

# Flesh-Eating Bacteria and Bubonic Plague Resurface in US, Echoing Bible Warnings

From new plagues to pestilences, outbreaks of strange and deadly diseases have long been seen as part of the signs Jesus warned would appear before His return. A rise in flesh-eating bacteria along the Gulf Coast and the reemergence of pneumonic plague in Arizona are the latest reminders that even in an age of modern medicine, the world remains vulnerable to ancient scourges described to us in the Bible.

As reported by Israel365 News, “a recent surge in deadly infections, including flesh-eating bacteria along the Gulf Coast and a rare case of pneumonic plague in Arizona, has drawn eerie comparisons to the biblical plagues of Egypt and prophetic descriptions of the end-of-days War of Gog and Magog.”

While Jewish scholars have noted parallels to Zechariah, we as Christians can also point to Jesus’ words in Matthew 24:7 that “there will be famines and pestilences, and earthquakes in various places” as signs of the approaching end of the age.

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Public health officials have confirmed a sharp rise in cases of *Vibrio vulnificus*, a dangerous strain of bacteria commonly found in warm saltwater and brackish environments. “So far in 2025, at least eight people have died and 22 others have been infected by the bacteria, which thrives in warm coastal waters,” the report said.

The Louisiana Department of Health noted that 17 cases required hospitalization, with four deaths, more than double

the state's annual average for the past decade. Florida reported 13 cases and four deaths as of late July.



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The Cleveland Clinic warns that infections can progress quickly and cause "blistering skin lesions, fever, sepsis, internal bleeding, organ failure, and in some cases, necrotizing fasciitis, a severe infection that kills flesh around an open wound." Health officials urge beachgoers to take precautions, such as avoiding raw shellfish, not entering the water with open wounds and using protective footwear.

Alongside the Gulf Coast outbreak, plague has also resurfaced in the American Southwest.

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"A person died from pneumonic plague in Arizona last week, the first death from the disease in this region in nearly two decades," according to the report. The bacterium, *Yersinia pestis*, was the cause of the Black Death in the Middle Ages, killing tens of millions. The World Health Organization now categorizes it as a re-emerging disease, with nearly 50,000 human cases worldwide in the past two decades.

We must use biblical discernment to see such events as reminders of the brokenness of creation since the fall of man in Genesis 3 and warnings of the times to come. Scripture speaks of pestilence as part of God's judgment, yet also as a call to repentance and faith in Jesus before the fullness of the Great Tribulation unfolds. Revelation describes devastating plagues that will strike the earth during the end times (Rev. 6:8; 16:2-21).

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While medical experts emphasize prevention and treatment, we must interpret these “wake-up calls” as opportunities to return to the hope of the gospel message. As pestilences reappear even in an age of advanced science, believers are reminded that Christ’s words remain true and that His return is drawing near.

***James Lasher is staff writer for Charisma Media.***

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## **‘Zombie’ Squirrels Spotted In the US: Are These Pestilences a Biblical Warning?**

Grotesque-looking gray squirrels covered in wart-like tumors have been spotted skulking through backyards across the United States, sparking alarm among residents and fascination among wildlife experts.

Photographs shared online show the animals with oozing sores and hairless patches on their heads and limbs, leading some to dub them “zombie squirrels.” Sightings have been reported in Maine and parts of Canada, with cases dating back to mid-2023 but surging again this summer, according to the Daily Mail.



Evelyns Wildlife Refuge

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“At first I thought it was eating something from my front

beds, but then I realized it was on its face,” one Reddit user posted July 31 after spotting a gray squirrel with a large tumor on its mouth.

Wildlife experts say the squirrels are most likely suffering from squirrel fibromatosis, a viral skin disease caused by leporipoxvirus. The virus spreads through direct contact with infected saliva or lesions and can resemble herpes transmission in humans.

The disease is often mistaken for squirrelpox, which is more common in the UK and often fatal to red squirrels. Fibromatosis, however, typically runs its course in four to eight weeks. In severe cases, the growths can spread internally and lead to death.



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Despite their frightening appearance, experts insist the squirrels are no danger to people, pets or birds.

“It’s like when you get a large concentration of people. If someone is sick and it’s something that spreads easily, others are going to catch it,” Shevenell Webb of Maine’s Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife told the Bangor Daily News. Webb said backyard bird feeders often act as transmission points because infected squirrels leave saliva or fluid behind on seeds.

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The unusual squirrel sightings come as Colorado officials warned of a separate outbreak, the so-called “bunny blight.” Cottontail rabbits have been spotted with black, tentacle-like growths sprouting from their heads, caused by the Shope

papilloma virus.

## **The Biblical Perspective**

While wildlife officials view these outbreaks as naturally occurring diseases, we as Christians can see them as reminders of a deeper spiritual truth. In the Gospels, Jesus warned that before His return there would be “pestilences” affecting the earth (Luke 21:11, Matt. 24:7). These warnings were not limited to human sickness but speak to a broken creation groaning under the curse of sin.

From the moment Adam and Eve fell in the Garden of Eden, the entire earth was subjected to corruption (Rom. 8:22). That curse has touched every part of creation, from humanity to the animal kingdom. Outbreaks like squirrel fibromatosis and rabbit papilloma remind us of that fallen state.

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Though unsettling, these events can point believers to the hope that one day Jesus will return and restore creation, wiping away disease and death forever (Rev. 21:4). Until then, they stand as warnings and signs, reminders that the world is not as it was meant to be and that the day of the Lord draws nearer.

**James Lasher** *is staff writer for Charisma Media.*

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## **Muslims in Gaza Describe**

# Life-Changing Dreams of Jesus

The headlines seem to be getting darker by the day, war rumors, strange earthquakes, pandemics and global deception. Many see these as isolated crises, but some believe they are connected threads in a prophetic tapestry the Bible laid out thousands of years ago. If the warnings are real, ignoring them could be the most dangerous decision a person ever makes.

Pastor Tom Hughes, speaking on his Tom Hughes Report, compared the devastating July 4, 2025, Texas flood to a much greater and eternal storm he says is rapidly approaching. "It's not just life or death, but eternal life or death," Hughes warned. "People need to know about it, and people who do know need to warn others." Hughes believes the Bible lays out clear signs of the end times, and that they are converging in our lifetime.

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## 1. Pestilences

Hughes pointed to pandemics as one of the clearest warnings Jesus gave about the last days. He cited COVID-19 as a prophetic marker not only because of its spread but because of "the protocols surrounding it from so-called officials" that reshaped thinking and trained people to "trust whatever the government or science tells them."

"Jesus said to watch for pestilences, and COVID was a major prophetic event for a few different reasons," Hughes said (Matt. 24:7; Luke 21:11)

## 2. Earthquakes in Diverse Places

While earthquakes have occurred throughout history, Hughes

noted a marked change in recent decades, with strong quakes striking unexpected locations like Texas and Oklahoma, areas known for tornadoes, not seismic activity. He challenged skeptics who attribute these to fracking, asking how Jesus could have predicted them 2,000 years ago.

“Earthquakes have gotten stronger since the birth of modern Israel in 1948,” Hughes said (Matt. 24:7)



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### **3. Wars and Rumors of Wars**

Wars have always been part of human history, but Hughes stressed that today's rumors are unique in scale and reach. He cited Russian President Vladimir Putin's nuclear threats as an example of a modern "rumor of war" amplified by mass and social media.

“Any of them can send a message to a few friends while a million strangers listen in. No generation spread rumors like this one,” Hughes said (Matt. 24:6).

### **4. Widespread Deception**

Modern technology has made it possible for falsehoods to sweep the globe almost instantly. Hughes used the example of the false statistic claiming Americans use 500 million plastic straws per day, a figure originating from a 9-year-old's guess that became accepted as fact worldwide.

“We live in an era when a 9-year-old can deceive the world,” Hughes said (Matt. 24:4, 11).

## 5. The Rebirth of Israel as the Prophetic Linchpin

Hughes underscored that Israel's restoration as a nation in 1948 is the keystone for all other prophetic signs. Without it, he said, past catastrophes like the Black Plague could not have fulfilled end-times prophecy. Today, these signs are converging while Israel exists, making the moment unique in human history.

"Without the rebirth of Israel and the return of the Jews to their ancestral homeland, none of the other signs would have prophetic meaning," Hughes said (Ezek. 37:21-22; Isa. 66:8).

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Hughes leaves us with an urgent reminder that these signs are not meant to cause fear but to prompt readiness and hope in Christ. He warned that biblical illiteracy leaves people, and even churches, blind to what is unfolding. "The times should not overtake us as a thief," he said. "We have the light of God's word. We see and know the warning signs."

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The call, Hughes stressed, is for believers to be watchful, anchored in Scripture, and bold in sharing the gospel. In a world swirling with chaos and deception, knowing God's Word may be the difference between being swept away by the storm, or standing firm until the King returns.

**James Lasher is staff writer for Charisma Media.**

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# Could Sept. 23 Be a Turning Point in Biblical Prophecy?

## Conflicting Reports Emerge Over Red Heifer Ceremony in Israel

The rare biblical red heifer, long regarded as a prophetic sign connected to the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem, has become the center of controversy after two very different accounts surfaced about whether the long-awaited ritual has already taken place.

In recent weeks, statements from Adam King, a media personality claiming firsthand knowledge of the event, has clashed with information from Mondo Gonzales of Prophecy Watchers, who has spent years closely following the red heifer project.

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## Adam King's Claim: The Ritual Already Happened

During a recent appearance on the Timcast IRL podcast, fellow podcaster Adam King said that on July 1, 2025, a real red heifer named Tikva was sacrificed in Israel according to Jewish law.

Publicly, it was announced as a "practice run" using a disqualified animal, but King insisted that this was intentional misdirection to avoid political backlash and

international outrage. "They fooled everybody and they successfully performed the ritual about a month ago," he claimed.

King described the sacrifice as being carried out "specifically according to halakha" (Jewish law) and emphasized the rarity of such an event. "The last time that the red heifer was done was over 2,000 years ago," he said, noting that the first was performed by Moses, the second by Ezra and that throughout all of Jewish history, only nine have been sacrificed.

He further claimed to possess physical proof of the event: "I have with me some of the ashes right here, red heifer ashes... and also hyssop that is from the actual ritual."

According to King, these ashes, kept in a clay jar in keeping with biblical requirements, are being used to purify people from the "impurity of death," enabling them to ascend the Temple Mount in ritual purity. He asserted that miraculous healings have already occurred, citing a man with Alzheimer's who "started remembering everything" and even cases of "sight to the blind."

King also tied the red heifer ritual directly to messianic expectations, saying, "Now that it's been done, the Messiah can come" and build the Third Temple. He maintained that the Third Temple cannot be constructed without the red heifer ceremony taking place and linked this development to broader geopolitical events, claiming that Hamas and other hostile actors saw the ritual as a threat. According to him, "The Democrats are trying to stop the Messiah," and the Oct. 7 Hamas attack was partly motivated by an obsession with halting the red heifer project.

# Mondo Gonzales: It Wasn't the Final Ceremony

Mondo Gonzales, co-host of Prophecy Watchers, has been in regular contact with those directly involved in the red heifer project, including Boneh Israel member Byron Stinson. While acknowledging that a heifer was burned on July 1, he says the location, Samaria, prevents it from qualifying as the final, prophetic ceremony.

“The Bible is ambiguous, but the rabbinic oral tradition in the Mishnah is crystal clear,” Gonzales explained. “It has to be on the Mount of Olives, and from a vantage point where you can look down into the Temple area. This box cannot be unchecked.”

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Gonzales confirmed that Stinson has described the July 1 ritual as both a “real ceremony” and a “practice” in preparation for the Mount of Olives event. According to Gonzales, Stinson has told him there are still “two, maybe three” qualified heifers remaining, with additional candidates being bred in Israel and Texas.

He also pushed back on speculation that the actual prophetic ceremony could have been done secretly. “There’s no way this could be done in secret,” Gonzales said. “We’re talking about a gigantic bonfire in an area surrounded by Arabs. The police have to be there. The fire department has to be notified. You couldn’t hide it.”

From a Christian perspective, Gonzales stressed that Hebrews 9 and 13 make it clear that Jesus is the ultimate sacrifice, rendering any future animal sacrifices unnecessary for believers. “This coming temple is not going to be the

millennial one. We know that for sure,” he said, warning that while the Third Temple is prophetically significant, it will ultimately be defiled by the Antichrist before being replaced by Christ’s millennial temple.

## **The Need for Discernment**

While the debate over the red heifer continues, Scripture warns that deception will increase in the last days (Matt. 24:4, 2 Thess. 2:9–10). For that reason, it is paramount for Christians to remain grounded in biblical truth, exercising discernment through God’s Word and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

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We live in a time when prophetic events can stir intense excitement, and misinformation, spiritual clarity is essential to keep believers anchored in what God has revealed.

***James Lasher is staff writer for Charisma Media.***

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# **10 Signs of the End Times Are Unfolding Right Now**

The war between Israel and Hamas has not only ignited fierce battles on the ground but also sparked an information war, with narratives shifting to portray Israel as the aggressor and Hamas as the victim. Critics warn that this reversal of truth mirrors an ancient biblical warning about calling evil good and good evil.

Christian broadcaster Erick Stakelbeck addressed the issue during a recent episode of The Watchman newscast, describing the situation as a fulfillment of Isaiah 5:20. “Woe to those who call evil good and good evil,” he quoted. “Hello 2025. Darkness for light, light for darkness ... embracing the darkness and trying to cast out the light.”

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Since Oct. 7, 2023, Israel has been fighting what Stakelbeck calls “wars on seven fronts” against the Iranian “Ring of Fire” network, including Hezbollah and the Houthis. “What they’ve been able to pull off is just astounding,” he said. “I believe the God of Israel has gone ahead of the IDF in some of these engagements.”

He argued that the global backlash against Israel, especially in the West, is fueled by deliberate misinformation. “Tell me that this does not encapsulate what we’re seeing now with Israel and the propaganda war ... the relentless castigation of the world’s one and only Jewish state, the lies, the outright bold-faced lies,” Stakelbeck said. “We’re talking about the Western world ... where the pro-Palestinian, . pro-Hamas cause, has a firm grip.”



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One of the most troubling elements, Stakelbeck said, is the expectation for Israel to supply humanitarian aid to Gaza during wartime. “This is the first time in history that I know of ... that one of the combatants is apparently responsible for feeding and clothing its enemy,” he said. According to the United Nations, roughly 80% of aid shipments into Gaza are seized by Hamas.

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Stakelbeck said the narrative has been flipped, with Israel “bending over backwards” to deliver aid while Hamas withholds it for propaganda purposes. “Israel was the target. They didn’t start it. It was unprovoked. But now it’s been flipped,” he said. “Good, evil, evil, good.”

Framing the moment as both geopolitical and prophetic, Stakelbeck compared leaders like Donald Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu to “modern-day Churchills” for resisting globalist pressure. “Netanyahu is fiercely sovereign ... at the end of the day, he could do the easy wrong thing or the hard right thing,” he said.

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Calling it a “wheat and tares” moment for nations, Stakelbeck urged Christians to remain steadfast. “Yes, it’s Isaiah 5:20 times. No doubt,” he said. “But God is moving. And there are many like you ... so be encouraged. Stay in prayer, but know the signs and the times.”

*James Lasher is staff writer for Charisma Media.*

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**More Than 7,000 Christians Killed in Just 7 Months As Persecution Crisis Deepens**

# Thousands of Christians Killed in Nigeria as Persecution Intensifies

The persecution of Christians in Nigeria has reached a staggering scale in 2025, with thousands losing their lives for their faith. This violence, driven largely by Islamic extremists and radicalized militias, echoes the biblical warning that believers would face hatred and persecution for the name of Jesus (Matt. 10:22). For Christians worldwide, these reports are a call to pray for our brothers and sisters in Nigeria, asking God to strengthen them, give them hope and fill them with courage to stand firm in their faith.

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## Staggering Death and Abduction Rates

The Anambra-based International Society for Civil Liberties and Rule of Law (Intersociety) reports that “at least 7,087 Christians were massacred across Nigeria” from Jan. 1 to Aug. 10 of this year. In the same period, “no fewer than 7,800 others were violently seized and abducted for being Christians.”

These numbers translate to “an average of 30 Christian deaths per day and more than one per hour,” according to the report. The abduction rate is similarly horrifying: “an estimated 35 Christians are also calculated to have been abducted daily and roughly two others per hour, in the said past 220 days.”



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The violence is largely attributed to jihadist groups such as Boko Haram, Islamic State affiliates, and radicalized Fulani herders. Intersociety warns that Nigeria is a “safe haven” for at least 22 Islamic terror groups intent on wiping out

Christians and indigenous ethnic identities, including the ancient Igbo heritage.

## **Government Inaction and Growing Threat**

Emeka Umeagbalasi, Intersociety's chair, has tracked religious violence in Nigeria since 2010 and says the trend is worsening. "We have been following the patterns and trends, and the situation is getting worse," he told The Christian Post. He accuses the Nigerian government of failing to apprehend perpetrators, even arresting Christian victims who attempt to defend themselves, rather than the attackers.

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Since 2009, the organization estimates that "185,009 defenseless Nigerians" have been killed, 125,009 of them Christians. During that time, 19,100 churches have been destroyed, over 1,100 Christian communities "sacked," and 600 Christian clerics abducted.

## **A Biblical Response to Persecution**

Scripture reminds believers that persecution is not new; Jesus told His followers that those who follow Him would face trials and suffering (John 15:18–20). Yet the Bible also promises that those who endure will receive the crown of life (James 1:12). As Nigerian Christians endure unimaginable hardships, the global Church is called to intercede for them, praying for their protection, steadfastness, and for their persecutors to come to faith in Christ.

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Umeagbalasi has urged the United States and Western nations to take stronger action, including reinstating Nigeria on the

U.S. “Countries of Particular Concern” list, which carries the possibility of sanctions. Nigeria was removed from that list during the Biden administration’s first year, a move that drew criticism from the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom.

## **Global Advocacy**

Other advocacy groups are sounding the alarm. Open Doors US, which tracks global Christian persecution, placed Nigeria in the seventh spot on its 2025 World Watch List, underscoring the urgent need for action and prayer.

**James Lasher** *is staff writer for Charisma Media.*