

Flat Earth Debate: In the Round or on Solid Ground?

As Israeli hostages, kidnapped by Hamas during the Oct. 7 terror attack in southern Israel, are gradually freed under a brokered cease-fire deal, stories of the horrors endured during their 50-plus days in captivity are emerging.

In the Schneider Medical Center in Tel Aviv, a specially assembled team of professionals, led by Dr. Yael Mozer Glassberg, is tasked with treating the returned hostages. Dr. Mozer Glassberg, usually heading the hospital's liver transplant unit, stated, "It is very, very quiet here," contrasting the usual sounds of pediatric wards. The team has worked with 22 freed hostages, including 15 children, in a specially created ward.

While physically stable, many hostages lost up to 15% of their body weight, and all are hesitant to raise their voices after their prolonged stay with terrorists. Family members and psycho-social medical teams are providing comfort and support. However, it's too early to discuss the full impact of their ordeal.

Israeli authorities have requested that hostages and their families avoid sharing in-depth details of their time in captivity due to concerns for the safety of those still held in Gaza. Nevertheless, information that has surfaced reveals the brutal treatment by captors, particularly toward toddlers, young children and the elderly.

Deborah Cohen, the aunt of 12-year-old Eitan Yahalomi, revealed that terrorists forced her nephew to watch raw footage of the Oct. 7 horrors at gunpoint. If he or other children cried, the terrorists threatened them with a gun to keep quiet. Yahalomi, kidnapped from his home, was placed on

the back of a motorcycle and driven into Gaza, where people jeered and beat him.

Relatives of the hostages have faced difficulties sharing terror stories from the Oct. 7 massacre, which claimed over 1,200 lives in southern Israel.

Israel's Ministry of Health reports that 69 hostages have been freed so far, including 51 Israeli citizens and 18 foreign nationals. Thirty are children, 20 are women, and one man. However, nine Israeli children, including a 10-month-old baby, remain in captivity.

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Christian Response: Nurturing Healing and Hope in Times of Tragedy

In times of profound trauma and tragedy, Christians can turn to the Bible for guidance on how to respond. The Scriptures emphasize the importance of offering comfort, support, and hope to those who have endured suffering.

1. Comfort Through Prayer

Philippians 4:6-7: "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with gratitude, make your requests known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will protect your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Christians are encouraged to lift up prayers for the victims and their families, seeking God's comfort and peace in the midst of their pain.

2. Extending Compassion

Galatians 6:2: "Carry one another's burdens, and in this way,

you will fulfill the law of Christ.”

Following the example of Christ, believers can extend compassion and support to those affected by the tragedy. This may involve practical assistance, empathetic listening and a willingness to share in the burdens of others.

3. Offering Hope Through Scripture

Romans 15:13: “Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Spirit.”

Sharing uplifting and hope-filled passages from the Bible can provide solace and encouragement to those grappling with the aftermath of a traumatic event.

4. Community and Fellowship

Hebrews 10:24-25: “And let us consider how to spur one another to love and to good works. Let us not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but let us exhort one another, especially as you see the Day approaching.”

Encouraging community and fellowship is vital. Christians can come together to provide emotional and spiritual support, fostering a sense of unity and strength.

In the face of such tragic events, Christians are called to be a source of light, love and hope. Through prayer, compassion, the sharing of Scripture and community support, believers can play a crucial role in helping those affected navigate the path toward healing and restoration.

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Supernatural Revival Unleashes Divine Power in Dallas Mass Deliverance 2

In a recent installment of Charisma magazine's insightful "Beyond the Article" series, Pastor Greg Locke of Global Vision Bible Church delves into a pressing question: Are people desperate for the Holy Spirit?

Throughout the interview, Pastor Locke illuminates a critical concern within the American church, underscoring the necessity for a profound grasp of the gospel and the authentic transformative influence wielded by the Holy Spirit.

Half-Truths and Incomplete Healing

Locke begins by highlighting a common problem found in the prophets of old, where the priests and prophets only shared half the truth. The danger, as Locke sees it, is that the American church tends to give people just enough Jesus without bringing about real freedom, deliverance or healing. The focus on motivational and pop psychology sermons falls short of the profound transformation the gospel offers.

"There is no real repentance," Locke claims. "There's no real transformation based on the gospel. No real healing in their home, in their marriage."

Medicating and Counseling the Demonic

Locke addresses the prevalent practice of medicating and counseling demonic influences instead of truly confronting them. He points out that cute sermons, therapy sessions and

other conventional methods may fall short when dealing with spiritual battles. The church, he argues, has taken people just far enough, and it's not the people unwilling to go further but the pastors afraid to delve into uncomfortable territory.

"All of these things aren't going to relieve people of a demonic spirit, of a spirit of heaviness or fear or addiction," Locke shares.

Overcoming Fear and Embracing True Deliverance

Reflecting on his own experiences, Locke admits to times when he, as a pastor, hesitated to embrace the movement of the Holy Spirit fully. The fear of accountability and responsibility led to cutting short potentially transformative moments. However, he emphasizes the importance of overcoming fear and allowing the Holy Spirit to bring genuine deliverance, drawing parallels with Mark chapter 1.

"We take people just far enough to still keep them in bondage," determines Locke.

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Pastoral Responsibility and True Gospel Transformation

Locke raises a critical point about pastors being complicit in maintaining a cycle of partial healing. He reveals the alarming reality of pastors, even from large churches, seeking deliverance for addictions and struggles behind closed doors. The focus on outward conformity rather than true gospel transformation becomes a stumbling block.

"it's kind of like a doctor situation," Locke says. "There's money in keeping people sick, right, and so sometimes there's money, there's power, there's influence, in keeping people

coming back.”

Breaking the Chains: Moving Beyond Half-Truths

Passionately advocating for a shift in mindset within the church, Locke exhorts the church to move beyond half-truths and embrace the complete gospel. He challenges the notion that pastors may prefer people to be healed only slightly, suggesting that a fear of losing control or influence could be at play.

“There is real freedom in Jesus Christ. A gospel that doesn’t provide freedom and life transformation is no gospel at all,” Locke says.

The Law of Double Reference: Unveiling Biblical Continuity

Delving into biblical references from Joel 2 and Acts 2, Locke emphasizes the Law of Double Reference. He clarifies that the fulfillment of these prophecies did not end with Pentecost but extends until the Second Coming of Christ. The continuous availability of deliverance and miracles challenges cessationist viewpoints.

Complete Wholeness: Challenging Cessationist Mindsets

Confronting the cessationist mindset, Locke acknowledges its comfort, but asserting that it contradicts the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit. Drawing from his own journey out of cessationism, he urges a re-examination of the biblical narrative, emphasizing that gifts are given to the church until the perfect man is formed.

“Why does the devil have supernatural ability, and God apparently has no more gifts for the body?” Locke asks. “From a cessationist point of view we only look at the beginning and we say, well, that happened on the day of Pentecost, yes, but the text clearly teaches us that it continues until the second coming of Christ, and so the deliverance is still available.

The miracle signs and wonders and visions are still available as long as they're in the context of Scripture."

Balancing Truth and Spirit: The Need for Both

Locke stresses the importance of maintaining a balance between truth and spirit within the church. Acknowledging abuses and misinterpretations, he advocates for a genuine pursuit of both spiritual manifestations and biblical truth, steering away from extremes.

"A false balance is an abomination to the Lord. We need both spirit and truth in worship," Locke explains.

Pastor Greg Locke's insights challenge the church to move beyond half-truths, embrace the fullness of the gospel and welcome the transformative power of the Holy Spirit for true freedom and deliverance in Christ.

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Update: Christian Pastor Clings to Life, Family Calls for Prayer

Zulya Schmidt, wife of 26-year-old Christian preacher Hans Schmidt, continues to urge fervent prayers for her husband's recovery following a tragic shooting incident on Nov. 15. Despite facing grim circumstances, she expressed profound gratitude in a Thanksgiving message on Facebook.

In the midst of a broader debate over religious freedom in the United States, the Department of Justice (DOJ) has weighed in on a legal clash in Oregon, highlighting concerns about the restriction of church activities.

St. Timothy's church in Brookings, Oregon, finds itself in a legal struggle with the city over an ordinance that limits the church's provision of free meals to those in need. The DOJ, through Kristen Clarke of the Civil Rights Division, emphasized the potential violation of federal antidiscrimination laws and the infringement on religious organizations' use of their land.

"Many churches and faith-based organizations across the country are on the front lines serving the critical needs of people experiencing hunger and homelessness," Clarke explains. "Discriminatory zoning restrictions that burden and limit religious organizations' use of their land violate federal antidiscrimination laws. The Justice Department is committed to enforcing federal civil rights laws to ensure that all religious groups can freely exercise their religious beliefs."

The heart of the matter revolves around the city's decision to restrict the church's charitable activities, claiming the ordinance aims to control the frequency of free meal services provided by St. Timothy's. The church, backed by the Episcopal Diocese in Oregon, argues that such restrictions impose a substantial burden on its faith-driven mission of compassion and offering assistance.

The legal battle hinges on the interpretation of the federal Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA). The DOJ contends that the city's actions may violate RLUIPA, a law designed to safeguard religious institutions from discriminatory land use regulations.

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St. Timothy's asserts that, for over a decade, it provided meal services up to six days per week, including during the challenges posed by the pandemic. The church maintains that its commitment to serving the community is an integral aspect of its religious exercise.

The city, however, challenges the applicability of RLUIPA to its actions and asserts that the ordinance does not significantly burden St. Timothy's religious activities.

In times when religious freedom is a subject of growing concern for American Christians, legal disputes like these reflect a broader societal shift. The Bible forewarns of challenges to Christians, stating, "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you," (John 15:18). The apostle Paul encourages believers to endure persecution, stating, "Yes, and all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution," (2 Tim. 3:12).

In navigating these challenges, the biblical perspective encourages Christians to stand firm in their faith. As Jesus advises in Matthew 5:10, "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

The ongoing legal battle between St. Timothy's church and the city of Brookings underscores the complex interplay between religious freedom, community service and legal restrictions. As the debate unfolds, American Christians face an increasingly delicate balance between their faith's convictions and societal expectations.

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Troubled Times See Boom in Exorcisms Worldwide

Sitting down with Charisma magazine for an exclusive “Beyond the Article” interview, Pastor Jentezen Franklin shares how he became aware of the transformative power behind prayer and fasting.

Raised in a preacher’s home, Pastor Franklin shares his early experiences with fasting, witnessing his parents example through prayer and fasting. Reflecting on these memories, he emphasizes the importance of fasting in aligning oneself with God’s will, sharing personal encounters during a pivotal three-day fast in college.

“Fasting is about us coming in alignment with God’s will. It’s not about what I can get out of God; it’s about giving more of ourselves to Him,” Franklin says.

Recalling moments of deep prayer and sensitivity during fasting, Franklin draws parallels between physical discipline and spiritual discipline. He likens the process to losing one sense, allowing others to intensify, aligning with the biblical principle of becoming more attuned to God’s voice.

“When I knelt down the presence of God overwhelmed me. There’s something about fasting that just makes you sensitive, it makes you open, it makes you broken. It makes you anointed, [with] ears to hear your spiritual ears get bigger,” Franklin explains.

Moving beyond the physical benefits, Franklin discusses the spiritual impact of fasting on the spirit, soul and body. He

emphasizes the biblical precedent of fasting, citing examples from Jesus, Elijah, Moses and Paul.

“Fasting hits all three aspects of our being: it fine-tunes our spirit, renews our mind and brings our flesh under control,” Franklin notes.

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Reflecting on the recent revival at Free Chapel, Franklin attributes it to a 21-day fast where families were symbolically placed on the altar through submitted pictures. The focus on youth and backsliders brought forth a powerful move of the Holy Spirit, with many experiencing salvation and spiritual renewal.

“We could not get the people in the buildings. And the thing that touched me the most was it was centered around two things: We had fasted and we prayed for our young people, and that the backsliders would come home and that there would be an outpouring on the sons and the daughters of the Holy Spirit. Baptism, speaking in other tongues, as the Spirit gave the utterance, and I’m telling you, we saw hundreds and hundreds and hundreds. I could not even count how many were saved and backsliders came back home,” Franklin shares.

Encouraging those unfamiliar with fasting, Franklin recommends education and preparation, suggesting resources and materials to understand its biblical significance. Stressing the communal aspect, he advises against fasting alone, suggesting a sunup-to-sundown approach.

“Fasting says to God, ‘I’m sincere. I mean business. I believe in You, and I’m turning with all of my heart to You.’ It’s a powerful way to show God that you’re serious,” Franklin asserts.

Pastor Franklin underscores that fasting isn't about getting more from God but about giving more of oneself to Him. "You don't get more of God; God gets more of you," he declares, encouraging believers to embrace fasting as a sincere pursuit of God's will and transformation in their lives.

To read more about Pastor Jentezen Franklin's insight into fasting, [click here](#).

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Mysterious 'Witch Bottles' Wash Ashore: Spiritual Hazard or Harmless Artifact?

In a recent interview with Charisma News, Skillet frontman, John Cooper, both a musician and author, delved into the complexities of our ever-changing culture. Cooper's insights, drawn from his experiences and observations, are captured in his upcoming book, "Wimpy, Weak, and Woke: How Truth Can Save America from Utopian Destruction."

The conversation touched upon the challenges of addressing the cultural shifts and moral dilemmas facing society today. Cooper expressed concern about the prevailing ideologies influencing both the secular world and the church, leading to what he terms as being "wimpy, weak and woke."

"I think we are to the place now where most people are like,

'OK, things are getting pretty weird.' ...Most people see these things happening now and they're just saying, 'What is going on?' and I wanted to write a book that encapsulated all of those things under the rubric of being wimpy, weak and woke," Cooper explains.

"Wimpy" refers to a tendency to prioritize being winsome over telling the truth, especially within the Christian community. It takes strength to stand on the Word of God in an increasingly secular world. Cooper notes that the fear of offending others has led to a reluctance to discuss critical topics such as morality, sexuality and gender. The desire to win the favor of the world, according to Cooper, has compromised the steadfast proclamation of biblical truths.

In addressing the challenge of being "wimpy," Cooper draws inspiration from the Bible, urging believers to stand strong in their faith. Proverbs 28:1 states, "The wicked flee when no man pursues, but the righteous are bold as a lion." This verse underscores the importance of courageously proclaiming God's truth even in the face of cultural opposition and cancellation.

On the concept of being "weak," Cooper emphasizes the importance of understanding the philosophical and theological foundations of our faith. He argues that a lack of familiarity with these foundations has weakened the Christian response to cultural challenges. Without a solid grasp of biblical principles, believers may unknowingly adopt secular worldviews that contradict the teachings of Christ.

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"We have become philosophically and theologically weak," Cooper proclaims. "We do not know what has come before us. We do not understand political philosophy. We don't understand worldview. And so we just start saying things that we don't

know are absolutely ridiculous, because we just don't know the Bible."

Cooper draws attention to Ephesians 6:10, which encourages believers to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. This verse serves as a reminder that true strength comes from a deep connection to God and a reliance on His Word.

The term 'woke' takes on a nuanced meaning in Cooper's discussion. While acknowledging the biblical mandate to care for the poor and oppressed, he critiques the secular social justice movement, which he believes often centers around power dynamics rather than biblical justice.

"It creates an entire world, not based on biblical righteousness or biblical wickedness, but it creates a new world [based] on power and oppression. So it creates these new groups of oppressed people that's not actually accurate to biblical justice."

Cooper calls on Christians to be discerning, guided by biblical principles. Micah 6:8 provides a biblical framework for justice: "He has told you, O man, what is good, and what does the Lord require of you, but to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God."

Cooper also discussed the rising trend of deconstruction within Christian circles, expressing concern that a lack of biblical understanding and an adherence to secular ideologies could lead believers down a path of deconstructing their faith. He emphasized the importance of knowing the Word of God and relying on it for answers.

John Cooper's upcoming book aims to address the challenges of navigating a culture that seems increasingly disconnected from biblical truth. As believers confront the falsehoods of a society that is seeking to replace God, Cooper urges them to stand firm in their faith, grounded in the timeless truths of

the Bible. The call is to be courageous, understanding that true peace and justice come from aligning with the cross of Jesus Christ rather than conforming to the ever-shifting tides of societal expectations. {eo}

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