anything traditional, including the simple scientific fact that there are only two genders. The antichrist spirit twists and perverts what is normal.

The antichrist spirit hates authority. In Romans 1:30 the apostle Paul refers to hardened sinners as "insolent"—which means, "showing a rude or arrogant lack of respect." In Paul's description of the deeds of the flesh, he also mentions "revilers" (1 Cor. 6:10). A reviler is "one who uses abusive or contemptuous speech." When you see hordes of people marching through our streets vandalizing property, spray-painting crude words on walls and screaming curse words, you can be sure the antichrist spirit is near.

The antichrist spirit hates the prophetic word of God. When Elijah called down fire from heaven, and God proved He was real to the nation of Israel, Jezebel got very angry. She was hell-bent on killing the prophet before he could preach again. This is why we must pray for all ministers in this challenging hour. We need the courage to speak, especially when God asks us to break the rules of political correctness.

The antichrist spirit hates the church. I have friends overseas who live in fear, either because their own government is closing churches or terrorists are killing Christians. I recently heard from a man in Nigeria whose wife and two children were killed by Muslim militants. I pray we never see such violence in the United States, but the spirit that is

slaughtering Christians in Africa is already lurking in our midst.

Six Specific Ways to Pray

I find a lot of comfort when I pray for the United States using Matthew 6:13. Jesus told us we should pray: “Father ... deliver us from evil.” Jesus recognized that there is evil in the world—and nobody can twist the definition of evil and make it good. I’ve been asking that Jesus will deliver us from evil in six areas:

1) Deliver us from lawlessness and violence. In some American cities today, murder rates are skyrocketing, and stores are closing because of rampant theft. In San Francisco and Philadelphia, for example, certain companies are pulling out of the cities altogether because local authorities won’t prosecute thieves. Lord, restore peace to our streets!

2) Deliver us from a mental health breakdown. Statistics show that deaths caused by alcohol, drugs and suicide have now reached their highest level ever in the United States. The deadly spread of fentanyl is only one of the causes of this increase. Anxiety, depression and serious mental disorders have turned many people into ticking time bombs. Lord, deliver us from this wave of mental illness!

3) Deliver us from media deception. It’s no secret that some world leaders are busy using their wealth and influence to plot evil. And sometimes the media—which is supposed to broadcast the truth and expose evil—is actually in bed with the evildoers. Pray that we will not be misled or manipulated by lies and cover-ups.

4) Deliver us from perversion. Immorality has taken deep root in our nation—and this includes the pervasiveness of pornography, the horror of human trafficking and the wickedness of full-term abortion. And now, doctors are making their fortunes by performing sex-change operations on minors

who are confused about their gender. Lord, deliver us from this evil!

5) Deliver us from racism. We as a nation still struggle with pervasive prejudice against certain minorities—and in many cases racism exists in the church. We need deep repentance and freedom from our hatred of people who don't look like us. Racism also has prevented the church from taking the gospel to certain communities, and from caring about orphans, foster kids and prisoners. Lord, deliver us from this hatefulness!

6) Deliver us from greed and materialism. The Bible warns that "the love of money is the root of all evil," (1 Tim. 6:10). This evil is entrenched in our banking systems, pharmaceutical companies, universities, media corporations, hospitals, high-tech companies and governments. Deliver us from greed!

We live in evil times. But we can have hope because the light of Jesus shines the brightest in the dark. Be brave. Live loudly. Share the gospel with courage. Challenge the culture around you. And pray fervently that the antichrist forces will lose their grip on our nation.

J. Lee Grady was editor of *Charisma* for 11 years and now serves as senior contributing editor. He directs the *Mordecai Project*, an international ministry that protects women and girls from gender-based violence. His latest books are *Follow Me* and *Let's Go Deeper* (Charisma House).