Buried for 2,000 Years: Ancient Second Temple Discovery Found Beneath Western Wall Plaza

A Jewish person living during the Second Temple period – roughly 516 BCE to 70 CE – was required to immerse in a mikveh before entering the Temple. As a result, ritual baths were built throughout Jerusalem, near main roads, public buildings, and private homes, forming an essential part of daily life in the holy city.

One of those mikvehs has now been uncovered in an extraordinary location—hidden beneath the Western Wall Plaza. Hewn directly into the bedrock during the final days of the Second Temple period, the mikveh lay sealed for nearly 2,000 years.

The rectangular ritual bath measures about 10 feet in length (3.05 meters), 4 feet 5 inches in width (1.35 meters), and 6 feet 1 inch in height (1.85 meters). Its walls were carefully plastered, and four hewn steps descend into the pool from the southern side.

The mikveh was burned during the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE. As Roman forces set the city ablaze and destroyed the Second Temple, ash and debris sealed the ritual bath beneath layers of destruction, preserving it for nearly two thousand years.

“This was a Temple city,” explained excavation director Ari

Levy of the Israel Antiquities Authority. “Daily life in Jerusalem revolved around ritual purity. That reality shaped how people lived, what they used and how the city itself was built.”

Archaeologists also uncovered numerous pottery vessels, along with stone vessels characteristic of the Jewish population living in Jerusalem on the eve of the destruction. Stone vessels were commonly used because, under Jewish law, they do not contract ritual impurity.

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‘Children Do Not Belong to the Government’: Federal Judge Smacks Down CA Gender Secrecy Policies

California public schools can no longer deceive parents or force teachers to keep parents in the dark about their child’s gender confusion, after a federal court declared the practice to be unconstitutional.

U.S. District Judge Roger Benitez has issued a permanent injunction against what he called “parental exclusion policies,” which required teachers to withhold information about a student’s gender expression unless the child

consented.

The decision came in Mirabelli, et al. v. Olson, et al., a class-action lawsuit brought by parents and teachers represented by the Thomas More Society.

“Today’s incredible victory finally, and permanently, ends California’s dangerous and unconstitutional regime of gender secrecy policies in schools. The Court’s comprehensive ruling—granting summary judgment on all claims—protects all California parents, students and teachers, and it restores sanity and common sense,” said Paul Jonna of the Thomas More Society.

As CBN News first reported in 2024, two teachers, Elizabeth Mirabelli and Lori West, have been fighting a legal battle for their jobs after they were initially placed on administrative leave for refusing to withhold information about students’ gender “transitions” from their parents.

The ruling by Judge Benitez states that California’s parental exclusion policies “harm the parents by depriving them of the long-recognized Fourteenth Amendment right to care, guide, and make health care decisions for their children, and by substantially burdening many parents’ First Amendment right to train their children in their sincerely held religious beliefs.”

It also found that teachers were “compelled to violate their sincerely held beliefs and the parents’ rights by forcing them to conceal information they feel is critical for the welfare of their students.”

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Trump Hints at Possible Second Iran Strike, ‘Horrible’ Consequences if Hamas Doesn’t Disarm

JERUSALEM, Israel – In what was described as a “historic day,” Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met with President Donald Trump for the sixth time since Trump took office in January. They talked about Iran and Hamas, and agreed that they’re on the same page most of the time.

After their meeting in Mar-a-Lago, Florida, the president indicated there was very little difference in where he and Netanyahu stand on issues and “where they want to go.” Netanyahu agreed.

“I think we have a partnership, if I can quote you, ‘second to none,'” Netanyahu stated. “I think it’s allowed us to do enormous things. He’s achieved remarkable things in the Middle East because we’ve worked together. We talk about our ideas. Sometimes we have different ideas, but we work it out. And most of the time we see eye to eye.”

As reports continue to emerge about Iran rebuilding its

missile arsenal, Trump suggested that another strike on Iran could be on the agenda.

“I hope they’re not trying to build up again because if they are, we’re going to have no choice but very quickly to eradicate that buildup,” the president said.

Before their meeting, Trump told reporters that he would back another Israeli strike against Iran if necessary, but he later added that he wouldn’t say they are close to another war with Iran.

He remarked, “Iran may be behaving badly. It hasn’t been confirmed, but if it’s confirmed, look: they know the consequences. You know, consequences will be very powerful, maybe more powerful than the last time.”

Closer to Israel, Hamas is long past its agreed-upon deadline to disarm in Gaza. President Trump said the consequences will be “horrible” if they don’t give up their weapons.

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Judge Blocks Mom from Taking Daughter to Church Services

A Maine judge’s court order prevented a mother from taking her own daughter to Christmas church services.

Now the Maine Supreme Judicial Court is set to weigh in on

whether the lower court overstepped its limits when it barred Emily Bickford from reading the Bible to her 12-year-old daughter or taking her to church for over a year.

The state's high court heard oral arguments last month in the case of Bickford v. Bradeen – a battle between judicial authority and parental rights. Liberty Counsel, a faith-based non-profit legal group, is representing Bickford. She is challenging a December 2024 custody order that prohibits her from bringing her daughter, Ava, to Calvary Chapel in Portland, Maine.

According to Liberty Counsel, Ava's parents were never married, but Bickford maintained primary custody of Ava, while her father had visitation rights.

After attending Calvary Chapel for three years, young Ava decided to be baptized. She shared the exciting news with her father. However, the news reportedly enraged him.

Liberty Counsel contends that the father found "an ACLU judge" and "flew in a Marxist former sociology professor from California" to testify that Calvary Chapel or any Bible-believing churches, for that matter, are "cults" that are "psychologically detrimental."

The Portland District Court sided with Ava's father and found that Bickford is "a fit parent except for the fact that she is a Christian," explained Liberty Counsel in a press statement.

The judge ruled that Bickford could not take her daughter to any church unless the father approved of it. Liberty Counsel claims that the order is so broad that if enforced, it can make it so that the young girl cannot associate with any of her church friends or any member of Calvary Chapel Portland.

If she meets new friends and they decide to attend the church, she allegedly would have to cut ties with them.

Also, she reportedly cannot attend any Christmas, Easter or any other Christian event or celebration at any church, including any wedding, funeral, or even hospital visits with anyone associated with Calvary Chapel. Ava is not allowed to have contact with any religious organization nor read the Bible or religious literature.

“Ava wants to attend church and be with her Sunday school friends. But this custody order has completely cut her off from Calvary and her friends, and from growing her Christian faith. This has been devastatingly heart-wrenching for both Emily and Ava. This has been going on since December 2024,” wrote Mat Staver, the Founder and Chairman of the Liberty Counsel.

Bickford is pushing back against the court’s order, contending that the ruling violates her parental rights. Liberty Counsel is seeking a reversal of the order and restoration of Bickord’s First Amendment right to pass on her religious beliefs to her child.

“It affects not only our family, but the families of all Christian children,” Bickford told reporters after oral arguments.

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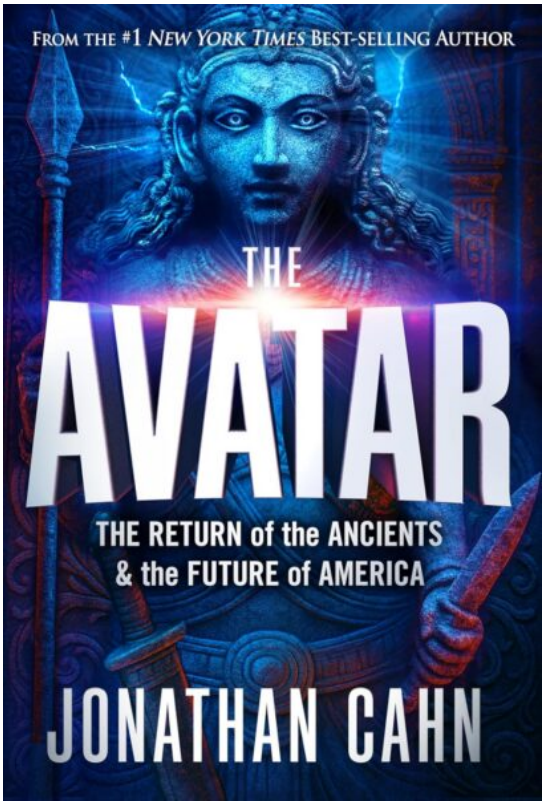
Prophecy In Action? Israeli Foreign Minister Calls on Jews Around the World to Immigrate to Israel

Against the backdrop of rising antisemitism, Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar is calling on Jews from a number of countries to make "Aliyah" (immigrate to Israel).

"We stand for the right of every Jew to live in security anywhere. But today, I am calling on Jews in the United Kingdom, Australia, France, Canada, and Belgium to immigrate to Israel," Sa'ar told participants at the "J-50" Forum.

Sa'ar founded the forum in May to create a direct, ongoing dialogue with Jewish community leaders worldwide. It provides them with briefings, public diplomacy tools, and a platform to address rising antisemitism.



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Sa'ar continued, "I want you to know that I will continue to make this call. We have learned lessons from our history. I believe it is my duty to do so and to enable Jews to raise their children in a non-hostile environment, in their true home: the Land of Israel."

Danielle Mor, vice president of Israel Allies and Global Philanthropy at the Jewish Agency, which processes those who make Aliyah, says there are eight million Jewish people in the world who are eligible to make Aliyah.

The Chairman of the Jewish Agency is hoping and planning for one million Jewish people to make Aliyah in the next five years, Mor told CBN News recently. And while that's the case, Aliyah usually takes some time.

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God and Scrooge: How Charles Dickens Pursued 'Real Christianity'

A holiday tradition for many families is to watch or read Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol. But who exactly was the man who brought us memorable characters like Scrooge and Tiny Tim?

The work of Dickens is still studied today, but few people know about his faith.

Scholar and author Dr. Gary Colledge has studied the legendary 19th-century English writer extensively. The Akron, Ohio, native even studied in the United Kingdom, earning a Ph.D. at the prestigious University of St. Andrews for his work on the faith of Dickens.

“That’s what’s going to be prevalent in anything we read by Dickens – that idea, that ‘real Christianity,’ and Dickens uses that term ‘real Christianity’ a number of times in letters and in his writing,” Colledge told CBN News. “‘Real Christianity’ is being like Jesus.”

Lessons from Scrooge

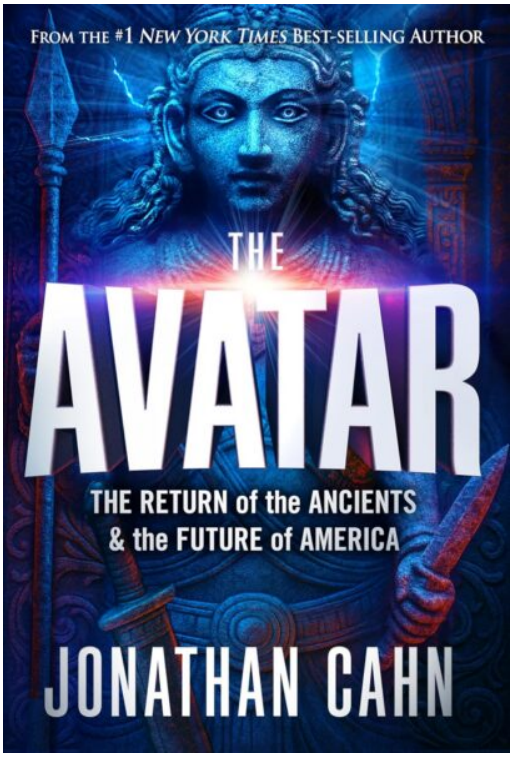
During his research, Colledge discovered that Dickens was a Christian, and his faith in Jesus Christ surfaces throughout his works in the themes and characters.

Colledge read a letter from Dickens to one of his critics:

“‘All my strongest illustrations are derived from the New Testament. All my social abuses are shown as departures from its Spirit. All my good people are humble, charitable, faithful, forgiving, over and over again. I claim them in expressed words as disciples of the Founder of our religion.'”

For example, in A Christmas Carol, Colledge says Marley’s warning to Scrooge about what it means to truly live life reflects the importance of imitating Christ.

“The taking care of humanity, the thinking about my fellow man, doing unto others as I’d have them do unto me,” Colledge explained. “For Dickens, the Golden Rule was absolutely crucial.”



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Evidence of Dickens' Faith

Colledge believes the most definitive evidence for the Christian faith of Charles Dickens is a little-known work, written during the height of his career over a period of three years for his children. It's simply titled, The Life of Our Lord.

"Critics are right; it's not a fantastic piece of literature, but it shines a bright light on Dickens' faith because he is the sole editor of this thing," Colledge said.

Colledge calls The Life of Our Lord a Gospel Harmony, where the author interweaves the four Gospels into a single narrative. In this case, Dickens summarized the life of Christ for the next generation – his children.

"My dear children, I'm very anxious that you should know something about the history of Jesus Christ, for everybody ought to know about Him," Dickens wrote at the beginning of the work.

Gospel Harmonies were very important in the 19th century. A Christian family at that time would have had at least two books in their home – the Bible and a Gospel Harmony.

"The spiritual formation of his children is nothing that Dickens would leave to someone else," Colledge noted. "He just wouldn't have done that, so this would have been a very important tool in Dickens' family for religious instruction – instruction in Christian thinking."

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Hobby Lobby Holds Massive Giveaway Defending Biblical Christmas Story

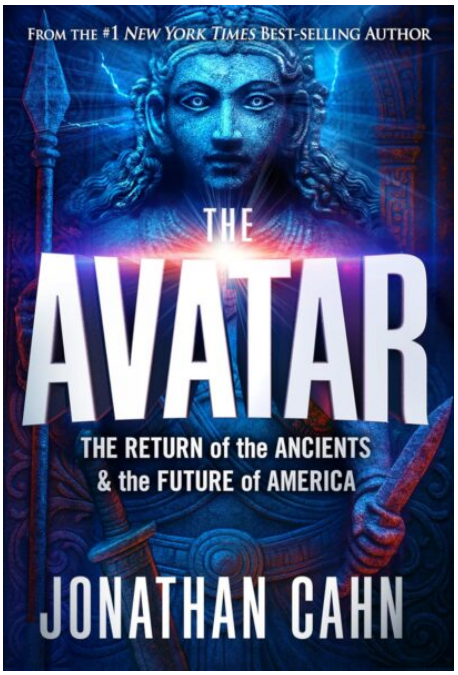
Hobby Lobby – a Christian-owned retailer – is giving away half a million copies of investigative journalist and author Lee Strobel's book defending the biblical story of Jesus' birth.

Strobel appeared on the latest episode of CBN's "Faith in Culture," where he announced the craft store was giving away 500,000 copies of "The Case for Christmas," a gesture he described as "wonderful."

Strobel's book – and Hobby Lobby's decision to give thousands of copies away – comes at a time when Americans are more open to spiritual themes.

According to data from Lifeway Research, while fewer than 50% of Americans attend religious services during the Christmas season, more than half (56%) have said it is likely they would go to church during the holidays if someone they knew invited them, including 40% of the religiously unaffiliated.

“I think that is such a powerful statistic,” said Strobel, referencing Colossians 4:5-6, in which the Apostle Paul wrote, “Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone” (NIV).



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He continued, “Here we have the Christmas season – this is an opportunity for us to seize. … Invite them to Christmas Eve services at your church. Yeah, it’s a little uncomfortable to do sometimes, but take a spiritual risk and invite them. Don’t just say, ‘Hey, why don’t you come?’ Offer to pick them up and take them. … Then you’re pretty much 100% assured they’re gonna show up.”

The author, who came to faith in Jesus years ago as a journalist for the Chicago Tribune when he set out on an

ultimately failed endeavor to disprove the Gospel, encouraged believers to boldly share their faith.

He referenced a conversation he had with the late evangelist Luis Palau at the end of his life. Palau told Strobel, “Lee, when you get to the end of your life and all is said and done, you’ll never regret being courageous for Christ.”

“Let’s not leave anybody behind this Christmas,” Strobel said. “Let’s share the Gospel far and wide, let’s invite people recklessly to come to church with us and you’ll be surprised at how many people – as that statistic indicated – will say, ‘Yes.’”

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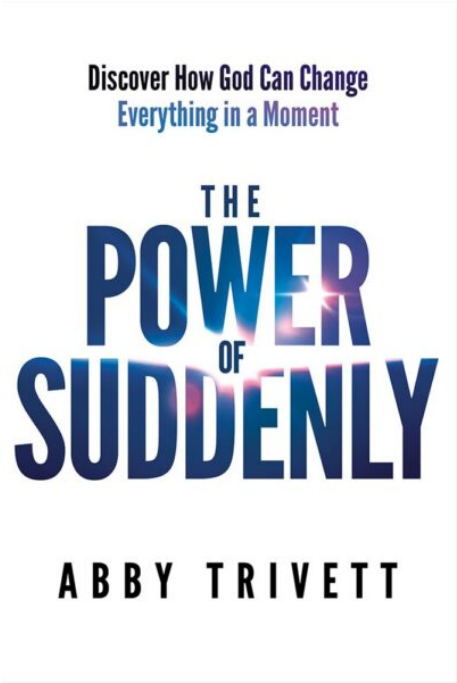
Ten Commandments Monument Restored at State Capitol

A Ten Commandments monument donated to Kentucky decades ago has been restored as a permanent fixture at the state Capitol grounds, First Liberty, a faith-based non-profit legal group reports.

The return of the granite monument to the Monument Park in Frankfort, Kentucky, comes after the passage of House Joint Resolution 15 (HJR-15) earlier this year, which directed the monument’s return to public display.

The Fraternal Order of Eagles Aerie 3423 donated the monument

to the Commonwealth in 1971, but it was moved to a storage unit in the 1980s due to surrounding construction.



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Its return was previously blocked by a court order based on the now-defunct "Lemon test," Liberty Counsel explained in a press statement. Courts previously used the Lemon test as a way to determine if laws or practices violated the First Amendment clause that protects religious freedom while also prohibiting the government from establishing religion.

First Liberty represented the Fraternal Order of Eagles in the legal battle to get the monument restored. According to the legal group, the U.S. Supreme Court first rejected the Lemon test in 2019 and later in 2022 "abrogated Lemon entirely and mandated that the Establishment Clause be understood and applied by original meaning, history, and tradition."

"We congratulate the people of Kentucky for restoring a part of their history," said Roger Byron, Senior Counsel for First Liberty Institute. "There is a long tradition of public monuments like this one that recognize the unique and important role the Ten Commandments have played in state and

national history. The people of Kentucky can now enjoy their monument whenever they visit their Capitol."

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Trump Addresses the Nation With Surprise Announcement for US Military

During a rare, primetime White House address to the American public on Wednesday, President Trump announced the distribution of bonus checks to military members to help ease financial pressures during the Christmas season. The checks, in the amount of $1,776, to correspond to the year 1776 when the United States was founded, "are already on the way," to 1.4 million service personnel.

The announcement was one of several economic issues the president addressed during the brief, 18-minute speech, which began with him saying, "Good evening, America. 11 months ago, I inherited a mess, and I'm fixing it."

In a speech defending his economic policies, the president said the prices of everyday items like cars, gas, and food are

lower now than when he took office. He also said Americans will have even more spending money in 2026.

“Next year you will see the largest tax cuts in American history that were really accomplished through our great, big beautiful bill,” he said. “That includes no tax on tips, no tax on overtime, and no tax on Social Security for our great seniors. Under these cuts, many Americans will be saving between $11,000 and $20,000 a year, and next spring is expected to be the largest tax refund season of all time.”

The administration’s focus on the economy comes as a new Quinnipiac poll shows 65% of voters rate the state of the economy as “poor” or “not so good,” with 50% saying Trump’s policies are making things worse. More than 90 percent of voters say the cost of living is a “very serious” or “somewhat serious” problem.

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Trump Orders Venezuela Blockade, White House Battles Blowback from Chief of Staff’s Tell-All

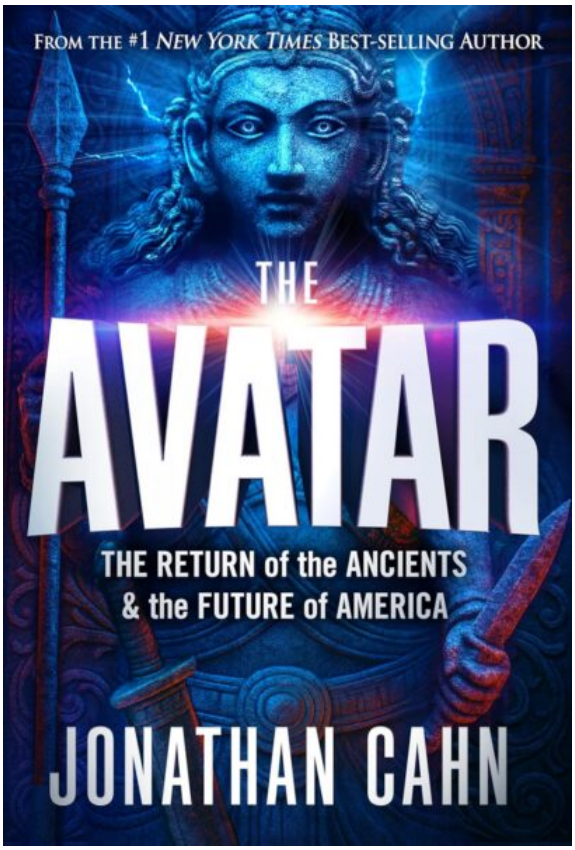
President Trump is declaring the Maduro Regime a foreign terrorist organization, ordering a blockade of all sanctioned

oil tankers.

More than a dozen sanctioned tankers full of oil are currently in Venezuelan waters. The nation is surrounded by a U.S. armada that President Trump said, “Will only get bigger.” Observers say the blockade could cripple Venezuela’s economy.

In a statement, Venezuela’s government is calling it “a reckless and serious threat.” Dictator Nicolas Maduro is calling for peace, but pledged to defend his country.

The latest moves come after the U.S. seized a Venezuelan tanker suspected of illicitly shipping oil to Iran last week. Up until now, the administration has mostly targeted drug-smuggling boats in the region.



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The military posturing comes as the White House defends Chief of Staff Susie Wiles for her candid comments about Venezuela, the Trump administration, and even the handling of the Epstein files. In an interview with Vanity Fair, Wiles said the

President “wants to keep on blowing boats up until Maduro cries uncle.”

Her interview with comments about the president and other top aides is unusual for such a high-placed official whose role is typically behind the scenes. Other candid remarks by Wiles include comparing the President’s personality to that of an alcoholic, saying he believes “that there’s nothing he can’t do. Nothing, zero, nothing.”

Some of her strongest criticism is aimed at Attorney General Pam Bondi, saying she “totally whiffed” demands to release the Epstein files. She also criticized Elon Musk’s dismantling of USAID and described Vice President J.D. Vance as a long-held conspiracy theorist. Wiles and the White House have rejected the article’s framing.

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