

How You Can Unknowingly Create Openings in God's Hedge of Protection Around You

We can unknowingly create openings in our hedge of protection, leaving us vulnerable to the enemy.

God will give us dreams and warnings to make us aware and keep us from harm. These dreams are for our good and protect us from the enemy's plans.

Is there somewhere you have caused an opening in your own hedge of protection? {eoa}

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Dr. Colbert: How You Can Bust the Weight Loss Halt

Like steps, it is natural for weight loss to hit plateaus, and then after a minor adjustment, weight loss continues. If your weight loss has stalled or plateaued for three to four weeks, then go through this checklist and adjust as needed.

Plateaus are normal when losing weight, but there are a

limited number of reasons that might happen. Carefully and honestly evaluate yourself as you consider the following.

- Am I eating too many carbs? Even healthy carbs count. At the macro level, 5 percent of your daily intake coming from healthy carbs should be enough to burn fat for most anyone. That's 20 grams of healthy net carbs per day. Odds are your carb intake has crept up and is greater than 5 percent (20 grams).
- Am I consuming too much protein? If you eat an excessive amount of protein, the body will convert the excess protein to carbs, and that can throw you out of ketosis. Usually 3–4 ounces of protein per meal for women and 3–6 ounces of protein per meal for men is adequate. Some people need less.
- Am I drinking enough water? Not drinking enough water can slow weight loss down. Increase your water intake to at least six to eight glasses per day.
- Am I eating too many nuts? Eating too many nuts, which may have excessive net carbs, can knock you out of ketosis. Or maybe the excessive proteins from too many nuts are converting to sugar, which definitely would stop ketosis and weight loss.
- Do I need to start exercising? Consider adding brisk walking to your routine. Start with ten to twenty minutes of walking three times each week. You'll want to eventually increase it to thirty minutes or more five days a week, but for now this is a good start. But just walk; don't run. Also, if you are able, find a walking partner for accountability.
- Am I eating too much dairy? Dairy is often the culprit for slowing down and even stalling weight loss. Look at what you've been eating. Adjust if necessary.
- Am I eating enough fat? Double-check your 75 percent fats intake. Are you still on target? Adding more olive oil or avocado oil to meals is often the answer. For women, 75 percent of 1,600 total calories as fat is 10

tablespoons per day (tablespoons per meal). For men, 75 percent of 2,400 total calories as fat is 15 tablespoons per day (5 tablespoons per meal).

- Am I eating too much food (calories)? Maybe you are simply eating too much food. Look at your daily intake. Are you on target (1,600 calories per day for women and 2,000–2,400 calories per day for men)? Count your calories for a few days to check yourself.
- Am I consuming artificial sweeteners? Fake sugars are notorious for knocking you out of ketosis. Examine your food and drinks closely.
- Am I eating hidden sugars? Examine your food and drinks. Nut butters, for example, which are great for fat and protein intake, often have sugar added and may even have excessive carbs.
- Do I need to increase my exercise? If you want to increase your exercise (beyond the assumed twenty-minute walks at least three times a week), increase your walks to thirty minutes four or five times a week. Do more aerobic exercise, ride a bike, swim, and so on.
- Do I need to begin intermittent fasting? On a keto diet, you will feel full longer and can usually skip meals, especially breakfasts. This increases your fat burning. Maintain your macros as you go. Many of my female patients are able to break through their weight loss plateaus by eating their last meals between 5:00 and 6:00 p.m.
- Am I under too much stress? Stress releases cortisol, which can cause weight gain. Stress may be unavoidable, so learn to practice techniques that calm you. Meditation, praise music, prayer, laughter, sleep, reading books, watching funny movies or TV shows, drinking tea, turning off technology, using essential oils, playing with your grandkids, or journaling are all good ways to decrease stress. If you are able to fix the situation and remove the stressor, that is always the best option. (My book *Stress Less* is a good resource if

you need to break free from stress in your life.)

- Am I experiencing hormone fluctuations? Women have hormone fluctuations during their menstrual cycles, especially during their menstrual periods, and this can slow down weight loss (typically for a week). If this happens, be aware, but press on.
- Am I getting enough sleep? Getting a good night's sleep, seven to eight hours, is vital. Some people need less sleep, but odds are you need to regularly get at least seven to eight hours of sleep each night.
- Do I have a sluggish thyroid? Consult your doctor for this or read my book *Dr. Colbert's Hormone Health Zone*, but a sluggish thyroid is common (especially in women) as we age. Symptoms often include cold hands and feet, losing the outer eyebrows, a lower body temperature, constant fatigue, weight gain, and dry skin. A natural thyroid supplement is usually the answer here.
- Am I consuming too much sodium? Too much salt can slow down your weight loss. I've seen it happen. Look closely at your food intake, and you may need to cut back on the salt and salty seasonings you might be using.
- Am I exercising too much? If you do high-intensity exercise, your body has to burn glucose for energy (protein and fat burn too slowly), so you will need to increase your carbs before a workout. (Or take MCT oil powder or Instant Ketones before a workout.) Otherwise, your body will crash, you may need to sleep, and you may feel sick. All you need to do is increase your carbs before or on those high-intensity-workout days. Eventually you will find the balance. It's best to avoid high-intensity workouts until you achieve your weight loss goals, or you will probably have to increase your carbs before your workouts. {eo}

The preceding is an excerpt from Appendix B of Dr. Don. Colbert's book Beyond Keto (Charisma House 2021). For more information and to order the book, please visit .

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Kingdom Economics: These Kingdom Strategies Will Help Navigate These Tumultuous Times

The world has more uncertainty today than we have seen in decades. Major news events are occurring nearly every day and sometimes every hour.

These events cause people to be anxious, fearful and concerned about the future. Many are worried about their careers, finances and geopolitical events, while wondering if the

pandemic might someday return. Inflation and geopolitical events add to confusion about the future.

Last week's reports document a very strong economy. The monthly change in the Chicago Fed's National Activity index was nearly seven times last month's change. Annualized fourth quarter GDP grew at 7.0%, pushing total 2021 growth to 5.7%—the highest since 1984. Personal consumption expenditures grew 2.1% from the previous month, which was the highest in nearly a year. The economy's growth is primarily a function of post-pandemic consumer exuberance and trillions in additional fiscal and monetary stimulus.

A strong economy is usually good, but current inflation is hot and getting hotter. A strong economy complicates efforts to control inflation. Consumer inflation is 7.5% (the highest since February 1982) and producer inflation is 9.7% (the second highest in history). FHFA showed a 17.6% yearly increase in home prices whereas the S&P/Case-Shiller house price index increased 18.6%. The Fed has promised to start fighting inflation by beginning to raise interest rates and decreasing their nearly \$9 trillion balance sheet starting in March. Both tools would decrease liquidity and slow the economy.

However, geopolitical events are adding another degree of uncertainty for the economy, inflation and Fed policies. After threatening for weeks, Russia invaded Ukraine. An invasion of primarily Russian-speaking areas quickly escalated to a full invasion of the country.

In response, Europe quickly increased their sanctions on Russia and the United States followed their lead. Europe and the United States have decided to increase the flow of weapons and supplies. Some argue that the conflict increases the likelihood that China would send its military into Taiwan. If they were to do so, the economy of the industrial world would likely enter a recession or worse.

Taiwan Semiconductor, for example, supplies more than 90% of the world's advanced computer chips (used in cars, airplanes, smart phones, computers, appliances, TVs, etc.).

These uncertain and turbulent times should encourage us to double down on our kingdom focus and efforts. Instead of focusing on the world's problems, we should concentrate on the Lord and His promises. We walk by faith instead of sight. A focus on the world will lead to confusion, depression and fear.

But the fruit of the kingdom is righteousness, peace and joy. As we move our focus from the world to the Lord, we are suddenly sleeping better, have more energy, are more optimistic, more productive and filled with expectation about the future because we are being led by Him.

"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided to you," (Matt. 6:33, NASB).

"For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit," (Rom. 14:17).

To enjoy a better, more fruitful and productive life, these times demand a life of faith as we follow kingdom principles. To do less will allow the enemy to invade our God-granted territory. The times will tempt some to compromise, but don't allow it to happen to you. It is a time to rise, to be strong and courageous. Remember, we have not been given a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline (2 Tim. 1:7).

The following kingdom principles, strategies and tactics should help to navigate these rough waters:

- *Walk in love: We are commanded to be imitators of God, just as Christ so loved us (Eph. 5:1-2).*

- *Remember that our struggle is not against flesh and blood,*

but against spiritual forces (Eph. 6:12): Recognize that the ultimate battle is between light and darkness, good and evil.

– Study and meditate on the Word of God: The Word will light our feet and our path (Ps. 119:105). In other words, the word will keep us from stumbling and show us which path to take.

– Pray in faith (Matt. 21:22): Whatever is prayed in faith is powerful. Faith will also be credited as righteousness (Rom. 4:20-22).

– Remember the promises the Lord has made to you through His Word, personal revelation and tested prophets: Every promise will be accomplished (2 Cor. 1:20).

– Ask the Lord for the wisdom to navigate these times: If asked in faith, it will be given (James 1:5).

– Keep a kingdom focus: We have everything we need to have better, more fruitful and productive lives. All authority has been given to our King. Other people depend upon us accomplishing our purposes. Let us focus on the anchor of our souls.

“This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and reliable and one which enters within the veil,” (Heb. 6:19). {eoa}

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When You Can't Say No, Here's Where Your Real Strength Resides

Before starting my time with God that morning in 1977, I decided God wouldn't mind if I finished off the cinnamon rolls staring me in the face. I grabbed the rolls and started reading in Matthew 17.

Then God's flashlight illuminated words that went straight to my heart.

Jesus replied, "Because you have so little faith. Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you" (Matt. 17:20, NIV).

I Have a Little Faith

I said, "God, I have a little bit of faith. I also have a mountain of flesh on my body. How can this mountain be moved?"

To put things in perspective, it was 1977 and I weighed over 200 for the first time in my life. I was headed toward 250 and I didn't like it. Still, I loved cinnamon rolls, cookies, cakes, rich casseroles, hot rolls, chips and so much more.

Jesus didn't answer my question in an audible voice but in the sense of knowing deep in my soul. I know the answer was straight from Him because it is not an answer I expected, had ever heard anywhere before or had ever thought about.

Stop Eating Sugar

He said, "Stop eating sugar. Eat more meats, fruits and vegetables. Stop eating so much bread."

I said, "Nice plan, Jesus. If I could do that, I could lose weight but I can't do that."

I didn't ask Him if He could help me with this plan. I didn't tell Him I'd think about it. I didn't decide if He was telling me to do this, He must have a reason. I simply said, "I don't need Your advice, after all, Jesus."

I didn't want to give up sugar. I knew the Bible well enough to know as a Christian I am free to do whatever I want and if I want to eat sugar, then I'm going to eat sugar. Nowhere in the Bible does it say, "Thou shalt not eat sugar."

The Sugar Conundrum

The conundrum I found myself in, though, was I wanted to lose weight and I knew overeating foods containing processed sugar was one of my biggest problems. Still, I didn't want to give up those foods completely. They were too intertwined with who I was.

For the next 30 years, I tried to lose weight by finding diets that curtailed sugar and most breads and focused on protein, meat, vegetables and fruits. On those diets, I could lose weight but I never learned anything about how to change my habits.

I'd stay on the diet until I got to a goal. Then I'd celebrate by baking one of Grandma's delicious oatmeal cakes and eating as much of it as I wanted. That always resulted in me gaining the weight back plus more.

Jesus, You're Mean to Me!

The plan Jesus gave me felt like He was being mean to me. Why could I not eat sugar? Others could eat it and not gain an ounce. Life was not fair.

He made Himself clear and plain to me on that day; it's a day I will never forget. It's the day He gave me a lifestyle change plan designed especially for me, but I thumbed my nose at Him and walked away. Even by this time, eating sugar had become more important to me than following Him. I had no clue I would become more than twice the size I was then before I finally implemented His plan.

If I'd been in my right mind and thought about it logically, I would understand eating sugar was not good for me. I was gaining weight, taxing my body and setting myself up to develop diabetes, high blood pressure and many other diseases

I was denying the Holy Spirit access to all of me. I was blinded by a lie I had allowed to grow into a stronghold. I had certainly fed it often enough.

Is Overeating a Sin?

When I asked Jesus how to move my mountain of weight, it wasn't because I was convinced it was a sin. It was because I saw my weight as an inconvenience. Plus, I wanted to look better. My reasons for losing weight were purely selfish, as were my reasons for eating whatever I wanted whenever I wanted it.

I'm surprised Jesus even answered such a selfish prayer. He answered, though, because He had a vested interest in what I was doing to myself. He gave me the right answer; I just didn't realize the depth of the question I had asked.

If I had known then what would eventually happen to me, all the difficulties, missed opportunities, pain and disease I had opened the door to, maybe I would have listened to Him. Sometimes, though, the best lessons are learned through experiencing our failures and brokenness.

To get through this, I was going to have to admit my weakness and rely on real strength, the strength that only comes from

God. I was going to have to stand on and understand that when I am weak in human strength, only then am I strong, truly powerful, truly drawing from God's strength, as it says in 2 Corinthians 12:10 (AMP). {eoa}

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Does Satan Rule Over Hell?

Is Satan the ruler of hell? Is hell part of his kingdom?

Satan does have a kingdom, but what does it actually consist of?

In studying and researching this topic, I believe Scripture gives us a clear answer to this question. {eoa}

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Chuck Pierce's Son Reveals Prophetic Dream About Russia and Its Rising Power

Daniel Pierce, son of prophet Chuck Pierce, last Sunday revealed a prophetic dream he had concerning Russia and the United States. Chuck Pierce says we must see this dream as a clear warning that "Russia is establishing itself to a higher place," but that God is still in control.

Daniel Pierce said in last Sunday's service at Glory of Zion International: "In the dream, I was in a tower and it was in a war zone somewhere in the world. The tower was unfinished. Inside there were two separate forces. There was an American force and a Russian force. I knew in the dream that normally we were enemies, always at odds with each other, but in this dream, we were working together on one specific project, which was to take out a high-value target that was there in the city.

"There was a sniper on the bottom floor who was American, and one on the top floor who was Russian. I was positioned with the Russian sniper. The decision had been made that the American sniper on the bottom floor was going to take the shot. We waited a while, and we heard a shot that sounded like a misfire. There was something wrong with the sound. We knew something had gone wrong.

"After that, all of the Russian soldiers began to turn on the American soldiers who were inside the building. As they reached and started to pull out their guns, we started to fight with them because we had been disarmed beforehand. We

had to get hold of them before they pulled guns on us. The last thing I remember in the dream is that the soldier next to me reached and started to pull a handgun, and I grabbed him to stop him, and then I woke up."

Chuck Pierce says the dream his son had is extremely significant for the body of Christ.

"We have to understand that things are changing greatly worldwide," he says. "We need to understand what God said in November, and that was to watch because war will be manifesting by April. We will be confused if we're not aware of it. This dream is a clear warning that we are in a place where Russia is establishing itself at a higher place. It is going to create a misfire in something we're going to do, and when that happens, they are going to take charge in ways we must be aware of.

"But this thing in Ukraine is not all of what it appears to be," Chuck continues. "You need to understand that we are coming into different times. ... This is a time we must be aligned; we must be ready. We must watch Israel and we must know this is a bigger thing going on that could lead us to a trap.

"Father, you say the nations are nothing more than a drop in the bucket to You," he prays. "Father, we say that You're going to see and favor. You also told me that out of Isaiah 54, no weapon formed against you will prosper. No word that is being spoken will be able to create shame in you. I speak that over every one one of us here. Every weapon that is forming against us is going to be dismantled."

Watch the video for the rest of this prophecy. {eoa}

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10 Things the Global Crisis Has Revealed about the Church

Since the beginning of 2020, the whole world has experienced an epochal challenge that has tried our souls. It has revealed character, motivation and maturity levels in the church and the world. Consequently, this should be a time of reflection and correction for us all.

Since I am an ecclesial shepherd, In the following 10 points, I will narrow my focus on the church.

1. Many people in the prophetic lack biblical alignment. The inaccurate prophecies regarding both the outcome of the presidential election and post-election predictions have greatly troubled many of us in the charismatic church. It has caused a massive crisis of confidence related to the charismatic movement. For this reason, Michael Brown, several dozen leaders and I have crafted the prophetic standards statement. Biblically aligned prophetic ministry always allows others in the church to judge its words (1 Cor. 14:29, 1Thess. 5:19-22.)

2. The leaven of Herod has infiltrated the church.

See my recent article on this [here](#).

3. Much prayer won't necessarily change election outcomes. I am a great proponent of fasting and prayer for revival and national awakening. On the other hand, I also know that God judges the hearts and motivations of people when they pray (James 4:3). Alas, despite multiple thousands of conservative evangelicals rallying for days of fasting and prayer, they did not get the result they were looking for. My only conclusion

is that much of the prayer was probably not in line with the will and heart of God. This is a prerequisite for Him to hear and answer (1 John 5:14). Perhaps our motives in prayer were related to avoiding persecution and retaining religious liberty (things the church in China, Iran, India and so forth) do not believe are essential for the church to thrive. Perhaps the prayers would have been better spent seeking the face of God to heal our land rather than striving for a particular candidate to be elected (2 Chron. 7:14).

4. The church must continually pivot for forward motion. The effective church must always be willing to adapt according to the times in which its people live. At the beginning of the pandemic, many of us had to work day and night for weeks to reinvent how we did church.

5. Only the remnant will persevere. The pandemic has caused most church attendance to drop between 25-50%. Consequently, those half-heartedly committed to Christ used the virus as an excuse to disconnect from church even after the lockdown was over. However, immediately after the lockdown, the faithful remnant church began to assemble again. Regarding those with COVID concerns for missing church, the test is whether they are still participating in the life of their church through Zoom, online services, and giving tithes and offerings.

6. The church is more than a building. The lockdown proved that a biblical congregation could not be defined merely by an edifice utilized for church services. The true church will always find a way to connect, shepherd the flock, conduct outreach to the community and love one another despite the lack of a central meeting place.

7. Technology is essential for gospel expansion and church cohesion. With the advent of television in the early 20th century, the church missed a huge opportunity in owning and operating TV stations. (Many Christian fundamentalists believed TV was of the devil.) We have also missed the ship

regarding other advances. The pandemic has proved to the church that we need to utilize the latest technologies to advance the gospel and relate the timeless message through changing methods.

Unfortunately, many churches had to close because they did not provide online services starting in 2020.

8. The church is still divided along the lines of ethnic identity. The death of George Floyd and the ensuing protests revealed that many Black, brown and white believers had different perspectives even though they read the same Bible. (Although to be fair, a large percentage of people walking in solidarity with Blacks in the demonstrations were white.) In some cases, differences of opinion even divided churches and caused great polarity. This crisis revealed that the church still has a long way to go to fulfill our ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18-20). For more regarding this point, see my article [here](#).

9. Many believers and churches are not biblically grounded. The tumultuous elections, the pandemic and civil unrest the past two years have revealed how biblically ignorant many in the church are. This ignorance was exacerbated by preachers that merely attempted to appease secular culture rather than preach biblical principles. A major indicator of vast biblical illiteracy in the church were the un-Christlike, vitriolic, political social media posts that believers wrote.

10. Most churches are not making disciples.

Jesus commanded us to make disciples, not merely new converts (Matt. 28:19). Churches that have focused only on gathering crowds instead of establishing Christians in the faith have been decimated during this lockdown season because they are now left with very few committed members.

What can be the way forward? Here are some suggestions:

- Church leaders should regularly engage in dialogical communities with leaders of different perspectives, ethnicity, and demographics that can help expand their ability to relate the gospel to contemporary culture.
- Churches should focus on disciple-making, not just evangelism and drawing crowds.
- Pastors should consider utilizing expository teaching to educate congregations, not just preaching meant to excite, motivate and inspire the masses.
- A high-level discussion should ensue regarding how the church can preach biblical principles without adorning the gospel with a political party.
- The church should utilize entrepreneurial leaders with apostolic, prophetic and evangelistic grace upon their lives so that the gospel will adopt and advance despite the many societal challenges. Entrepreneurial leaders, such as those with the ministry gift of apostle, view every challenge as an opportunity.
- Above all, the church should always strive to be Christocentric in her character, behavior and message. {eoa}

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Feeling Lonely? There Are Really Only 2 Choices

Many women's lives are saturated with busyness, interactions, relationships, social media and the expectations of others. However, all the busyness in the world doesn't guarantee that a woman will never be lonely.

Loneliness is simply feeling as if no one sincerely cares about you or is interested in your life beyond surface interactions. It is assuming that nobody desires to listen to your thoughts or quietly understand what is going on in the recesses of your heart.

If loneliness is not recognized and lovingly healed, it will certainly be the precursor to depression. And when loneliness and depression join forces in a woman's life, it can be a lethal combination of poisonous warfare. Your spiritual enemy has a strategy for how to defeat you. Satan's goal for your life is to keep you weary and exhausted every single day of your existence. He is wily and beguiling and knows exactly how to magnify the pangs of loneliness in a believer's life. He can grip a woman's heart with loneliness when she is also dealing with weariness, exhaustion, and fear.

However, there is power in God's Word to fight every negative emotion and to dismantle the schemes and plans of your archenemy. The devil's subtle whispers shout most loudly when we are alone.

"Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you'" (Heb. 13:5, NIV).

You serve a God who will never leave you alone. You are not forsaken in any situation or at any moment in life. He is with you, which is a glorious relief! The enemy wants you to

believe that you are alone, but according to the greatest book of truth in all of history, you always have someone by your side. The mournful ballad that the enemy croons over your life is "One Is the Loneliest Number." Yet the love song that Jesus sings to a lonely daughter is "You'll Never Walk Alone." The biblical reality is that you are surrounded by God's love and care every day of your life.

Jesus truly wants to be your closest friend, so feel free to talk to Him anytime or anywhere. Share your heart with Him and then listen for His loving response. When you begin to respond to Jesus as you would to a friend, your loneliness will slowly begin to ebb away.

In my seasons of loneliness, I have reminded myself numerous times that there are at least two ways to walk through the door to God's undeniable presence: fellowship and worship. Matthew 18:20 teaches us that when believers are with each other, He is with them also. If you want to spend time with God, spend an evening with a group of people who love Him. God dwells where praise is full and strong! If you long for your loving Father to make Himself known and manifest in your life, then you should spend time worshipping Him. If you deal with loneliness, turn up the worship music and then lift your hands in the air because He is there. You are not alone!

We can also learn from the example of Jesus concerning loneliness in the life of a believer; we must observe what He did when He too was all alone. It seems to me that Jesus was in the habit of proactively being alone so He could spend time in prayer. I believe we should imitate everything Jesus chose to do during His time on earth, and if it was beneficial for Him to choose to be alone in order to pray, it will be beneficial for us to do the same.

What if God has wisely appointed you to a season of solitary living so you can grow closer to Him? What if you will never experience the true love of the Father unless you actually

spend time with Him? There is a divine assignment with your name on it that loneliness is not able to erase.

While you are feeling alone, you can either alienate yourself, or you can fulfill the plan of God for your life. {eo}

Carol McLeod is an author and popular speaker at women's conferences and retreats, where she teaches the Word of God with great joy and enthusiasm. Carol encourages and empowers women with passionate and practical biblical messages mixed with her own special brand of hope and humor. She has written five books, including *No More Ordinary*, *Holy Estrogen!*, *The Rooms of a Woman's Heart* and *Defiant Joy!* Her most recent book, *Refined: Finding Joy in the Midst of the Fire*, was released last August. Her teaching DVD *The Rooms of a Woman's Heart* won the Telly Award, a prestigious industry award for excellence in religious programming. You can also listen to Carol's *A Jolt of Joy* program daily on the *Charisma Podcast Network*. Connect with Carol at .

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What Scripture Says About Gog, Magog and the Russian Tyranny for These End Times

As Russia continues an unprovoked invasion into the sovereign nation of Ukraine, political warnings abound.

Ukraine Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba told the United Nations on Wednesday an outright war with Russia would be the “end of the world order.” Others are pondering what Russian President Vladimir Putin’s obstinate and dangerous acts mean for the future of international affairs more broadly.

Amid all this dismay, though, is a lingering theological conversation that has unfolded for decades around the biblical end times and Russia’s theoretical involvement in it.

Are the end times upon us? Are Russia’s actions part of the eschatological landscape? What does it all mean? These are just some of the pressing questions before us.

Is Russia a Key End-Times Player?

Most Bible experts carefully discuss these issues and are cautious not to overstate or definitively make proclamations about nations and events, though viable theories have emerged that are worth exploring.

Author Joel Rosenberg has been among those who have vocally explored Old Testament prophecies about the biblical end of days, discussing Russia’s potential placement in the mix. He published a blog post a few years ago in which he discussed world events as they pertain to the writings of Ezekiel, a biblical prophet.

“The Hebrew prophet Ezekiel wrote 2,500 years ago that in the ‘last days of history, Russia and Iran will form a military alliance to attack Israel from the north,” Rosenberg wrote. “Bible scholars refer to this eschatological conflict, described in Ezekiel 38–39, as the ‘War of Gog & Magog.’”

A New Development ... Russia Rejects Israel’s Claim to Golan Heights

The text discusses a “Gog, of the land of Magog” and points to not only a battle but a victory for the Lord before the

world's eyes. Ezekiel 38:14-16 (NIV) reads:

"Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say to Gog: 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: In that day, when my people Israel are living in safety, will you not take notice of it? You will come from your place in the far north, you and many nations with you, all of them riding on horses, a great horde, a mighty army. You will advance against my people Israel like a cloud that covers the land. In days to come, Gog, I will bring you against my land, so that the nations may know me when I am proved holy through you before their eyes.'"

Read the rest here.

What Are Gog and Magog?

There are undoubtedly many opinions surrounding Gog, Magog and the intensely complex themes in these biblical texts. is one of the outlets that has provided an explainer regarding Russia, among other facets.

"Gog is a person. Whoever Gog is, he is from the land of Magog and is the leader of Tubal and Meshek (some translations add 'Rosh' to the list) and a confederacy of other nations: Persia, Cush, Put, Gomer, and Beth Togarmah (Ezekiel 38:5–6)," the outlet notes. "And, whoever he is, he will have plans to 'attack a peaceful and unsuspecting people,' viz., Israel (verses 11, 14, and 18). But, regardless of Gog's plans, the Lord God is against him and will defeat him soundly (Ezekiel 38:4, 19–23; 39:3–5)."

This is a pretty concise recap of what is believed to be happening in this text. But you might have a lingering question: *Why is Russia believed to be Magog by so many?*

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Kingdom Economics: Kingdom Decisions Have Consequences

The Mortgage Bankers Association released its weekly report. The average weekly 30-year mortgage rate was %, 22 bps higher for the week and the highest since July 31, 2019.

Mortgage applications were down 5.4%, compared to being down 8.1% the previous week. The MBA Mortgage Market Index was down 5.4% and the Refinancing Index was down 1.2%.

The National Association of Realtors (NAR) also released its January real estate report. Existing-home sales increased a very strong 6.7%, the highest since September 2021 and compared to a 3.8% drop in December. At the end of December, the unsold inventory of existing homes fell to a record low of 860,000. Median existing-home prices in January were 15.4% higher than a year ago.

According to NAR's chief economist Lawrence Yun, "Buyers were likely anticipating further rate increases and locking-in the low rates, and investors added to overall demand with all-cash offers." Yun also indicated that the supply of for-sale homes below \$500,000 is disappearing, while the supply of homes above \$500,000 is increasing.

Real assets, such as homes, are usually a good hedge for inflation. With consumer inflation currently at 7.5% and producer inflation at 9.7%, the demand for homes is likely to remain strong if inflation and inflationary expectations persist.

Future actions of the Federal Reserve (Fed) will play a large role in determining the size and duration of inflation. Fed chairman Powell has indicated that inflation will be a top priority and that the Fed will take all necessary steps to control inflation. Specifically, he indicated that interest rates will be increased, and their balance sheet (currently at \$8.8 trillion) will be reduced sufficiently to control inflation. Their actions will begin in March, but will their actions match the strong rhetoric?

Actions of the Fed cannot be reliability predicted over time. Future political and geopolitical events are uncertain. The world is currently filled with anxiety, hopelessness, division, coarseness, anger, hate and fear about the future. But we are different. Our hope is in Christ (Matt. 12:21). We live in the world, but our citizenship is in heaven (Phil. 3:20).

Most of life can be boiled down to a series of binary choices: yes or no; agree or disagree; believe or don't believe; work or leisure; be active or sedentary; and a host of other choices. Our current situation, to a large degree, is a function of choices we have made in the past. Our future, to a large degree, is a function of choices we will make.

When we repented and accepted Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we were saved and gained our citizenship in the kingdom. We are saved through grace and nothing else. But many of the kingdom blessings in this world and rewards in the next depend upon our choices.

Are we thankful to Him? Are we striving to improve our

relationship? Do we pray regularly? Do we read the Bible daily? Do we fellowship with other members of the kingdom? Do we strive to order our lives with biblical principles? Are we compromising to worldly pressures? Have we repented of known sins? Are we striving to live a holy and sanctified life? How do we express our thankfulness, faith and love to Him?

The Bible is filled with kingdom blessings and promises. Some promises are unconditional; other promises are conditional. A few of the blessings that depend on our decisions are listed below:

- Provision is provided as we seek first His kingdom and His righteousness (Matt. 6:33).
- Give and it will be given to you. By your standard of measure, it will be measured to you (Luke 6:38).
- All things will work together for your good if you love God and are called according to His purpose (Rom. 8:28).
- Forgive others and your heavenly Father will forgive your sins (Matt. 6:14-15).
- Receive the Holy Spirit and you will receive power (Acts 1:8).
- You will be blessed if you hear the Word of God and follow it (Luke 11:28).

Sometimes we make the decision-making process too complex. We have the infallible Word of God. We have the Holy Spirit living in us. We have the perfect example of our King and Savior.

Kingdom decisions have consequences. Choose life and happiness (Deut. 30:15,19). {eo}

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