

# Training to Triumph: Finding Faith in Life's Darkest Moments

In his latest message, [evangelist and author John Ramirez](#) emphasizes the critical need for believers to strengthen their faith in challenging times. Drawing from his upcoming book, ["Exposing the Devil's Playbook,"](#) Ramirez likens the Christian walk to the story of Olympic swimmer Michael Phelps, who was trained to swim in complete darkness with leaking goggles. This highlights how believers must exercise their faith even when they can't see the way forward.

"Faith in dark times," Ramirez explains, "is where we need to shine the most."

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Just as Phelps was able to break world records due to his training and dedication, Christians are called to persevere through seasons of spiritual darkness, trusting in God's preparation and provision. Ramirez stresses that faith is not just a feeling but a muscle that needs to be trained through trials. Drawing from James 1:2-4, which encourages believers to "count it all joy" when they face trials, Ramirez teaches that these moments refine faith, preparing Christians to overcome the enemy's schemes.



[Order John Ramirez's "Exposing the Devil's Playbook" on Amazon.com!](#)

[In chapter 6 of his new book, 'Faith in Dark Times,' Ramirez emphasizes the spiritual warfare](#) that believers face, warning that the devil seeks to "fragment your faith" and distort it with "a religious spirit." Ephesians 6:12 reminds Christians that their battle is "not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world." Ramirez' message is clear: the devil uses confusion and trials to shake faith, but God allows these moments to strengthen His people.

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"When God turns off the lights on your season," Ramirez says, "it was God that turned off the light, not the devil." By maintaining faith, Christians prove their trust in God,

knowing that He is training them for victory. Ramirez reminds believers that they are like “gold medalists” in the kingdom of Christ, equipped to win against the forces of darkness.

As Ephesians 6:16 instructs, believers must take up the shield of faith, with which they can “extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.” In the face of spiritual warfare, Ramirez urges Christians to put their faith into action, trusting that God has prepared them for victory, even in the darkest of times.

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*James Lasher is staff writer for Charisma Media.*

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## **Mark Levin Reveals: Ancient Wonders Confirm Biblical History**

On a recent episode of LevinTV on The Blaze Network, host Mark Levin explores one of the most [remarkable archaeological discoveries](#) in modern history.

Joined by leading experts, Levin presents the excavation of the City of David in Jerusalem, where a broken sewage pipe in 2004 led to the unearthing of ancient sites that are central to both Jewish and Christian heritage. The episode focuses on the biblical significance of these discoveries, including the Pool of Siloam and the Pilgrimage Road, and how they affirm Jerusalem’s enduring role as the spiritual capital of the kingdom of Israel.

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Here are just a few of the key discoveries Levin and his guide, Ze'ev Orenstein, encounter in the ancient city of Jerusalem:

- **Pool of Siloam:** The Pool of Siloam served as a massive ritual bath used by Jewish pilgrims to purify themselves before ascending to the Temple in Jerusalem. Millions of pilgrims would have used this pool for cleansing before heading up to the Temple Mount.
- **Pilgrimage Road:** Archaeologists uncovered the ancient "Biblical Super Highway," a 2,000-year-old road connecting the Pool of Siloam to the Temple Mount. "This road is not just symbolic," Orenstein emphasizes. "The likelihood that Jesus Himself walked on these very stones is 100%. He would have gone with all the Jews in Jerusalem...cleansed Himself, and walked up the pilgrimage road." Lined with shops and market stalls, the road would have been bustling with activity as pilgrims made their way to the temple for religious observances.
- **Artifacts:** During the excavation, archaeologists found pottery, ancient coins and black soot—evidence from the Roman destruction of Jerusalem. These artifacts offer a tangible connection to Jerusalem's storied past and its role in Jewish history. "You have little pieces of black soot... that's ash from the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70... remnants of the fires when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem," Orenstein reveals.
- **Historical Impact:** For Levin, the discoveries reaffirm

Jerusalem's status as the eternal capital of the kingdom of Israel. Levin also touched on the controversy surrounding the excavation, noting opposition from groups like Hamas. "This undermines the story they've been telling for the last century, that Jews and by extension Christians have no roots, have no heritage in Jerusalem," Levin says, emphasizing the importance of the city to both faiths.

- **Spiritual Legacy:** The excavation has sparked debate about using the Bible as a guide to uncover ancient ruins. Levin and his guests believe the findings strengthen both the Jewish and Christian connection to Jerusalem, reinforcing its status as the spiritual and historical center of their faiths. "The Egyptians are gone. The Babylonians are gone. The Romans are gone. Jerusalem is still standing," Orenstein says. "The story of Jerusalem, of the Jewish people, is of a people and a place that has been knocked down time and time again." "And so you can see why the Palestinians want this to stop. Because they want to deny Judaism and Christianity their history," Levin adds.

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As excavation continues, Levin and his guide Ze'ev hope that the project [will further illuminate Jerusalem's rich history](#), offering a deeper understanding of its role in shaping the Judeo-Christian tradition.

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*James Lasher is staff writer for Charisma Media.*

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# Jihadist Attack: Christians Slaughtered in Two-Day Massacre

In late August, Burkina Faso witnessed [one of the deadliest Islamist extremist attacks](#) in the country's history, further showcasing the increasing dangers Christians face in the region.

Over the course of two days, militants carried out a brutal killing spree, targeting both civilians and Christians. According to Christian Solidarity International, up to 400 people were killed, and hundreds more were injured. The coordinated attacks took place in the northern town of Barsalogo and the western town of Sanaba, with civilians caught off guard as they dug trenches under military orders.

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On Aug. 25, the situation took an even darker turn when militants stormed a Protestant church in Sanaba during a Sunday service. They tied the hands of [26 Christian men and executed them](#) by cutting their throats, according to eyewitness accounts and reports by The Christian Post. Survivors sought refuge in a nearby school, but the trauma of the attack will linger long after.

These killings mark a grim chapter in the ongoing jihadist insurgency that has plagued Burkina Faso and the wider Sahel region since 2012. Multiple terror organizations, including those associated with al-Qaeda and ISIS, have intensified their efforts to destabilize governments and impose Islamist

rule. This surge in violence has devastated communities, leaving many Christians particularly vulnerable to persecution.

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In addition to the violence, the militants reportedly burned homes, stole livestock and even accidentally killed two of their own members due to an improvised explosive device. The aftermath has left communities shattered and in desperate need of basic necessities such as food, shelter and medical care.

Burkina Faso is ranked 20th on the Open Doors World Watch List for 2024, as evidenced by the severe persecution facing local Christians. Along with physical aid, the need for prayer is paramount. Christians in Burkina Faso are in great need of strength and endurance in the face of increasing danger, and it is up to the global church to pray for their safety, resilience and faith amid this ongoing persecution.

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*James Lasher is staff writer for Charisma Media.*

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## **Samaritan's Purse Provides Crucial Aid to Israel Amid Crisis**

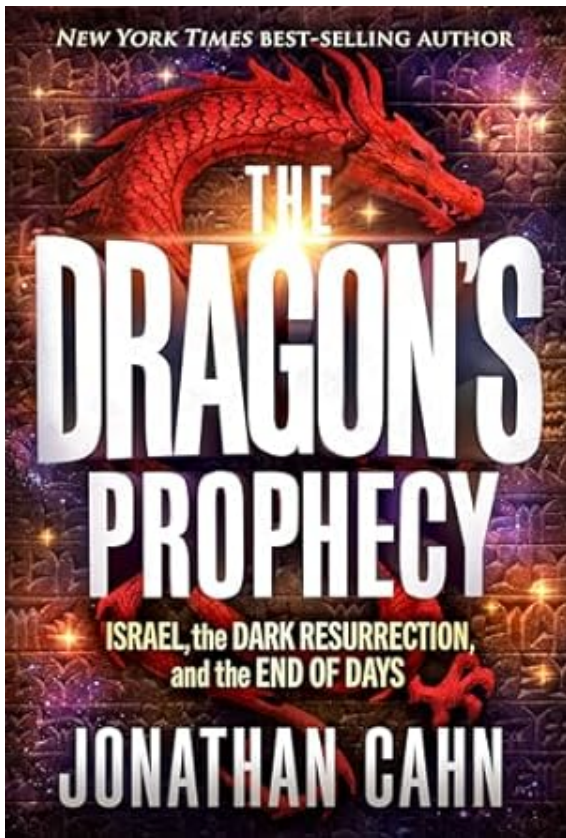
The global Christian relief organization Samaritan's Purse has

stepped in to [provide critical aid to Israeli communities](#) affected by the ongoing war in Gaza, including donating armored ambulances and supplying essential items to displaced families. The organization, led by Rev. Franklin Graham, is replacing 14 ambulances destroyed in attacks and continues to armor others to protect first responders and citizens near Gaza.

“They did not have enough armored ambulances,” Graham says in an interview with Fox News, explaining the urgent need for the life-saving vehicles. “We were able to dedicate these ambulances in God’s name to His glory.” The new ambulances, along with trauma centers and therapy services for children affected by terrorism, are crucial in aiding those directly impacted by violence.

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Graham emphasizes that [these acts of charity are inspired by God](#) and reflect His love for Israel. “As I tell everyone, these come from God. In times of trouble, we need to turn to God. We need to look to Him,” Graham says, on the need for Christians to stand with Israel in prayer and action, especially during times of conflict.



[Order Jonathan Cahn's "The Dragon's Prophecy" on Amazon.com!](#)

Beyond ambulances, Samaritan's Purse is providing thousands of gift cards to displaced Israelis who cannot return to their homes due to rocket attacks. These cards allow people to purchase essentials from local stores, restoring a semblance of normalcy. "The big thing is these gift cards," Graham explains. "It really helps them to live and to try to have some kind of a normal life. Right now, there is nothing normal there."

Graham urges his fellow Christians worldwide to continue supporting Israel. "We just need to stand behind Israel and have their back during this very difficult time," he said.

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The Bible is quite clear on the importance of blessing Israel. Genesis 12:3 reveals the covenant God made with Abraham saying, "I will bless those who bless you, and curse him who

curses you; and in you all families of the earth will be blessed.” Christians are called to support Israel, especially during hardship, aligning with God’s promises.

By providing ambulances, trauma services and gift cards, Samaritan’s Purse exemplifies this biblical mandate, and sets itself up as a practical example on how Christians can assist the nation of Israel.

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*James Lasher is staff writer for Charisma Media.*

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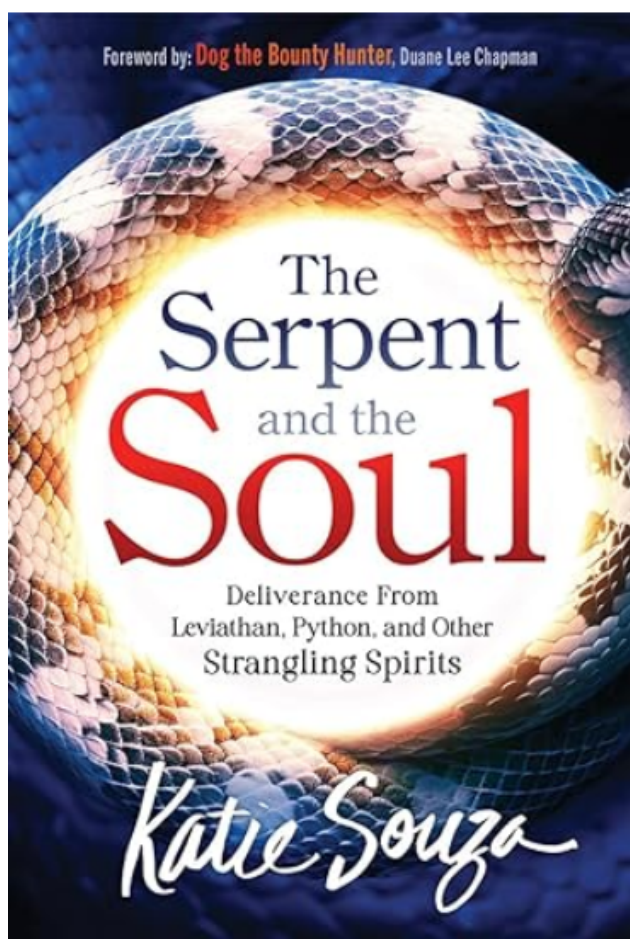
## **Progressive Pastor Skews the Parable of the Prodigal Son**

Biblical discernment and understanding is an essential quality for Christians in the deceptive days we are living in.

First reported on by Protestia, Pastor Reginald Avant, the “queer senior pastor of Madrona Grace Presbyterian Church,” located in Seattle, Washington, gave a sermon on the parable of the Prodigal Son, offering [a deeply troubling interpretation](#) of one of the most significant teachings of Jesus. Avant’s portrayal of the father in the parable—traditionally understood as a representation of God—not only distorts the biblical message but also presents an unbiblical narrative that exposes a false doctrine in progressive churches.

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Avant frames the father in the story as flawed, even suggesting that he failed by allowing his son to leave so easily. “Why was the father not more reluctant in this decision with his son?” Avant asks. “Why did he give in so easy and not hesitate about what he felt or thought in this situation?” He goes on to speculate that perhaps the father didn’t want to “discourage his son” or be seen as “a dream killer.” Such a viewpoint presents a dangerous shift from traditional Christian understanding, casting the father—and by extension, God—as a figure whose actions are in need of questioning or correction.



[Order Katie Souza's "The Serpent and the Soul" on Amazon.com!](#)

The central message of Jesus’ parable is clear: God’s grace and forgiveness are boundless. The father’s swift acceptance of his wayward son, with open arms and a heart full of love, reflects God’s readiness to forgive us, no matter how far we’ve strayed. Yet Avant’s interpretation mischaracterizes the

father's actions as mistakes, implying that God's approach to His children is flawed.

Avant continues this erroneous narrative, stating, "I think the father needs to repent as well. I think the father needs to apologize to his son for letting him go, for not fighting for him, for not being reluctant." This perspective is not only unbiblical but it also strips the parable of its essential message: the unmerited grace of God.

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This kind of theological distortion contributes to [the growing problem within progressive churches](#), where biblical teachings are twisted to suit personal or cultural narratives. These interpretations, far from bringing believers closer to God, often push them further away by undermining foundational Christian truths.

Such teachings represent a dangerous drift from the authority of Scripture, contributing to confusion and spiritual harm within the body of Christ and those seeking answers to life's questions. It is critical for Christians to remain anchored in the biblical understanding of God as perfect and unerring—a truth clearly revealed in the original message of the Prodigal Son.

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

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# Is the Palestinian Flag Linked to the Four Horsemen?

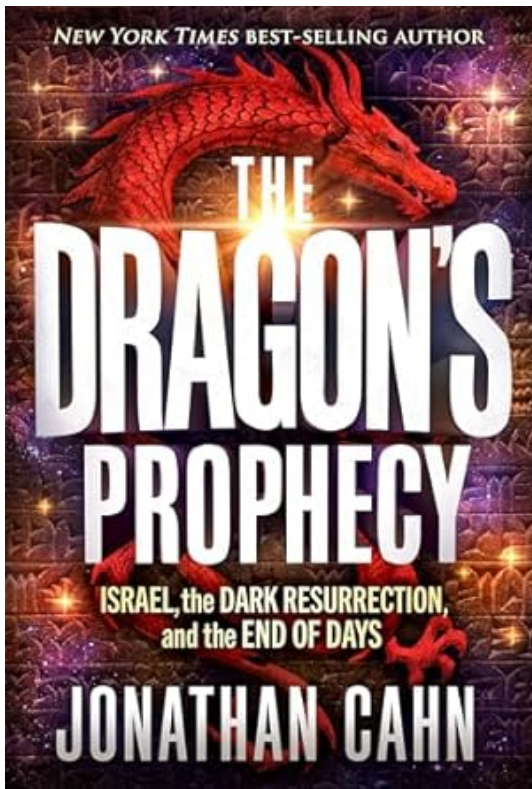
In a recent podcast with Mondo Gonzales of Prophecy Watchers, best-selling author Rabbi Jonathan Cahn explains a profound connection [between biblical prophecy and modern events](#), focusing on what he calls the “Jubilean mystery.”

This mystery, rooted in the celebration of Jubilee—a biblical period occurring every 50 years when God restores what was lost, particularly for Israel—reveals a divine pattern in history. Cahn explains, “Every 50 years, God gives to Israel a year of restoration. If you lost your life [or] land, you get it back.”

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According to Cahn, significant historical events in Israel’s restoration align with Jubilee years, such as the 1917 Balfour Declaration and the 1967 Six-Day War. “The next Jubilee... 2017... the Jerusalem Proclamation goes forth... recognizing Jerusalem as the capital,” he notes, referring to the U.S. formally acknowledging Jerusalem as Israel’s capital.

However, Cahn warns that the enemy has twisted these divine cycles, referencing the Yom Kippur War of 1973 as a pivotal moment in this counter-Jubilee. “The enemy took this calamity... and he did the Jubilee of it,” he says, explaining that the war’s prophetic significance points to Oct. 7, 2023, 50 years after the conflict. According to Cahn, the date aligns with a Hebrew holy day, following a biblical pattern outlined in Leviticus 25.



[Order Jonathan Cahn's "The Dragon's Prophecy" on Amazon.com!](#)

One of the most striking revelations in Cahn's address involves the Palestinian flag. He connects the colors of the flag—white, red, black and green—with the ["colors of the Apocalypse"](#) from Revelation 6:1-8, which describes the four horsemen as riding white, red, black and pale (green) horses. Cahn explains, "All this hatred for Israel was done in the name of a flag... the flag of Palestine... white, red, black and green." He reveals that these colors symbolize the forces of opposition against Israel in the end times, noting that "every nation that has those colors... is an enemy of Israel. It's no accident; it's all linked to the end."

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This color scheme is used by several nations hostile to Israel's very existence, and some who have an uneasy truce with the people of Israel. These countries include: Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Sudan, Syria and the United Arab

Emirates.

Cahn's message carries a sense of urgency for fellow believers, warning those who would listen that we are approaching the end of the age. He urges Christians to recognize the fulfillment of biblical prophecy, referring them to Scriptures that reveal the entire world is going to focus on that little nation of Israel.

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*James Lasher is staff writer for Charisma Media.*

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## **A Pastor's Darkest Hour Led to a Miracle from God**

In 2006, Pastor Larry Ragland was on a spiritual high, preparing for what he believed would be the greatest year of his life. "I was preaching fire," Ragland shared in a recent interview with Charisma Media, recalling how he had been proclaiming that 2007 would be "the year of the Holy Spirit, the year of perfection, the year of completion."

But instead of entering a season of triumph, [Ragland faced a personal and spiritual breakdown](#) that shook him to his core.

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Ragland's world started to crumble during what seemed like a routine family dinner at Subway. After a successful ministry event, his wife, visibly distressed, broke her silence. "She just started crying," Ragland recalls. "She said, 'Larry, I

can't stay silent anymore. I don't know who you've become.'" In that moment, Ragland learned his marriage was hanging by a thread. His wife confessed, "I love you, Larry, but I don't know if I'm in love with you anymore," giving him one year to turn things around or she would leave.

As the new year began, [Ragland's health suddenly deteriorated.](#) After experiencing severe pain on Jan. 7, 2007, just hours after preaching about the transformative year ahead, he was rushed to the hospital. "They did every test in the world on me," he said. What doctors initially thought was stomach acid turned out to be much worse—his appendix had ruptured, poisoning his body.

As the months dragged on, Ragland's condition worsened. "I was basically going blind, and they said, 'You have more poison in your body now than when your appendix ruptured,'" he explains. In and out of hospitals, his health, his family and his faith were all hanging in the balance.

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One night, Ragland reached his breaking point. "I told God things I never thought I'd say," he admits. He questioned why, after years of devotion, he couldn't find healing. That's when he heard God speak: "Now, are you done telling Me about Me? Let Me tell you about you." In that moment, Ragland experienced a profound spiritual awakening. He repented, and a peace he hadn't felt in years washed over him.

Two days later, Ragland was miraculously healed. His health restored, his marriage mended and his ministry renewed, he emerged from 2007 with a deeper understanding of God's grace. "I had to hit the bottom in order to become the man that she needed me to be," he reflects, on his restored and strengthened bond with his wife.

Ragland now shares his testimony openly, emphasizing how God used his lowest point to bring about the greatest year of his life.

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*James Lasher is staff writer for Charisma Media.*

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## **God or Gods? Decoding the Meaning of Elohim in Scripture**

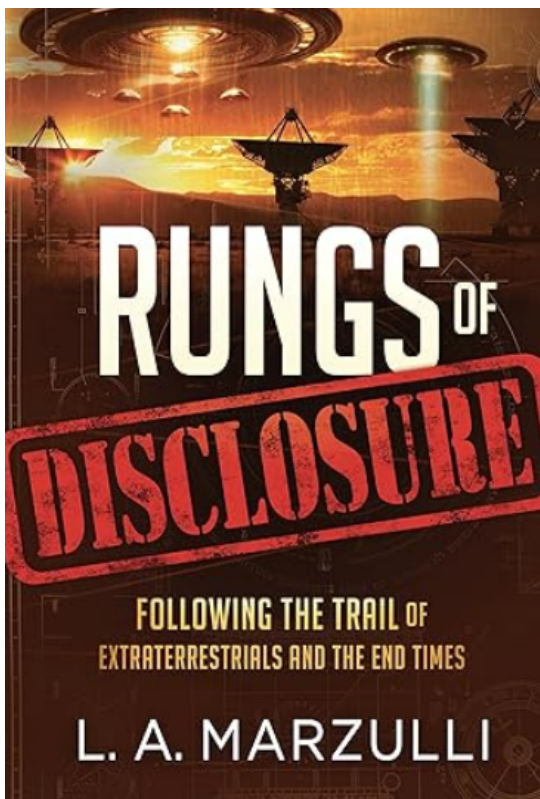
In a recent interview with Mondo Gonzales of Prophecy Watchers, [author and filmmaker L.A. Marzulli](#) delves into the biblical interpretation of the term “Elohim” and the growing misinterpretations surrounding it. Marzulli and Gonzales discuss how the Hebrew word, which appears in the Bible more than 2,500 times, has become a focal point for confusion among both believers and secular scholars.

“Elohim refers broadly to spiritual beings,” Marzulli explains, “and can include God, angels, demons and other supernatural entities.” He emphasizes that while the word is often translated into English as “gods,” leading to claims of polytheism, this does not reflect the original Hebrew meaning. Marzulli points out that understanding Elohim as spiritual beings provides a more accurate biblical perspective. He says, “If we use the words ‘spiritual being,’ it clears everything up.”

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Gonzales and Marzulli focus on how New Age and secular authors, including some who advocate for theories like panspermia, misinterpret Elohim as referring to extraterrestrial entities. “These people are really well-meaning,” Marzulli notes, “They know something is going on with the UFO phenomenon, and they’re trying to fit it into their paradigm.” This misinterpretation, according to Marzulli, creates confusion by substituting spiritual beings with “space brothers” or alien beings.



**[Order L.A. Marzulli's "Rungs of Disclosure" on Amazon.com!](#)**

From a biblical standpoint, Marzulli emphasizes that Yahweh, the God of the Bible, is distinct and singular among all spiritual beings. “There’s only one uncreated Creator,” Marzulli said, “and that’s Yahweh.” He further explains that while other spiritual beings do exist, such as angels and demons, they are not gods in the polytheistic sense. He cites examples from the Old Testament, including Deuteronomy 32 and Psalm 89, which reference Elohim as spiritual beings, but

stress that Yahweh is unique: “Who is like you, Elohim, among the Elohim?”

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Marzulli warns against allowing modern philosophies and translations to cloud the true meaning of Scripture, particularly when secular authors and New Age movements try to blend the biblical narrative with their own beliefs. “When we say ‘spiritual beings,’ nobody’s offended,” Marzulli says, explaining that the term Elohim in Hebrew does not imply polytheism.

Ultimately, Marzulli seeks to bring clarity to a topic that has generated widespread confusion. “We need to be on guard,” he continues, “against those who want to come in and say the Bible teaches there are these other gods.” For all believers, understanding the original Hebrew context of Elohim is essential to maintaining a proper biblical worldview.

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*James Lasher is staff writer for Charisma Media.*

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## **Is Russell Brand the Spiritual Warrior the World Needs Right Now?**

Since his baptism in the River Thames on Sunday, Apr. 28, alongside his good friend Bear Grylls, comedian, actor and

podcaster [Russell Brand](#) has unashamedly proclaimed the name of Jesus Christ and kept his audience up-to-date on his new spiritual journey.

Brand's unique style of asking questions he has about faith publicly, and answers he finds in the Bible, has resonated with people worldwide who are encouraged by his transparent walk with God.

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Recently, Brand posted a daily morning prayer on his X account that has been viewed by over 300,000 accounts, and the number is still growing. Commentators can be seen thanking Brand for his words, with some saying his faith has directed them to [their own relationship with God](#).

Here is Brand's daily prayer from Friday, Sept. 20:

*Heavenly Father, we trust in Your promises, even when the wait feels long and the road seems uncertain. Lord, You are the God of victories, and we believe that our season of victory is drawing near. God, we lift up every problem and challenge that Your people are facing right now. We know that You see every struggle, every hardship and every tear. We ask for Your divine intervention in each of these situations, Lord. Please move powerfully in our lives and show us that even when we cannot see it, You are working behind the scenes to bring about change. We pray for restoration in every area of our lives, relationships, finances, health and spirit. Where there has been brokenness, bring healing. Where there has been loss, bring restoration. Where there has been pain, bring peace and renewal. Father, we trust that You are the restorer of what has been lost, and the healer of all wounds. Let Your restorative power touch every part of our lives, making us whole again. Lord, we also bring our financial needs before You. We know that You are our provider, and we*

ask for Your provision in our finances. Open doors of opportunity bless the work of our hands, and give us wisdom to manage the resources You have entrusted to us. Help us overcome any financial challenges and see Your miraculous provision in our lives. We also cry out for Your healing over our bodies and minds, whether it is physical pain, emotional distress or mental suffering. We believe that You are the great physician. We place our trust in Your healing power. Please restore our health, comfort us in our moments of pain and give us strength and hope as we wait for complete healing. Finally, we seek Your protection over us and our loved ones. Guard us from all harm and danger, Lord, and shield us from every attack of the enemy. Surround us with Your angels, and may Your hand of protection be upon us at all times. Father, we recognize that Your timing is perfect, and that Your ways are higher than ours. Even in the waiting, help us trust completely in You. Grant us the patience to persevere, the faith to keep believing and the courage to keep moving forward. We declare with confidence that our victory is on the way, and that You are working all things together for our good. Thank You, Lord, for hearing our prayers, and for all the work You are doing in our lives, even when we can't see it. To You we give all the glory, honor and praise for the miracles that are on the way. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

*Prayer of the day:*

*Heavenly Father, we trust in your promises, even when the wait feels long and the road seems uncertain. Lord, you are the God of victories, and we believe that our season of victory is drawing near. God, we lift up every problem and challenge that your people...*

– Russell Brand (@rustyrocks) [September 20, 2024](#)

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Let us join Brand in prayer before the Lord Most High, not only for ourselves, but for our families, communities and nation. We can take comfort that our prayers will not fall on deaf ears, for Jesus tells us in Mark 11:24:

*Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you will receive them, and you will have them.*

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*James Lasher is staff writer for Charisma Media.*

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## **New Egyptian Artifact Linked to Exodus Uncovered**

The last year has brought with it [a treasure trove of discoveries](#) from the ancient world. From Jerusalem to Bahrain, antiquities continue to prove the Bible is a reliably accurate teller of ancient history.

Recently, a discovery in Egypt announced by the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities revealed an ancient fort which is believed to be 3,200 years old, and which gives further confirmation as to who the reigning Pharaoh was when Moses led the Israelites out of bondage in the book of Exodus.

While the Bible does not specifically state who the monarch

was that ruled of the Hebrews, historians widely believe it to be Rameses II.

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The site, called Tell Al-Abquain, was an outpost used by the ancient Egyptians and is made up of “a series of mudbrick architectural units, including military barracks for soldiers and storage rooms for weapons, food, and provisions from the New Kingdom era.

“In addition to the barracks, numerous artifacts and personal items belonging to soldiers were unearthed. [The] artifacts provide insight into the daily lives, religious beliefs, and military activities of the fort’s occupants,” the statement continued.



“These [findings] include weapons used in battle, hunting tools, personal adornments and hygiene items, such as ivory kohl applicators, carnelian and faience beads, scarabs and protective amulets.”

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One of these ancient weapons, a bronze sword in incredible condition for its age, bore the engraved symbol of Ramses II, giving credence to the his being the ruler during the time of Moses and the Exodus from Egypt.

Time and again, [archaeological discoveries prove the Bible](#) accurate and true, such as the continued renovation of the Pools at Siloam. Pray that as the world continues to see the accuracy of the Bible verified, hearts will soften to the conviction of the Holy Spirit and accept God's Word as true and accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

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