

Church Sermon Inspires Arkansas Woman to Win Major Powerball Prize

In a shocking life event, a woman identified as K. Anthony from Harrell, Arkansas, found herself [the fortunate winner of a \\$100,000 Powerball prize](#) after a church sermon inspired her to test her luck.

According to the Arkansas Scholarship Lottery's press release, Anthony, who typically plays the Arkansas lottery only once or twice a month, felt compelled to try her luck after a particularly uplifting sermon.

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Lottery officials revealed that the sermon that stirred Anthony's curiosity was centered around "praising the Lord for things on the way." Acting on this newfound inspiration, she played Powerball using the Jackpocket lottery app, with the app's system randomly selecting her winning numbers. Miraculously, Anthony matched 5 out of the 6 winning digits—9, 41, 43, 49 and 64—along with the Powerball number 4, securing her a \$100,000 prize.

She had a feeling "fortune was going to come" her way.

K. Anthony has been on Jackpocket for over two years and orders tickets a few times a month. Her biggest lottery win ever was \$60. Until now. Read her story <https://t.co/0owXIpivak> pic.twitter.com/IidTdIqBA6

– Jackpocket (@Jackpocket) [February 8, 2024](#)

Despite initial skepticism, Anthony, who thought she was being scammed after receiving calls from Jackpocket's New York headquarters, was elated upon confirming her win with a team member. The unexpected jackpot, resulting from Anthony's decision to add the Power Play option, is earmarked for home remodeling, a family vacation and savings. Anthony, no stranger to lottery wins, plans to wisely allocate her prize money.

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Financial Wisdom From the Bible: A Lesson in Stewardship

In the biblical context, financial wisdom is a common theme, emphasizing principles of stewardship, generosity and responsible handling of resources, as well as avoiding the love of money. One well-known scriptural principle comes from Proverbs 21:20, stating, "There is treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling of the wise, but a foolish man squanders it." This verse encourages individuals to exercise prudence in managing their resources, [advocating for saving and wise investment.](#)

Furthermore, the Bible underscores the importance of generosity and helping those in need. Proverbs 19:17 states, "He who has pity on the poor lends to the Lord, and He will repay what he has given." This principle teaches that financial prosperity is not solely for personal gain but also for the benefit of others.

By embracing a biblical approach to finances, individuals can cultivate a mindset of stewardship, ensuring their resources are used wisely for the well-being of both themselves and their communities.

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James Lasher is staff writer for Charisma Media.

Arizona Democrat Praises Satanists on Senate Floor

In a move that defies every argument against [Satanism not infecting America today](#), Democrat state senator Juan Mendez publicly praised The Satanic Temple and their plight in America.

Mendez commended the Satanists, stating they took a “noble action,” and expressed that he’s “graced” with their presence.

“Members, I would like to introduce a group of Arizonans—some from my district but they have membership all across the state,” Mendez said from behind a mask during the Senates floor session.

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“They are here to confront the arbitrary, tyrannical authority of religious persecution that’s scheduled for government committee later on today. We are graced with the presence of ministers and members of the Satanic Temple of Arizona. Please stand today. They are at the Capitol today to fight for the rights of their more than 12,000 members of their denomination and the rights of free speech and free exercise of all Arizonans,” he continues.

CHILLING!!

Democrat Senator, Juan Mendez, shows his support for

worshiping the devil as he proudly honors and welcomes Satanists and their satanic ministry to the Senate today.

The Senator promotes them as taking 'noble action' and says he's 'graced' with their presence. pic.twitter.com/1p5fsM54UQ

– AZSenateRepublicans (@AZSenateGOP) [February 7, 2024](#)

Mendez continued propping The Satanic Temple on some kind of moral pedestal, as though they are freedom fighters against an oppressive authority. Even though it was Christianity that influenced this nation's Founders to value freedom of religion in the first place.

"The Temple practices non-theistic Satanism divorced from superstition without any belief in gods or devils. They practice the religious values of compassion, justice, bodily autonomy, free speech, science, humility and noble actions," Mendez claims.

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Mendez affirmed that the Satanic Temple engages in community outreach, emphasizing their objective to foster "benevolence and empathy among all people."

This incident in Arizona is simply [another in a long line of establishing Satanism in American government.](#) Recently, the [Iowa Capitol building allowed a demonic idol to be erected in it's halls,](#) until [Christian, Navy veteran Michael Cassidy destroyed it and is now being charged with](#) a "hate-crime."

Additional controversy ensued when a second Satanic statue was installed in front of the Michigan State Capitol, closely following the one erected in Iowa. A Democratic staff member posed with the statue, describing it as "sexy." Subsequently,

the statue has been removed from the premises.

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James Lasher is Staff Writer for Charisma Media.

Frightening Trend Revealed in New Report about Children's Belief in God

A recent report from the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University raises alarms about the diminishing biblical worldview among pre-teens, suggesting that the American church is on the brink of Christian invisibility.

The research findings rely on responses from 400 pre-teens collected in December 2022, 600 parents of children younger than 13 gathered in January 2022, 600 pastors of Christian churches collected in February 2022, 400 teenagers gathered in November and December 2022 and a survey of 2,000 adults conducted in January 2023.

[The comprehensive study](#) compared the beliefs of children ages eight to 12 with parents, pastors, teenagers and adults, uncovering a disconcerting trend. Only 36% of preteens affirmed that "Jesus Christ is the only way to experience eternal salvation," in stark contrast to 54% of children's pastors.

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Shockingly, a mere 25% of pre-teens agreed that “the Bible is the true Word of God that should be a guide to knowing right from wrong,” while higher percentages of parents (44%) and children’s pastors (62%) expressed agreement.

The report also disclosed that less than half of pre-teens (21%), parents (28%) and children’s pastors (36%) believed in “absolute truths—things that are right and things that are wrong, that do not depend on feelings, preferences or circumstances.” Additionally, only 17% of pre-teens defined “real success in life” as “consistently obeying God,” a sentiment echoed by 19% of parents and 42% of children’s ministers.

The research further identified that just 26% of pre-teens consistently consult the Bible when determining right from wrong, while 21% believe turning to the Bible is the best way to distinguish right from wrong.

Cultural Research Center Director George Barna expressed deep concern, stating, “The worldview development of children is the existential challenge facing the American Church today.” The study revealed that a mere 2% of preteens hold a biblical worldview, a figure slightly higher at 12% among children’s pastors.

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Reacting to the findings, Barna emphasized the critical role of parents in shaping their child’s worldview, cautioning against the influence of external sources such as media, schools and peers. “The child’s worldview will inevitably develop. The critical questions are who will shape it and what four worldviews will be most forcefully and consistently proposed,” he warned.

In response to this crisis, it becomes crucial for Christians

to raise our children according to a biblical worldview. The book of Proverbs 22:6 emphasizes the significance of early guidance, stating, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." This biblical wisdom details the responsibility of parents to instill a foundation grounded in God's truth, ensuring that children grow up with a strong biblical worldview to navigate the complexities of life.

The decline in biblical perspectives among preteens highlights the urgency for intentional and prayerful efforts in fostering a generation deeply rooted in Christian principles, otherwise many will succumb to the deceptions of the devil.

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Damascus Airstrikes Spur Talk of Isaiah 17 War

As the war between Israel and Hamas continues, Christians are also paying attention to the skirmishes taking place between Israel and Iran-backed forces in Syria.

[With the latest airstrikes hitting the outskirts of Damascus,](#) the capital of Syria and one of the most ancient cities in the world, many are questioning whether the Isaiah 17 war is on the horizon.

Israeli airstrikes on Feb. 10 targeted locations near Damascus, as reported by the Syrian military. The attacks

allegedly resulted in three casualties, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. While the strikes caused some material losses, it remains unclear if there were additional casualties.

A Farm used by Members of Hezbollah and other Iranian-Backed Groups between the Towns of Al-Dimass and Al-Assad in Western Syria was reportedly the Target which was Struck several minutes ago by the Israeli Air Force.
pic.twitter.com/Jv4Fxsg5d3

– OSINTdefender (@sentdefender) [February 9, 2024](#)

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Since the outbreak of the Gaza war, triggered by Hamas's Oct. 7 massacres, Israel has escalated its longstanding campaign of airstrikes against Iran's presence in Syria. These attacks have targeted both Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps and Hezbollah, engaging in hostilities with Israel along the Lebanese-Israeli border since Oct. 8. Israel rarely acknowledges its operations in Syria and has not claimed responsibility for the recent strikes.

Previous presumed Israeli strikes in Syria have resulted in the deaths of high-ranking figures affiliated with Iran's Revolutionary Guard. In December, a strike in a Damascus neighborhood claimed the life of Seyed Razi Mousavi, a prominent Iranian general and longtime advisor to the paramilitary Revolutionary Guard in Syria.

Amid the ongoing conflict, Hezbollah-led forces have consistently attacked Israeli communities and military posts along the Lebanese border. Hezbollah claims its actions are in support of Gaza amid the ongoing war. The border skirmishes have led to six civilian deaths on the Israeli side and the

loss of nine IDF soldiers and reservists.

Additionally, Hezbollah reports that 186 of its members have been killed by Israel during the skirmishes, mostly in Lebanon and also in Syria.

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As these military excursions continue, and tensions across the Middle East are strained further, those looking at these events through a biblical lens realize this ongoing season must happen. [Amir Tsarfati, of Behold Israel, spoke with Abundant Life](#) church in December and explained the Isaiah 17 conflict must take place before the Ezekiel 38 war with Gog of Magog.

“Isaiah 17 is the thing that will ignite the whole region to bring about the Ezekiel 38 war,” Tsarfati said. “Isaiah 17 speaks of the utter destruction of Damascus to the point that it can no longer be inhabitable. And as you know, Damascus has never been destroyed to that point. And so, it’s a future event, and it will happen.”

Even though media coverage of the war Israel is involved in has slowed down and taken a dramatic anti-Semitic turn, the prophetic clock continues to tick toward God’s eventual day of judgment, and for this event to take place, biblical prophecy must be fulfilled.

[Using biblical discernment and analyzing the events taking place in the world today](#) through the lens of biblical prophecy will give a firm grasp on what is taking place and cast out fear and anxiety of what the future holds. God gave us a handbook for navigating the end times, and we must pick up His Word if we are to gain the wisdom and strength He provides to us from within it’s pages.

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James Lasher is Staff Writer for Charisma Media.

Joel Osteen Issues Statement, Shocking Revelation Released on Lakewood Shooter

Following the chaotic aftermath of the shooting at Joel Osteen's Lakewood Church in Houston, Texas, distressing details are being released about the shooter and what drove her to commit this heinous act.

[As Charisma News reported](#), two individuals were shot and wounded, including a child who is in critical condition, while the shooter now identified as Genesse Escalante Moreno was shot and killed by two swift-acting off-duty officers who were at the church.

It is now being reported that Moreno is a transgender individual from El Salvador who went by the name, Jeffery Escalante-Moreno.

BREAKING: The Lakewood Church shooter was transgender. He went by the name "Genesse" and previously "Jeffrey."

Another act of trans terrorism. We need to have a national conversation about the LGBTQ movement turning youth into violent extremists. pic.twitter.com/CqrbbMKEw2

– Libs of TikTok (@libsoftiktok) [February 12, 2024](#)

There is still confusion by many media outlets about whether Moreno/Escalante is woman who identifies as a man or a man who identifies as a woman, but the Post Millennial writes, “Reports indicated that the shooter was female, but it has since been revealed that Moreno was male.”

Regardless of the actual gender of the deceased suspect, this continues the harrowing trend of radicalized, LGBTQ shooters targeting Christian institutions, [much like the Covenant School shooter Audrey Hale](#).

Hale was a woman who believed she was a man and former student at the Covenant School, who ended up killing six people including three children before officers killed her on the scene.

In the Lakewood terror attack yesterday in Houston, it has also been discovered that the shooter had written, “FREE PALESTINE” on the side of the rifle used to carry out the shooting.

The attack at Lakewood Church took place during the Spanish-speaking service around 1:53 p.m. Shots can be overheard on the church’s livestream with panicked congregants scattering in the background.

[#BREAKING](#): Watch Moments when the active shooter began to fire shots at the Lakewood Church

[#Houston](#) | [#Texas](#)

Watch chilling footage of an active shooter incident during a live Spanish service broadcast. The suspect began firing multiple shots, resulting in a... pic.twitter.com/bfXGuSi436

– R A W S A L E R T S (@rawsalerts) [February 11, 2024](#)

Pastor Joel Osteen released a message following the shooting:

Our community is devastated by today's events and grateful for the swift actions of law enforcement. May the healing hands of God touch the lives of everyone involved and provide comfort during this difficult time.

In the face of such darkness, we must hold onto our faith and remember evil will not prevail. God will guide us through the darkest of times. Together, we will rise above this tragedy and stand firm in our commitment to love and support one another.

In times like these, our faith is tested, but it is also strengthened. We don't always understand why things like this happen, but we know that God is in control.

Please join me in continued prayer for healing and peace.

Our community is devastated by today's events and grateful for the swift actions of law enforcement. May the healing hands of God touch the lives of everyone involved and provide comfort during this difficult time.

In the face of such darkness, we must hold onto our faith and... pic.twitter.com/hAz0SSX69i– Joel Osteen (@JoelOsteen) [February 12, 2024](#)

The deceased suspect has a history of criminal activity, as well as using multiple aliases in the past. According to KHOU 11 in Houston:

Moreno had a criminal history dating back to 2005, and previously identified as Jeffery Escalante, according to a Texas Department of Public Safety records search. Prior arrests include failure to stop and give information, assault of a public servant, assault causing bodily injury, forgery, possession of marijuana, theft, evading arrest unlawful carrying weapon.

Between the time of being shot and death, Moreno told police there was also a bomb. However authorities searched the backpack and vehicle used in the shooting as well as Lakewood Church without finding any evidence of a additional terror weapons.

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James Lasher is Staff Writer for Charisma Media.

Is There Anyone Not Mad About Jesus Super Bowl Ads?

Even with all of the talk surrounding the Kansas City Chiefs, the San Francisco 49ers and Taylor Swift, people still ended up discussing Jesus and the commercial He was featured in.

Promoted by the He Gets Us organization who spent upwards of \$100 million total in their marketing campaign, the commercial [featuring people washing the feet of others has caused quite a stir following its airing.](#)

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According to their website, He Gets Us had a different strategy this year than previous Super Bowls, stating:

As we thought about what to do for this year's commercial, we reflected on our 2023 TV spot, "Love Your Enemies." That commercial was all about Hate and Division. Ultimately, it was about pride. Pride says, "I'm right, and you're wrong."

Every image depicted people in a state of prideful contention, whether it be politicians yelling in a debate or parents fighting at a youth football game.

So we thought that maybe this year, we should focus on the thematic inverse of last year's commercial – one built on the premise of Love and Unity. And with an upcoming election year that will be filled with division and derision, we decided to focus on one of the most important directives given by Jesus – Love Your Neighbor.

Highlighting the love and servant leadership Jesus exemplified when He washed His disciples feet, He Gets Us appeared to try and emulate this. Using people of various paths of life, the message of the commercial made it's appearance at the end against a black screen that read, "Jesus Didn't Teach Hate."

As it turns out, people on both the left and the right are fuming mad at the commercial.

Many of the critics on the right, stemming from people like social commentator Jason Whitlock who just didn't care for it to The Babylon Bee's Joel Berry who surmised that the commercial was trying to sell Jesus as a leftist or using Him to sell a political movement.

There's a reason the "He Gets Us" commercial didn't show a liberal washing the feet of someone in a MAGA hat, or a BLM protestor washing an officer's feet. That would've been actually subversive.

Because they were strictly following oppressed v oppressor intersectionality... pic.twitter.com/R1ZS1wkTQ4

– Joel Berry (@JoelWBerry) [February 12, 2024](#)

There appears to be a unified theme in much of the criticism,

as many social media users pointed to the lack of repentance in the message.

The Blazes Steve Deace was less than pleased with the message in the commercial in his post on X, saying, “Jesus washed the feet of His disciples, not the multitudes of unrepentant sinners as the ad depicts. Instead, for them He freely offered Himself up as a living sacrifice for their sins, which the ad never points out to them. It affirms them in their sin instead.”

How wrong was [#HeGetsUs](#) ad at the [#SuperBowl](#) ? Jesus washed the feet of His disciples, not the multitudes of unrepentant sinners as the ad depicts. Instead, for them He freely offered Himself up as a living sacrifice for their sins, which the ad never points out to them. It...

– Steve Deace (@SteveDeaceShow) [February 12, 2024](#)

Opinions from those on the left side of the political/social/cultural spectrum were not too favorable either.

[Since the He Gets Us organization](#) has ties and funding to groups such as the Alliance Defending Freedom, as well as Hobby Lobby co-founder David Green, they have been labeled by the left as a part of the “anti-LGBTQ and anti-abortion” movement. Many left-leaning social posters viewed it as a push for Christian nationalism, while others called for churches to be taxed (He Gets Us is not a church).

Regardless which side a person stands on this issue of the He Gets Us campaign, the need for biblical literacy is clear.

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Whether we struggle with showing others grace, love or mercy like Jesus does, we must never forget that true repentance and a turning away from the sinful lives we lived before Christ are the essential parts of salvation.

Jesus loves all of us, but does not tolerate the sin we practice. This is why we must turn from it and abandon our flesh while taking up our crosses with Him and grow in the righteousness of God. The Bible teaches people what the God views as righteous and what He views as sin, and without biblical literacy to guide us down the path of righteousness, deception can take hold and instead pull people away from the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

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James Lasher is Staff Writer for Charisma Media.

Prophetic Vision Sparking Concerns for Super Bowl in Las Vegas

[In a recent YouTube video,](#) Joseph Z again shared a prophetic vision he experienced on Sept. 16, 2023, raising concerns about potential events surrounding the Super Bowl in Las Vegas. Z recounts the vision, stating, “I woke up very early this morning and I had a prophetic vision where Heather and I were in Las Vegas.” The vision prompted a sense of urgency as he continued, “I began to see something and I started to hear the words, ‘a breach, there’s a breach going to happen

regarding Las Vegas.'”

[In an exclusive interview with Charisma News in December](#), Z previously discussed the dream, along with other matters he believes the Lord put on his heart for 2024.

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What caught Z’s attention was the phrase, “What happens there will not stay there,” a twist on the popular advertising slogan associated with the city. Z says describes the vision as “the walls [were] contained.”

Connecting the vision to technology, Z suggests, “there’s something to do with waves, Wi-Fi, like a blast of information and technology that is putting pressure on Las Vegas.” He expresses uncertainty about the specifics but believes there is a connection to a potential tech breach that will cause major disruption in the city.

[The unexpected revelation in Z’s vision](#) is the alignment with the location of the Super Bowl in 2024. Z states, “Now, the interesting thing is that we’ve already prophesied about this. We’ve talked about this quite a bit, but now a sports announcer by the name of Joe Buck comes out and says something interesting.” Quoting Joe Buck, renowned sports announcer, Z emphasized Buck’s unease regarding the Super Bowl in Las Vegas, “There’s going to be some story...there’s going to be something that happens because it’s Vegas now, get this, it’s Vegas and it won’t stay in Vegas,” Buck said, echoing one of the themes in Z’s dream.

Joe Buck is predicting that the Super Bowl in Las Vegas will be a “mess”

“I do not have any desire to be there. There’s going to be some story, there’s gonna be something that happens because it’s Vegas and it won’t stay in Vegas. There’s gonna be a

big... pic.twitter.com/0gmX5qxXqY

– JPAFootball (@jasrifootball) [February 6, 2024](#)

Throughout the recent video Z calls for prayer, expressing worries about cyber attacks, containment and possible difficulties surrounding the Super Bowl. He emphasizes, “I’m not at the point that [I] want to say, you know, do this, don’t do that. I’m not trying to do that again; we know in part and we prophesy in part.”

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Z reveals a timeframe between the Super Bowl and May as a crucial period, hinting at upcoming events including an April eclipse many have labeled [“The Great American Eclipse.”](#) Z calls for continued prayer, stressing the need to pay attention to the signs and wonders unfolding in the world.

These instructions align with the Bible’s guidance to believers on how to act in the face of uncertainty. Using biblical and spiritual discernment, believers are able to separate the true from the false by testing the spirit of a prophecy and comparing it with the Word of God, and live victoriously in an ever-increasingly dark world.

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James Lasher is Staff Writer for Charisma Media.

Dream Center Lifts Up L.A. Amid Historic Storms

Even in the midst of literal storms, God is there with us as trials and tribulation come our way.

He also sets in place ministries to help those affected by life's hardships, [such as the Dream Center in Los Angeles, California.](#)

Answering the call Jesus put forth, the Dream Center, helmed by founder Matthew Barnett, has opened its doors and hit the streets to assist those being affected by the threatening weather pattern and lack proper housing.

Posting to X (formerly Twitter), Barnett sounded the alarm about the approaching weather, and that the Dream Center had emergency housing on standby for those who needed it.

The [@LADreamCenter](#) is providing emergency housing for anyone in need of shelter as the rain and hurricane force winds about to land in a few hours.

– Matthew Barnett (@MatthewBarnett) [February 4, 2024](#)

A relentless storm has been unleashing torrential rain on Southern California since Sunday, shattering precipitation records and leaving residents grappling with historic levels of rainfall.

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According to the National Weather Service, the two-day period from Feb. 4 to Feb. 5 became the third wettest in the history of Los Angeles. The last time such a deluge occurred was on

Jan. 25 and Jan. 26, 1956, as reported by the NWS.

Sunday stood out as the wettest February day in nearly 110 years for Los Angeles, making it the third wettest day overall since records began in 1877.

“Nearly half of the average seasonal rainfall of Los Angeles has fallen in two days,” noted NWS officials.

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Beyond Los Angeles, several airports in the area experienced record-breaking rainfall. Los Angeles International Airport saw over two-and-a-half inches Feb. 5, surpassing the previous record set in 1978. Fox Field in Lancaster, Palmdale Airport in Palmdale, Bob Hope Airport in Burbank and Long Beach Airport also witnessed rainfall records being shattered.

The cumulative rainfall for the 2023-2024 season in downtown Los Angeles, starting from Oct. 1, 2023, to Sept. 30, 2024, has reached 13.95 inches.

“It is also already 98 % of the normal seasonal rainfall of 14.25 inches,” highlighted the National Weather Service.

In the wake of the devastating storms that have swept through California, leaving communities in need, [the Dream Center's provision of emergency housing stands as a beacon of hope and compassion.](#) As they open their doors to those affected, this act of service mirrors the teachings of Jesus, who exhorted his followers to love and serve others selflessly.

The Dream Center's response exemplifies the Christian call to be a light in the darkness, demonstrating that in times of crisis, faith compels believers to extend a helping hand to those facing adversity. In the spirit of community and compassion, the Dream Center's commitment to providing shelter

and support echoes the timeless message of love and service that Christians are called to embody in a world that needs it now more than ever.{eoa}

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James Lasher is Staff Writer for Charisma Media.

‘Nasty’: Radical Activists Reach Pathetic New Lows at Library Event

Hundreds of families gathered at a local library in Missouri for a BRAVE Books story hour, [where professional surfer Bethany Hamilton](#) and former University of Kentucky swimmer Riley Gaines shared their inspiring stories of overcoming obstacles in the face of transgender athletes competing in women’s sports.

As Gaines and Hamilton recounted their athletic experiences, the event was marred by the presence of transgender activists draped in pride flags and themed clothing, causing disturbances from the crowd. One activist went to the extreme, dressing as a shark to mock Hamilton, who famously survived a shark attack in 2003.

CEO of BRAVE Books, Trent Talbot, expressed dismay at the disruptive behavior, stating, “The activist who showed up dressed as a shark to target Bethany Hamilton is a terrible person. Once again, those who claim they are most tolerant turn out to be the most callous.”

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The activists, who had made a “call to action” on social media urging supporters to “wear inclusive shirts” and to contact the library to cancel the event, were condemned for their disruptive tactics.

Despite the disruptions, Riley Gaines found inspiration in the support shown by a long line of young girls and swimmers who attended the story hour. “I’m so grateful for the people of Missouri who came out to the story hour. The presence of a group of confused people dressed as a shark and clothed in pride did nothing to stop hundreds of families and young girls from taking in messages of truth and faith at our BRAVE Books story hour,” Gaines said.

How messed up is this? This protester brought a shark stuffed animal to mock Bethany Hamilton who lost her arm to a shark.

Miserable, insufferable people. But oh so “tolerant”
<https://t.co/o2yP0gYhXH> pic.twitter.com/TbMmY6Wnds

– Riley Gaines (@Riley_Gaines_) [February 6, 2024](#)

The Library Center event featured book readings of the new children’s books “Happy No Snakes Day” by Gaines and “Surfing Past Fear” by Hamilton. Both books, [published by the conservative Christian book publisher BRAVE Books](#), advocate standing up for truth despite fear and overcoming obstacles to achieve big dreams.

During the event, Gaines presented Hamilton with the Riley Gaines Center’s 2023 “True Woman of the Year” award. Special attendees included Missouri Secretary of State John “Jay” Ashcroft and former Division I collegiate swimmer Valentina Gomez.

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Hamilton, a survivor of a shark attack, recently criticized transgender athletes in women's sports, stating on social media, "Male-bodied athletes should not be competing in female sports. Period."

Gaines, who famously competed with transgender athlete Lia Thomas in the 2022 NCAA Championships, has become an outspoken defender of maintaining the integrity of women's sports. Reflecting on the disruption caused by activists, she said, "This is the tactic they use time and time again. They want so desperately to mock, intimidate and threaten those they don't agree with into silence, but this was a step too far."

Despite the challenges, Gaines concluded, "I have no words to describe how messed up it is to directly mock Bethany Hamilton and her traumatic experience that cost her arm by bringing a shark to a children's story hour. Dare I call this protester an ableist?" She emphasized the importance of sharing stories at the BRAVE Books story hour, noting, "They needed to hear the stories read even more than the kids."

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James Lasher is Staff Writer for Charisma Media.

Rome and America: The Decline

of Empires

In a recent video, [evangelist Perry Stone delves into the intriguing parallels](#) between the current state of America and the historical trajectory of democracies, particularly ancient Greece and Rome. Stone sheds light on the cyclical nature of history and the warnings it holds for the United States.

This is a topic often overlooked or mocked by many Americans—the idea that democracies, including the one in the United States, do not endure indefinitely. Drawing inspiration from the roots of Western democracy in ancient Greece, specifically Athens, Stone highlights how democracies are designed to empower the people, allowing them to share power and elect representatives. However, he underlines a significant historical truth: democracies, despite their inherent strengths, have a limited lifespan.

Embarking on a historical journey, Stone traces the roots of democracy to ancient Greece, attributing early democratic ideas to the Phoenicians, showing how democracies have existed off and on for 2,500 years within a cyclical nature of history, a concept rooted in ancient Greek beliefs.

The Founding Fathers of the United States, well-versed in both Scripture and historical texts, drew inspiration from the democratic principles of the Grecian Empire and political patterns of the Roman Empire when establishing the nation.

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What Stone uncovers however is an intriguing list of parallels between Rome and America. From the structure of government to societal practices, the similarities are striking. Both nations experienced wars over slavery, allowed the killing of infants, practiced the same-sex lifestyle, permitted gay

marriage and built stadiums for sports, glorifying their athletes. The list continues, pointing out shared characteristics in areas such as religion, census-taking and the presence of houses of prostitution.

It is no stretch of the imagination that America is currently undergoing the same “democratic erosion” that the Roman empire suffered through. This erosion, as Stone explains, manifests in a variety of ways, including a diminishing work ethic, growing dependency on government support, a decline in Christian values and a waning respect for churches and the Bible. Stone’s historical and biblical analysis serves as a stark warning about the potential consequences of these societal shifts.

To further illustrate his perspective, [Stone draws a parallel between the decline of the Roman Empire and potential challenges facing the United States.](#) Economic strains, similar to those experienced by Rome, are evident in the need for infrastructure repair, including roads and bridges. The historical pattern of an increasing number of people relying on government assistance rings familiar, leading Rome to pass laws to prevent individuals from quitting their jobs to maintain a workforce.

But there was one particularly crucial turning point in the decline of the Roman Empire—the loss of individual responsibility among the citizens. Stone notes that Senators of Rome prioritized retaining power over genuine concern for the people, a trend echoed in the halls of America’s Congress. The tax burden on the rich became so immense that many chose not to have children, fearing the financial strain, a scenario reminiscent of present concerns regarding the national debt.

Edward Gibbon, the author of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* and was no fan of Christianity, outlined five reasons for the downfall of great civilizations:

1. The rapid increase of divorce, with the undermining of the sanctity of the home, which is the basis of society (the nuclear family).
2. Higher and higher taxes; and the spending of public money on bread and circuses (food and entertainment).
3. The mad craze for pleasure, sports becoming more exciting and brutal each year (NFL, NBA, MMA, gambling).
4. The building of gigantic armies to fight external enemies, when the most deadly enemy, the decadence of the people, lay within (consumerism, narcissism, lack of education).
5. The decay of religion; faith fading into mere form, losing touch with life and becoming impotent to guide it (paganism, persecution of Christianity, rise of religious “nones” and Satanism).

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Perry Stone's comprehensive analysis serves as a necessary exploration of history, democracy and biblical prophecy. It urges Christian and Americans alike to reflect on the patterns of the past, drawing parallels between the rise and fall of civilizations, and consider the potential consequences of current societal, and spiritual, shifts.

Whether one views these connections through a historical, political or biblical lens, Stone's message invites the public's attention toward the resilience of democracies, the lessons of history and the shaping forces that influence the destiny of nations.

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