

Pastor Arrested in Latest Communist Crackdown on Christians

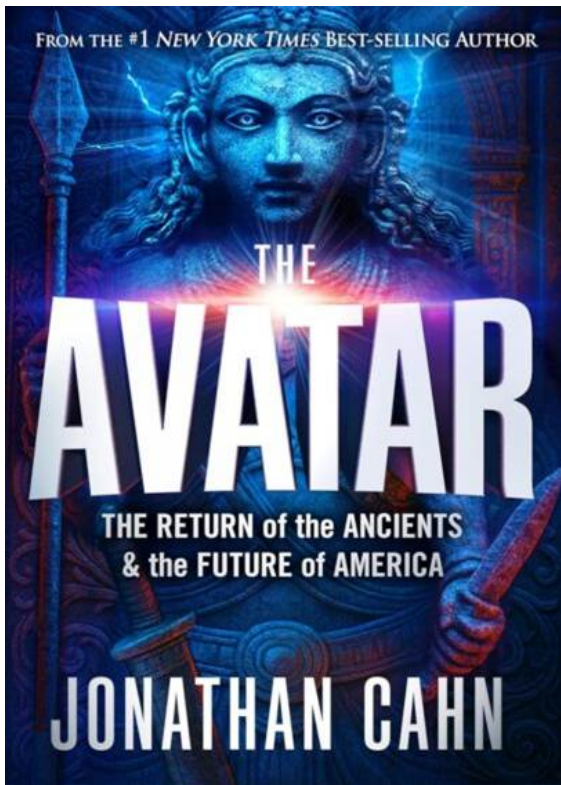
Chinese authorities have formally arrested Protestant pastor Huang Yizi on charges of “illegal business operations,” part of the [Chinese Communist Party’s](#) intensifying crackdown on unregistered Christian activity.

“Pastor Huang Yizi was informed of his formal arrest this week, more than a month after he and four others were taken into custody by Pingyang Public Security officials on June 26,” U.K.-based Christian Solidarity Worldwide reported. The believers, from Zhejiang Province, were detained the following day.

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As reported by The Christian Post, “Two of the five were released on bail last Friday, while the remaining three, including Huang, remain in custody. The charges against the other detainees have not been made public. A sixth church member was detained on July 17 and remains in custody.”

Under China’s Criminal Procedure Law, authorities must request a formal arrest within 30 days. Huang’s representative said the arrest was rushed through suspiciously, raising “concerns about the depth of the review and the lack of official documentation.”



[**Pre-order Jonathan Cahn's Newest Book, "The Avatar" on Amazon.com!**](#)

[**This is not Huang's first imprisonment.**](#) He previously served a year in prison in 2014 for protesting the demolition of church crosses in Wenzhou and was later held again on charges of "endangering national security."

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The Chinese Human Rights Lawyers Group condemned the regime's use of vague accusations like "illegal business operations" to suppress pastors, stressing that sharing sermons is a constitutionally protected expression of faith.

Pastor Huang's arrest highlights the growing cost of following Christ in China, where Christians face intimidation, prison and the confiscation of religious materials.

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We must continue to pray for our Chinese brothers and sisters in Christ suffering under the heavy hand of communism. Pray that they are strengthened to endure persecution, and that their oppressors encounter the radical, transforming power of Jesus Christ.

James Lasher *is staff writer for Charisma Media.*

John Bevere Exposes the Silent Threat Facing the Modern Church

In today's culture, tolerance is often praised as a virtue. But what happens when tolerance crosses the line into allowing compromise in the church? Scripture warns that the acceptance of false teaching and worldly practices can subtly erode intimacy with God. The danger is not always obvious, it creeps in quietly, cloaked in the language of grace, until believers find themselves far from the holiness Christ calls them to.

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[Author and Bible teacher John Bevere](#) explored this in a recent discussion on the message to the church of Pergamum in Revelation. Quoting directly from Jesus' words, Bevere highlighted, "But I have a few complaints against you. Jesus said, you tolerate. Remember the word tolerate. You tolerate some among you whose teaching is like that of Balaam... He taught them to sin by eating food offered to idols and committing sexual sin."

Bevere emphasized that the heart of the problem wasn't simply the sin itself but the church's willingness to put up with it. "Repent of your sin. What sin? The sin of tolerance. This is interesting. It's not the sin of teaching them actually teaching idolatry and sexual immorality. No, he said you are tolerating those who teach this."



[**Pre-order James Lasher's Newest Book, "The Revelation of Jesus" on Amazon.com!**](#)

For Bevere, this cuts to the very core of spiritual compromise. He explained why Jesus introduces Himself in Revelation as the one with the sharp two-edged sword: "I personally believe this is because what he's about to do with this church is cut something out that is very deadly, and that's called tolerance." Tolerance of false teaching, he warns, doesn't just allow sin to flourish, it robs believers of what they most desire: closeness with God. "The very thing that most people cry out for they give up, and that is intimacy with God."

Bevere also connected this with [the destructive message of the Nicolaitans](#) in the early church, noting how their distorted view of grace mirrors modern trends. "We have developed a grace message, which is exactly what the Nicolaitans did. They developed this grace message that permits a very ungodly, worldly, fleshly lifestyle." This so-called grace may sound appealing, but it quietly undermines the very relationship with Christ it claims to uphold.

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It should be clear to all Christians that silence and compromise are not pleasing to God. As Bevere said, "Remaining silent on these very critical matters is not pleasing." The

call of Christ is not to tolerate teaching that leads people into sin, but to confront it, with both boldness and compassion, so that believers can walk in purity and true fellowship with God.

Bevere's reminder is firm but necessary. It challenges us to examine our lives and our churches: What are we tolerating that Christ would confront? The words of Revelation are timeless. The call is not to bend with culture but to stand firm in truth. As Bevere makes clear, our response must be decisive: "We refuse to compromise, we don't tolerate, we don't tolerate in our own life, we don't teach it, we don't tolerate the teaching of it, but we expose it."

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Now is the time for believers to stand guard against the sin of tolerance and pursue the intimacy with God that only comes through holy living, obedience and uncompromising devotion.

James Lasher is staff writer for Charisma Media.

Israeli Hostage Forced to Dig His Own Grave in Chilling Hamas Propaganda Video

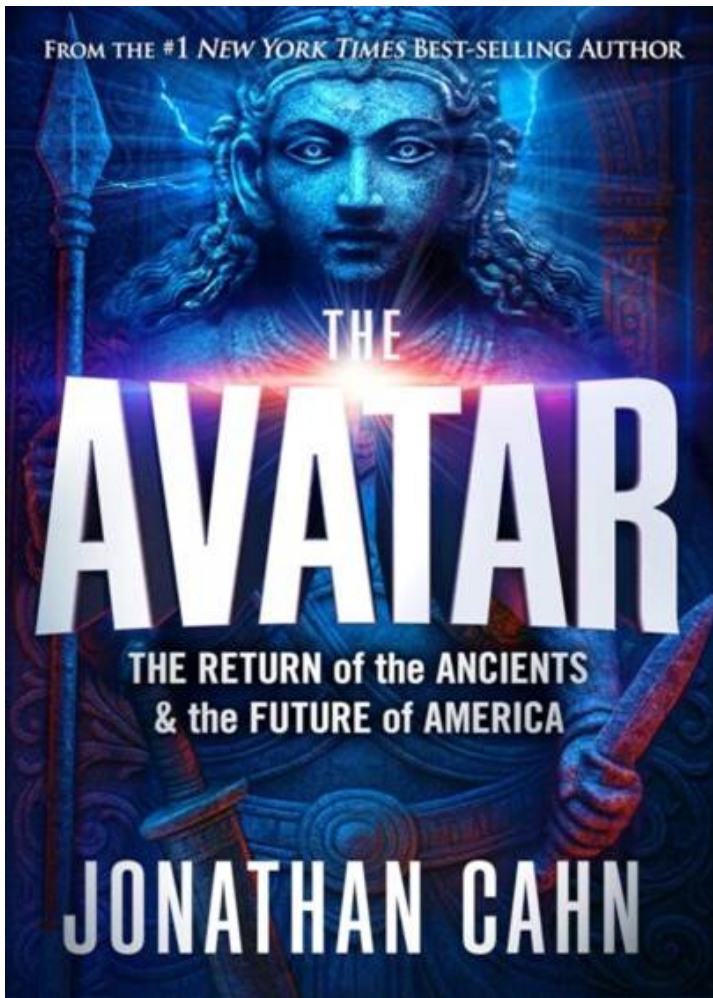
Hamas released a disturbing propaganda video showing [emaciated Israeli hostage](#) Evyatar David, 24, being forced to dig his own grave, sparking outrage in Israel and across the world. The horrifying footage highlighted once again the terror group's brutality and its refusal to release the remaining hostages.

In the nearly five-minute video, David is seen trapped inside a narrow tunnel, marking days on a calendar before digging into the dirt with his bare hands. "I haven't eaten for a few days in a row," he says, later being handed a single can of beans. "This can is for two days... This whole can is for two days so that I don't die. This is the grave I think I'm going to be buried in. Time is running out."

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As reported by the New York Post, David's family gave permission for the release of the video, saying in a statement: "We are forced to witness our beloved son and brother, Evyatar David, deliberately and cynically starved in Hamas's tunnels in Gaza, a living skeleton, buried alive. The deliberate starvation of our son as part of a propaganda campaign is one of the most horrifying acts the world has seen."

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu [condemned Hamas's grotesque tactics](#), declaring, "Hamas terrorists deliberately starve our hostages, documenting them in a cynical, humiliating, and malicious manner." Holocaust survivor Naftali Fürst said the images took her back to the days of Auschwitz and Buchenwald: "I know hunger up close. In the camps, we were given rations of bread and watery soup. I remember the humiliation, the complete stripping of human dignity."



[*Pre-order Jonathan Cahn's Newest Book, "The Avatar" on Amazon.com!*](#)

U.S. lawmakers also denounced the terror group. "The chilling video of Hamas hostage Evyatar David is a grotesque reminder of why America must stand with Israel and demand every hostage's release," Rep. Don Bacon (R-Neb.) said, adding, "If Hamas released the tortured hostages, this war would end." Sen. Rick Scott (R-Fla.) called the footage "gut-wrenching," stressing that "we cannot stop until every hostage is home and Hamas is destroyed."

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Even across party lines, the condemnation was strong. Sen. John Fetterman (D-Pa.) said he could not "begin to imagine the horror of this video" for the David family and demanded Hamas

“send these poor souls home, disarm, and end this hell on earth in Gaza.” Rep. Mike Lawler (R-N.Y.) called the video “vile” and laid responsibility for the humanitarian crisis solely on Hamas: “The only entity for the devastation that has been inflicted upon innocent Israelis and Palestinians is Hamas. Period. Full stop.”

The atrocity [showcases the cruelty of Hamas](#), which continues to hold at least 20 living hostages and 30 dead, according to Israeli officials. Despite international pressure, Hamas has shown no willingness to release captives or surrender, instead using human suffering as a weapon to prolong the conflict.

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The families of the hostages, and the hostages themselves, still desperately need the prayers of the world. Let us pray for God’s protection over those still held in captivity, for strength and comfort for their families and for the swift defeat of Hamas so that peace and freedom can return to Israel.

James Lasher is staff writer for Charisma Media.

A Christian Guide to the 7 Deadly Sins

The seven deadly sins have long been a way of describing patterns of brokenness that turn hearts away from God. While each sin takes a different form, whether through pride, anger or greed, they all point to the same root problem: [humanity’s](#)

[need for redemption](#) through Jesus Christ.

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In a recent video, Joe Kirby of Off the Kirb Ministries used a creative approach to explain these sins, pairing them with emojis to help modern audiences visualize them. But more importantly, he reminded viewers that every one of these sins, though destructive, can be defeated by Christ's power on the cross.

Look For Joe Kirby's Newest Book "No Time Like the End Times" Coming Out Spring of 2026!

Here's a closer look at each of the seven deadly sins, with Kirby's insights included:

1. Pride

- Pride is often considered the root of all sin because it exalts self above God and others. It convinces people that they are good enough on their own and blinds them to their need for mercy. Scripture shows pride was the sin that caused Lucifer's fall and continues to keep many from seeking Christ.
- "The big one. The sin that says, 'I am the main character and everyone else is just background extras.' It's often called the queen of sins because it's where all the others sprout from. It's the sin that got Lucifer kicked out of heaven. And it's the sin that very often stops people from coming to Jesus because they believe that they are already good people."

2. Greed

- Greed is an insatiable craving for more, whether

money, possessions or power. It promises satisfaction but never delivers, leading to a cycle of discontentment and spiritual emptiness.

- “The one that whispers, ‘Just a little more and then I’ll be happy.’ But spoiler alert, you won’t. Do me a favor. Do not drink from that cup. I promise you, there is not enough money and power on earth for you to be satisfied.”

3. Envy

- Envy is resentment toward others for what they have, coupled with dissatisfaction over one’s own blessings. It breeds bitterness, steals joy and prevents gratitude for the gifts God has already given.
- “Jealousy turns you bitter real quick and it makes it nearly impossible to see the current blessings that God has placed in your life. Because as President Theodore Roosevelt once said, ‘Comparison is the thief of joy.’”

4. Lust

- Lust is a distorted desire that seeks pleasure outside God’s design for love, marriage, and purity. It promises thrill but leaves emptiness, growing strongest when hidden in secrecy.
- “It’s the one that promises thrill but leaves you empty. It’s the sin that never satisfies and the one that no one ever likes to talk about. But we must bring this one to light because out of all of these deadly sins, this is the one that grows in the dark.”

5. Gluttony

- While often thought of as overeating, gluttony extends to overindulgence in anything—whether

food, entertainment, or even social media. It places appetites above discipline and allows consumption to rule life.

- “We often think of overeating, but it’s more than that. It’s anything that we consume in excess, even Netflix or scrolling on videos all day long. The Bible does warn about those whose god is their belly and whose appetite rules their lives.”

6. Wrath (Anger)

- Not all anger is wrong, even Jesus displayed righteous anger at injustice. But wrath refers to uncontrolled rage that lashes out over minor offenses, causing harm to self and others.
- “You probably know that not all anger is wrong. For instance, being angry at an injustice is actually a good thing. And Jesus Himself showed righteous anger when He drove the money changers out of the holy temple. So, what type of anger are we talking about? We’re describing an anger which is out of control, like losing your temper over minor things.”

7. Sloth

- Sloth goes beyond laziness, it’s neglecting to do the good and necessary things God calls us to. It wastes time, avoids responsibility, and robs a person of living out their God-given purpose.
- “Sloth. This isn’t just laziness, though. It’s ignoring the good things that we should be doing. Like when you procrastinate for three hours instead of doing your homework or your chores. We sometimes go easy on this sin and even find it funny. But if you think it’s a joke, just read the book of Proverbs because God’s word calls this person a slugard and shows us that the slothful

person effectively achieves nothing with their life.”

The Struggle and the Hope

Kirby reminded his viewers that [sin grows like a seed](#) into a destructive tree, but Jesus has the power to cut it down. “Your heart is like a garden. And there are seeds that were planted... which eventually one day would grow into a monstrous tree. But the Lord Jesus Christ took his strong axe and he did chop it down for me.”

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The good news is that the cross of Christ paid for every sin: past, present and future. “It’s not just seven of the deadly sins that were paid for at Calvary, but thousands and thousands, millions and billions. Every sin that was ever committed was nailed to that cross with Jesus Christ. And he paid the price for those sins with his very blood.”

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For those who feel burdened by guilt, Kirby emphasized the new identity believers receive through Christ: “When God looks at us, he doesn’t see our daily failures anymore. He sees us as pure as snow because Christ’s blood has washed us clean and has made us righteous in God’s eyes.”

James Lasher *is staff writer for Charisma Media.*

How Genesis and Revelation Connect: the Beginning and the End

When it comes to the Bible, some wonder which book carries more weight, Genesis, the first book of beginnings, or Revelation, the last book of prophecy and Christ's return. Both are filled with vital truths, yet too often believers find themselves drawn to one while overlooking the other. Questions about creation, time, prophecy and eternity swirl in people's minds, but the deeper issue may be how we approach Scripture as a whole.

Christian apologist Ken Ham recently addressed this question and offered an important reminder about the foundation of our faith. "Actually, every book of the Bible is important because it's all God's Word," he said.

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Still, he noted that while "a lot of people...concentrate on the book of Revelation" and various end-time views, [the opening chapters of Genesis](#) are often neglected, even though they are essential for a right understanding of the rest of Scripture.

Ham pointed to the parable Jesus told about a nobleman who entrusted resources to his servants, saying, "I'm going to go away and then I'm going to come back. While I'm away, you do business." According to Ham, this illustrates how Christians should live as they wait for Christ's return: "It's a reminder for each of us that God has entrusted talents to us, gifts to us, and we're to use the gifts he's entrusted to us until the King returns."



[**Pre-order James Lasher's Newest Book, "The Revelation of Jesus" on Amazon.com!**](#)

Part of that faithfulness, he explained, comes through rightly understanding the foundation of the Bible. "[Genesis 1-11 is the foundation for everything.](#) For the rest of the Bible, for all of our doctrine, for our worldview, it's the foundation for everything," Ham said. By contrast, "Revelation is not the foundation for the rest of the Bible. Genesis is. Revelation is not the foundation for all doctrine. Genesis 1-11 is. Revelation is not the foundation for the gospel. Genesis 1-11 is."

Ham warned that dismissing or compromising on Genesis has led to devastating consequences in the church and culture. "There's been a catastrophic generational loss because they've been told Genesis 1-11, you don't have to take it literally. It doesn't matter. You can believe in evolution, millions of years. Well, why should we believe the rest of the Bible?" he said. Once the foundation is removed, "many of these people today don't understand what they should believe in regard to marriage or gender or anything else."

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At the same time, Ham is careful to affirm that Revelation is also a vital part of God's Word. "Genesis or Revelation, well, both are the Word of God. Both are vitally important, but they have different functions. And Genesis is actually the foundational book of the Bible."

The discussion ultimately points to a balanced approach. It is good to study specific books of the Bible, whether Genesis, Revelation or any other, but not at the expense of the rest. Each book is divinely placed, interconnected and serves a

distinct purpose.

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As Ham explains, beginning with Genesis lays the foundation for understanding the entire Word of God. But Revelation, along with every other book, gives us truths God intended for us to know. Every word serves a purpose, and together they provide the complete picture of God's plan for humanity.

James Lasher is staff writer for Charisma Media.

Have You Committed the Unpardonable Sin? The Truth from Scripture

Few topics in Scripture stir up more fear and confusion than the question of the ["unpardonable sin."](#) Many people wrestle with nagging thoughts like, "Did I mess up too badly for God to forgive me?" or "Have I committed the unforgivable sin that Jesus spoke about?" These questions can weigh heavy on the heart, leaving believers trapped in shame and fear. But Scripture offers clarity, and hope, on what Jesus really meant when He spoke about blaspheming the Holy Spirit.

Pastor Kap Chatfield recently addressed this subject in a video teaching, reminding viewers that the context of Jesus' warning in Mark 3 was directed at the Pharisees who had witnessed His miracles and still declared that He was working by Satan's power.

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“It wasn’t just bad doctrine,” Chatfield explained. “This was actually willful, hard-hearted rejection of the Holy Spirit’s testimony about Jesus. It was witnessing a miracle, seeing the hand of God at work and saying, ‘That’s the devil.’”

Chatfield encouraged his audience not to live in constant fear that [they’ve accidentally crossed the line.](#) In fact, he said the very opposite is true: “If you’re worried, that’s actually proof that you haven’t done it. The unforgivable sin is not an accident. It’s not something that you slip into unknowingly. It’s repeated, willful, deliberate rebellion. So if you’re afraid that you’ve gone too far, that fear is proof that your heart is still soft. And that’s a gift from the Holy Spirit.”



[Pre-order Kap Chatfield’s Newest Book, “The Power to Prosper” on Amazon.com!](#)

The difference, he explained, is between conviction and condemnation. “Conviction is from God. And conviction draws

you closer. Condemnation on the other hand pushes us away from God. Condemnation is from the enemy. And it drives you and me away.” God’s character, Chatfield reminded, is one of mercy and forgiveness. Pointing to Psalm 86:5, he said, “For you, Lord, are good and ready to forgive and abundant in mercy to all those who call upon you.”

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To illustrate this, Chatfield reflected on the parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15. “The father wasn’t waiting with crossed arms. He was running towards his son. That’s how God responds to you when you return to him.” He also shared Jesus’ own words from John 6:37: “The one who comes to me, I will by no means cast out.”

Chatfield closed with an encouraging reminder that [God’s grace outweighs every failure.](#) “Grace is still greater. You might be watching this thinking, ‘I don’t know if I can be forgiven.’ But if you’re reaching for Jesus, he’s already running towards you. Remember that fear that you had at the beginning? Let it turn into reverence. And let reverence lead you into relationship, full of conviction, but 100% without condemnation.”

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The truth is simple yet powerful, if your heart longs for God, He has not turned His back on you. His forgiveness is abundant, His mercy is ready and His arms are always open.

James Lasher is staff writer for Charisma Media.

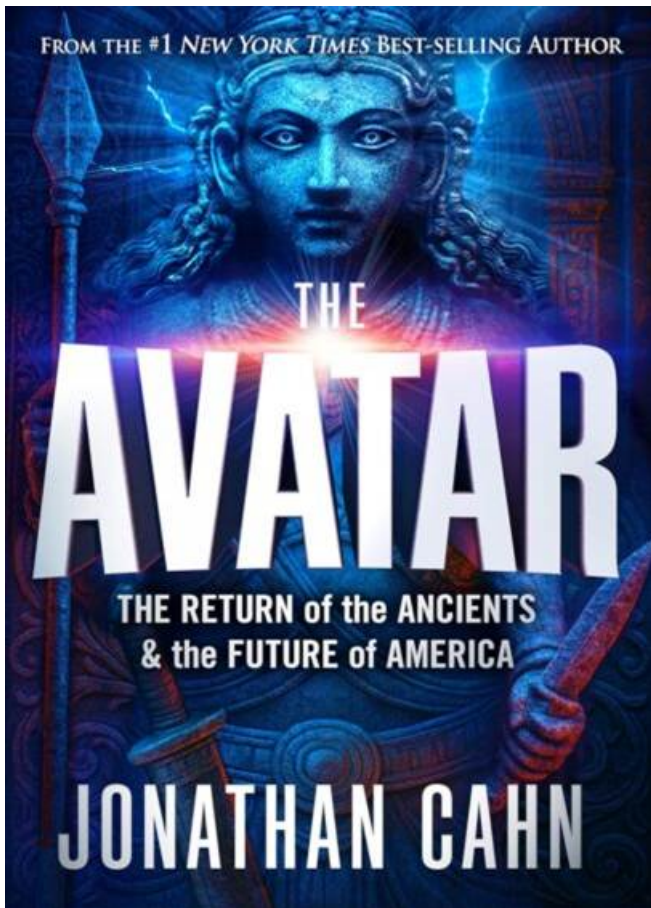
August Celestial Events Include New Moon and Planets Lining up in Night Sky

The month of August is filled with remarkable celestial events that Pastor Troy Brewer highlights in his latest edition of Heavenly Happenings.

On August 9, skywatchers can look forward to the big full moon. [Brewer explained](#), “Remember the big full moon nights are not the night that you want to go out to see all the stars. It’s the night that you want to go out to see the full moon. And that’s going to happen on August 9th.”

[Breaking News](#). [Spirit-Filled Stories](#). *Subscribe to Charisma on YouTube now!*

Later in the month, on August 23, the new moon will arrive, signaling what Brewer calls the true beginning of the lunar cycle. He noted, “A lot of folks don’t know what a new moon is. It’s actually the new beginning of the solar cycle and it is not when the moon is full. It’s actually when you can’t see it at all.” He went on to connect this with the Hebrew calendar: “For us a day starts whenever the sun comes up. For them it’s exactly opposite. The sun going down is when the day begins. And by the way, that was God’s design.”



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Brewer drew spiritual encouragement from this biblical pattern: "God likes to start off with building momentum for hope. He always wants to make sure that the worst thing is never the last thing. I just love that about King Jesus."

Another highlight this month is the close appearance of Venus and Jupiter in the night sky. Brewer described, "On this date, you can go outside and what you can actually see is you can see Jupiter, you can see Venus together and they're right there by each other and they're just beautiful. So, you will be looking like just after sundown or just before sunrise on the 9th."

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In addition to the moon and planetary events, the Perseid

meteor shower will continue to light up the skies this month. As reported by Space.com, “The Perseid meteor shower is one of the most prolific meteor showers of the year. The shower is active from mid-July until late August and will peak on the night of Aug. 12, before dawn on Aug. 13, 2025.”

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Observers are encouraged to start watching around 11 p.m. local time, though the report notes that “the peak occurs just three days after a full moon, so moonlight may wash out fainter meteors.”

James Lasher is staff writer for Charisma Media.

Temple Institute Declares It Is Time to Build the Third Temple in Jerusalem

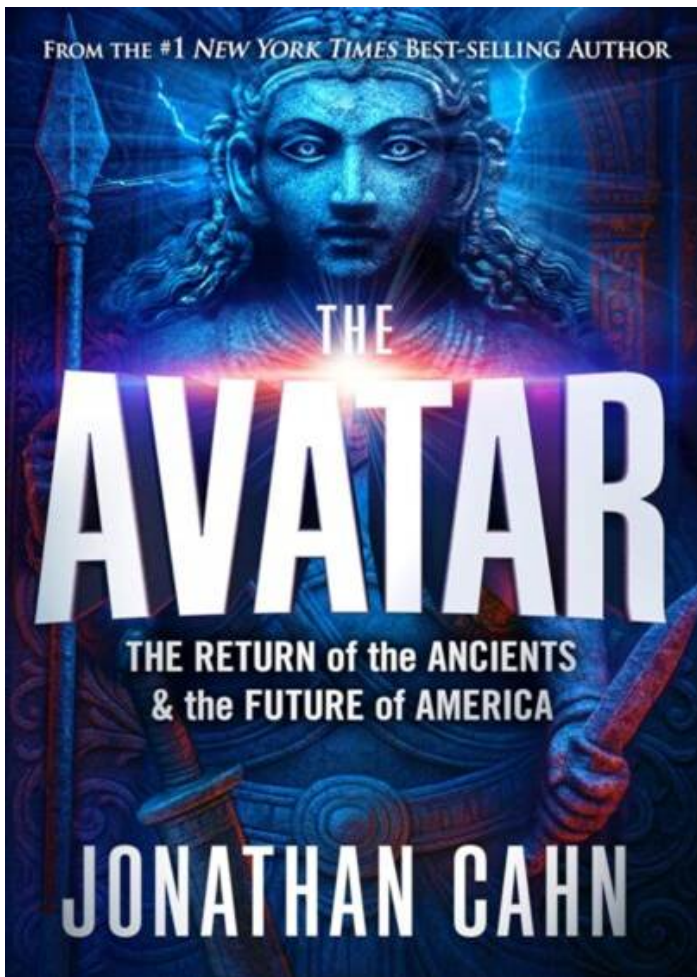
The Temple Institute in Jerusalem stirred global attention this week with a striking Facebook post featuring a wristwatch with an image of [the rebuilt Jewish Temple](#). The post read: “SYNCHRONIZE YOUR WATCHES! IT’S TIME TO BUILD!”

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The announcement was made during Tisha B’Av, the annual Jewish fast day commemorating the destruction of both the First and Second Temples. This solemn day is marked by mourning, prayer and reflection on the loss of the Temple as the center of

worship. For the Temple Institute, however, the fast is also seen as a call to action, transforming grief over past destruction into preparation for rebuilding.

As outlined in the Institute's Statement of Principles, the organization is dedicated to restoring "Temple consciousness" and preparing for [the construction of the Third Temple](#) on Mount Moriah. They argue that one-third of the commandments in the Torah revolve around the Temple and that Judaism without it is incomplete. The Temple, in their view, is not just a relic of the past but a divine mandate awaiting fulfillment in the present.



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From a Christian perspective, however, the significance of this post points in a different direction. Pre-tribulation believers understand that while the Jewish world anticipates a

physical Temple, Scripture makes clear that Jesus Himself is now the final sacrifice and the true Temple (Heb. 9:11–12; John 2:19–21). The rebuilding of a Third Temple is not necessary for salvation, but prophecy indicates it will play a central role in the unfolding of the last days.

The apostle Paul warns that the “man of sin,” the Antichrist, will one day seat himself in the Temple of God and proclaim himself to be God (2 Thess. 2:3–4). Daniel likewise foretold that sacrifices would be reinstated and then cut off by the abomination of desolation (Dan. 9:27). For those watching the signs of the times, the growing movement to rebuild the Temple is a vivid reminder that prophetic events are aligning rapidly.

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That this call to “build” was issued on Tisha B’Av carries particular weight. For centuries, Jewish mourning on this day has looked back to the destruction of the Temple. The Temple Institute’s post flips that perspective forward, casting the fast not only as a memorial but as a countdown toward the future. From the lens of biblical prophecy, it signals the approach of the tribulation period when Israel will again have a Temple, though one defiled by the Antichrist before Christ’s return to establish His millennial kingdom.

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The renewed urgency to rebuild the Temple serves as a reminder that the prophecies of Scripture are unfolding exactly as God declared they would. Comfort is found in knowing that every promise in His Word is true, and as history moves toward its climax, God’s plan is firmly in place. These signs assure that Jesus is coming soon, and there is confidence in the

unshakable hope of His return.

James Lasher is staff writer for Charisma Media.

Protests Erupt After Lawmaker Offers Cash Rewards for Attacking Christian Leaders

India's Catholic bishops have issued a sharp rebuke of Maharashtra state authorities for their inaction after a ruling party legislator publicly offered cash rewards [for assaults on Christian leaders](#).

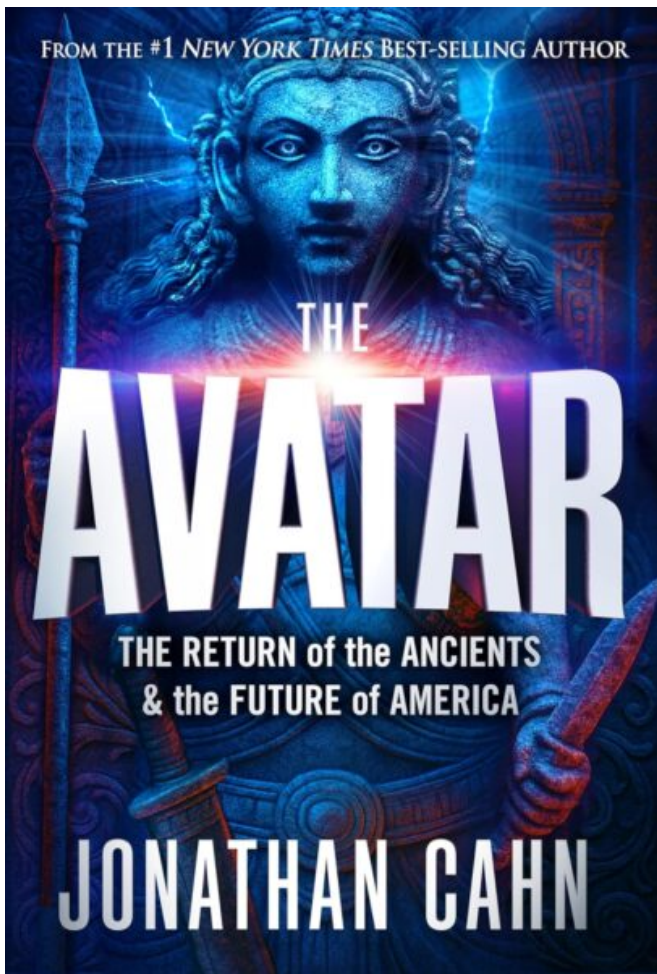
In a statement released Monday, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI) decried the failure to prosecute BJP MLA Gopichand Padalkar following his June 17 speech in Sangli District, in which he pledged up to ₹500,000 (approximately \$5,756 USD) for those "bashing up missionaries" and ₹1.1 million (about \$12,663 USD) for attacks on Christian leaders.

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The CBCI expressed "deep anguish and alarm over the growing climate of hostility and violence directed against minority communities in the country," calling Padalkar's remarks "a clear instance of incitement to religiously motivated violence, amounting to a grave offense under Section 152 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023."

As reported by The Christian Post, the bishops added that Padalkar's tiered reward system "warrants immediate and

decisive legal intervention, particularly when the incitement is explicit, direct and poses an imminent threat to public order.”



[Pre-order Jonathan Cahn's Newest Book, "The Avatar" on Amazon.com!](#)

Open Doors has ranked India 11th on its 2025 World Watch List of countries where Christians face the most severe persecution.

Despite widespread protests, including a six-hour demonstration on July 11 in Mumbai's Azad Maidan attended by thousands of Christians and prominent political figures, the CBCI lamented that "law enforcement authorities [have reportedly failed to register even a First Information Report \(FIR\)](#). This inaction stands in stark contrast to the swift legal response often seen against students, activists and opposition leaders for far less serious expressions, such as

social media posts or peaceful dissent.”

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Church leaders from across India have condemned Padalkar’s rhetoric. The Rev. Vijayesh Lal of the Evangelical Fellowship of India warned, “No elected representative should ever incentivize attacks on any citizen based on their faith,” while Raphael D’Souza, former president of the Bombay Catholic Sabha, noted the “lack of response” even as the state assembly sat in session. BJP representatives have distanced the party from Padalkar’s statements, labeling them his “personal views” and “highly irresponsible.”

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Let us join in prayer for all Christians enduring persecution around the world, asking God to grant them hope and strength amidst their trials, and to move the hearts of those in power toward justice and compassion.

James Lasher is staff writer for Charisma Media.

NFL Player Reveals Angelic Encounter That Changed His Life

Sometimes life’s most pivotal turns come in the midst of routine. You know the scene: an open practice field, the steady thud of a football meeting cleats and an athlete locked

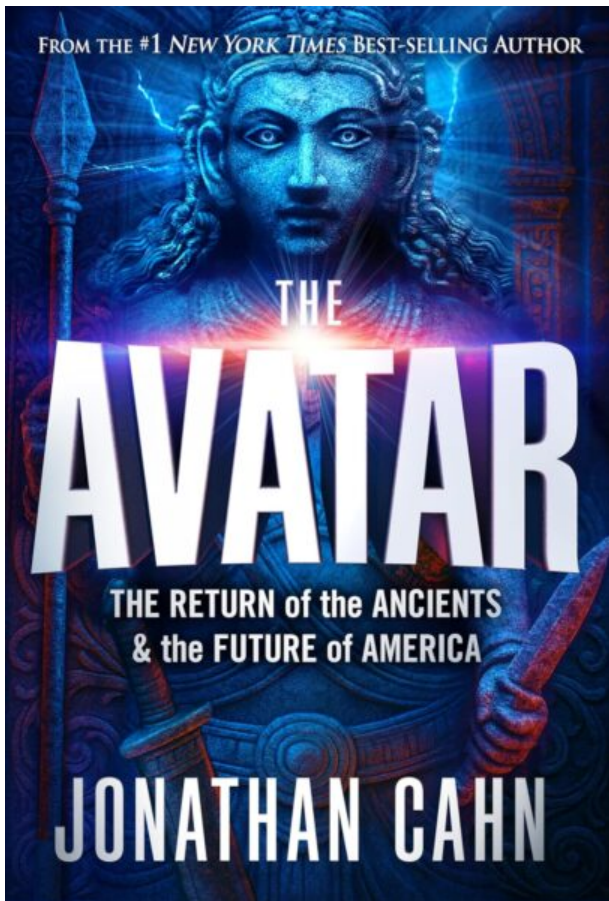
in on perfecting one more kick. Nothing about that afternoon hinted at a life-altering encounter, until every goalpost faded away, and something deeper broke through.

It was on Sports Spectrum with hosts Matt Forte and Jason Romano that Atlanta Falcons punter Bradley Pinion unfolded the rest of the story. He spoke candidly about how a random visit to his high school field became the backdrop for his spiritual awakening, tracing it all back to a journey that began long before that afternoon.

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Pinion grew up “going because my family was going, but it wasn’t because of my choice,” he said of his church-filled childhood. When his parents divorced, he found refuge in football, confessing, “At that point in my life, my god was football. It was my escape.”

As recruitment offers rolled in, he reached a crossroads not just about where to play college ball, but whether to test this “God guy” he’d only heard about in Sunday school. “I remember thinking in my head, [let me test this God guy and see what He’s about,](#)” he recalled, even praying aloud during a solo drive in his ’94 Sonoma.



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That test led him to the practice field instead of the weight room, just another decision, until a stranger in a Clemson-orange shirt approached and asked, "Are you the kicker at Northwest Parish High School?" What felt like a two-hour conversation instead lasted minutes, yet it cut to the core. The man shared Proverbs 23:7, "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he," then slipped away.

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Pinion tried to resume kicking but "shanked everything left and right," finally retreating to his truck in tears. "I cried the whole way home," he said, and it was in that moment of brokenness that he believed "God sent an angel to me because I said that prayer."

His heart may have flipped in an instant, but his life aligned more gradually. ["I felt my heart transforming before my actions did,"](#) Pinion admits, noting it took until college's junior year to fully unite belief and behavior. Since then, he's leaned into vulnerability, leading mission trips with Compassion International, opening his locker room to honest conversations, and living out the very freedom he found that day on the field.

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We may never predict where or when God will send someone our way to redirect our steps. But when He does, through a stranger's timely word, an inner nudge in a lonely moment or an unplanned meeting on an otherwise ordinary day, the impact can echo through every choice that follows.

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