

Steve Hill: Read All the Words in Red

The other day I picked up my Bible, opened to the **Gospels** and began to read only the words printed in red. Yes, every word of **Scripture** is God-breathed, but for this devotion I simply wanted to emphasize the words of Christ.

I had barely turned a few pages before tears began to well up in my eyes. I looked to heaven and said, "Jesus, it's a wonder You weren't killed long before the cross."

His words were full of spirit and they were life, but they were also cutting. Jesus was a radical man who preached a bold message. He confronted the popular teachings of the day, and He challenged the religious rituals that kept the people in bondage. He never held back, and He never backed down.

Several years ago, I had the opportunity to preach on the steps of the old temple in the heart of Jerusalem. As I stood there and proclaimed the **gospel**, I was overwhelmed with the thought that this was the exact spot Jesus drove out the money changers. That was a violent event as the Great Shepherd ran out the thief and the robber. He didn't whisper. He didn't politely ask these men to leave. He was a man consumed with righteous anger. Armed with a whip, He forcefully removed those who would take advantage of God's people. Jesus' own disciples commented on the zeal Christ displayed for God's house.

"It is written ... 'My house will be called a house of prayer,' but you are making it 'a den of robbers'" (Matt. 21:13, NIV).

Pastor, read the all the words in red! Were Jesus to attend your church this weekend, how many tables would be overturned? How many leaders would He have to whip? Would this radical be

welcomed through your doors or ushered out of them?

Has Jesus been given unrestricted access to your own heart? What would He overturn or seek to drive out? How will you respond when this radical **Jesus** is set loose in your own life? Will you reject His words, or will you rejoice in them?

Is this image of Jesus in line with the messages you're hearing preached? Don't misunderstand me. I am not seeking to make Jesus mean. I am simply seeking to complete the picture.

Everyone loves the image of Christ with a child on His lap as He teaches us to become like a child:

"Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me" (Matt. 18:3-5; see also Mark 9:33-37; Luke 9:46-48).

It is a beautiful picture of Christ. Do a quick image search online of "Jesus children." Thousands upon thousands of pictures will be displayed of our loving Savior embracing children like the perfect father He is. I have several pictures like these created by master artists from centuries ago. But this can't be the only way we see Christ. Keep reading the words in red. With a child still on His lap, Jesus warns:

"If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea. Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to stumble! Such things must come, but woe to the person through whom they come!" (Matt. 18:6-7).

I've seen the millstones with my own eyes. They are scattered throughout the Holy Land. Most weigh more than two tons.

Pastor, do you understand the implications of ignoring all of Jesus' words in red? Are you causing your people to stumble because you refuse to preach the whole Word? Is there a millstone with your name on it?

Leaders today are frantically trying to create a no-cost cross. We want Christianity without sacrifice, heaven without holiness, and worldliness without consequence. Jesus didn't leave any middle ground. His words were clear.

John 3:16 is the most-quoted Scripture on Planet Earth. I've shared Christ with men who just stepped out of a bar, covered in the stench of alcohol, who in a drunken stupor could still quote "for God so loved the world." Sinful man loves to comfort himself with the notion that God loves him. However, the same verse that tells us of God's love is the same verse that shares His judgment as well. Read all the words in red:

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed" (John 3:16-20).

John 3:16 is just as much a judgment Scripture as it is a love Scripture. These words in red tell us that we were perishing. We were already condemned. The verdict was in; the judgment was made. We loved the darkness and hated the light. Yet in spite of all that stood against us, God so loved us that He sent His Son, the Deliverer.

Many ask the question, "How could a loving God send anyone to

hell?" Yet the very verse that so many know and misquote answers the question. He didn't come to condemn the world—we were already condemned. He didn't come to send anyone to hell—we were already headed there. He came to deliver us from hell. Those who listen to His words, Jesus tells us, will not perish but have eternal life. Those who do not listen are already condemned.

I thank God for the hope found in the red letters. His words saved my life. He sacrificed His life—spilled His blood to save me from my sin. Every drop of His blood is priceless. How dare anyone have the audacity to cheapen His sacrifice by ignoring a single one of His red-lettered words.

Friend, ignoring the words written in red will cost you as well. Pastor, omitting the words written in red will cost you and your people. Preach all the red-letter words. Saint, open the Word and ask **Holy Spirit** to breathe fresh life upon Christ's words. These red-lettered words will do you much good! Let them go through you like the sharp sword that they are. Let the radical words of Jesus deliver you from the spiritual avalanche that awaits everyone who foolishly chooses to ignore what is plainly posted in bold red letters.

*Evangelist **Steve Hill** preached the Brownsville Revival for five years, is pastor emeritus of Heartland World Ministries Church and has authored 13 books, including Spiritual Avalanche.*

Is the 'Noah' Movie Set to

Bomb With Christians?

The group behind the recent movement, which played a leading role in Phil Robertson's return to *Duck Dynasty*, is tracking the commercial viability of major Hollywood films courting faith audiences this year. During 2014, the year of the Bible movie, studios are targeting 46 million Faith Driven Consumers who spend \$ trillion annually.

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"However," he continues, "our online survey finds that Paramount's upcoming *Noah* film—widely reported to stray significantly from the core biblical message of the actual story—is going to face serious challenges resonating with Faith Driven Consumers, which could hurt the film's bottom line. In order to increase its commercial viability, Paramount would be wise to take another look."

With the impending release in March of the Paramount Pictures film *Noah*, starring Russell Crowe and directed by Darren Aronofsky, Faith Driven Consumer questioned members of the

film's target audience about the commercial viability of the \$125 million movie given its widely reported and controversial deviation from the actual biblical narrative.

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'Call Me Tractor'

For the last few years, our moral and cultural opponents have mocked our predictions, telling us that we are deluded, that there is no slippery slope, that the scenarios we warn about are just figments of our overactive, fundamentalist imagination. Are they right?

Last August, I wrote an article entitled "Boys Will Be Girls Will Be Boys," adapting the title of the article from a 2004 coloring book called *Girls Will Be Boys Will Be Girls*. (The purpose of this children's book was to deconstruct "traditional gender roles.")

In the article, I discussed Assembly Bill 1266, which had just been passed in California, allowing students in grades K-12 not only to choose which bathroom they used, based on their perceived gender, but also to choose which sports team they played on (meaning, the boys' team or the girls' team), using the respective locker rooms as well.

As I explained, this meant that "18-year-old Sam, who is convinced he is actually Sally, can not only come to school

dressed as a girl and use the girls' bathroom, he can play on the girls' basketball team and use their locker room too."

Needless to say, I was ridiculed for making this comment and scolded for my lack of understanding.

Well, on Feb. 14, it was announced that a 17-year-old male student, who now identifies as a female (but who has had no sex-change surgery or even hormonal treatments) and who played on the freshmen baseball team (as a male) will be playing on the girls' softball team.

This did not sit well with Randy Thomasson, president of , who commented to , "It is categorically unfair to biological girls to have to compete with a sexually-confused young man with stronger upper body strength, who makes the game board decidedly 'unequal.'"

Interestingly, Iran recently banned a number of players on its women's soccer team because they were biologically male (or had other sexual issues), with news reports stating, "Footballers in Iran's professional women's league are to undergo mandatory gender tests to establish that they are fully female.

"The country's football [meaning, soccer] governing body is bringing in the random checks after it was revealed that several leading players—including four in the national women's team—were either men who had not completed sex change operations, or were suffering from sexual development disorders."

Back in 2011, in the last chapter of *A Queer Thing Happened to America* (the chapter was entitled "GLBT and Beyond: Reflections on Our Current Trajectory"), I warned that a departure from male-female gender definitions would lead to a world in which the sky would be the limit as to how we defined and described gender.

This week, Rich Ferraro, of the gay activist organization GLAAD appeared on CNN, discussing Facebook's recent decision to offer American users the ability to choose from 50 different descriptions of gender (including "neither," for those who believe they are neither male nor female), with users able to pick as many as 10 descriptions at once. (Ferraro was interviewed by Kyra Phillips, known for her LGBT activism.)

KYRA PHILLIPS: So, what do you say to those folks that are like, "OK, this is just way too much to understand and comprehend—and why can't we keep it more simple [meaning, male or female]?"

RICH FERRARO: Sure. I don't think it's ridiculous to accept LGBT young people for who they are. I think that Facebook has really made a great step forward—to telling those young people that you can be who you are on Facebook.

PHILLIPS: Well, that's a beautiful thing. We all want to be who we are—right, Rich?

What exactly does this "beautiful thing" look like? We'll let the folks at NPR help us here, as they explain the realities of this bold new world in an interview called "Young People Push Back Against Gender Categories" (which aired July 16, 2013).

According to the host, Margot Adler, "The fascinating thing with this generation in high school and college is they are going way beyond transgender. They are arguing for a world beyond the gender binary—beyond male and female. And it's something that many people over 30, like myself, are totally unaware of."

Adler spoke with Joy Ladin, described as "a transwoman, a male-to-female transgender person." According to Ladin, "The folks who are cutting edge and exciting, they're gender fluid, they're gender complicated, they're gender queer. They have

some kind of much more dynamic relation.”

Adler then noted that Ladin had told her about going to “a Jewish women’s retreat; anyone who defined themselves as a woman was welcome—genetic women, trans women. But some of the younger people were uncomfortable. They wanted to get rid of the word *woman* altogether.” (Who would make this up?)

Adler mentioned, “At one college that Joy Ladin visited, things were so fluid you could make up a different pronoun for a different event.”

Yes, Ladin explained: “So you can be she/her at one event, and then you go to lunch and you say, ‘OK, now I am he/him.’ And then one charming young woman told me, ‘Oh, yes, today, I’m just using made-up pronouns.’”

This, however, is only the beginning.

According to Lynn Walker, “a director at Housing Works, an organization that provides housing for those with HIV,” we must embrace this constantly changing landscape, since “part of the intake [with her transgender clients] is to say, ‘Well, what pronoun do you like today?’ It might be just today.”

As Adler explains, this is “because Walker has clients who might be Jimmy one day and Deloris the next.”

And what do you do if human descriptions are not enough?

Walker explains, “We encountered high school students who said, ‘I want you to call me Tractor and use pronouns like zee, zim and zer. And, in fact, I reject the gender binary as an oppressive move by the dominant culture.’”

There you have it. A young person who says, “Call me Tractor,” because male-female categories are “an oppressive move by the dominant culture.”

Need I say more?

Michael Brown is author of *Hyper-Grace: Exposing the Dangers of the Modern Grace Message* and host of the nationally syndicated talk radio show *The Line of Fire* on the Salem Radio Network. He is also president of FIRE School of Ministry and director of the Coalition of Conscience. Follow him at AskDrBrown on Facebook or at @drmichaellbrown on Twitter.

Why the Hypocrisy of the Obama Administration?

Afghan President Hamid Karzai has made international waves by releasing dozens of dangerous prisoners in an effort to garner favor with the Taliban. According to Fox's Leland Vittert, these are men who "have the blood of U.S. servicemen on their hands."

General Jack Keane, a Fox News contributor and all-around tough guy, made the argument that this makes as much sense as releasing Nazis after World War II as a gesture of peace to the Germans. On the contrary, many of the captured Nazis were hung.

The U.S. had requested that these terrorists stay behind bars. No one was to be released without the approval of U.S. forces. However, Karzai, possibly realizing that with U.S. troops on the way out, he will be left with the Taliban, one of the most vicious, ruthless organizations on earth, is seeking to make friends in low places.

What's the Problem?

What I don't understand is why the U.S. is so upset. Isn't this right in line with U.S. policy regarding terrorists in

Israel? John Kerry should be backing Karzai—not criticizing him!

Since August, Secretary Kerry has pressured Israel to release 104 Palestinian prisoners, nearly all with blood on their hands, in exchange for ... well, zilch. Releasing these killers was called a “confidence-building measure.” (You have to wonder: Who is getting confident through such idiotic policies? Not Israel.) Just as Palestinians welcomed home their terrorist sons, the Taliban is also laughing as their fighters come home—just in time for the spring battles.

This is called reaping what you sow. The United States has been more than willing to put Israel’s soldiers, not to mention innocent women and children, in a precarious position but cries foul when Karzai does the same thing to U.S. troops.

Technically, they are right to be mad. It is suicidal to release these Taliban fighters. They will no doubt return to the battlefield. Not only will U.S. soldiers be at risk, but also Afghani women and children.

But how can President Obama and John Kerry think that Palestinian terrorists whom they pressured Israel to release will not return to fight another day—or be used as inspiration to young would-be terrorists? You can’t have your cake and eat it too!

Hopefully Israel will grow a backbone and stop kowtowing to Kerry’s threats. Last week in Germany he seemed to almost threaten Israel, saying that if we missed this opportunity for peace—the “Kerry” opportunity—we would be even more isolated than we presently are and that we should expect more boycotts and divestments. Thanks for encouraging the enemy!

The problem is that he makes no declarations like that to the Palestinians, who have been offered a state by Israel on three different occasions—and said no each time.

Sadly, it may only be when an American soldier is killed by one of Karzai's released prisoners that the Obama administration sees the lunacy of its policy towards Israel. But from what I have seen over the past five years, even that most likely won't change its hypocrisy.

Note: For those who don't know me, I am an Israeli American, and I equally hold in high esteem the soldiers of both of my homelands.

Ron Cantor is the director of Messiah's Mandate International in Israel, a Messianic ministry dedicated to taking the message of Jesus from Israel to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). Cantor also travels internationally teaching on the Jewish roots of the New Testament. He serves on the pastoral team of Tiferet Yeshua, a Hebrew-speaking congregation in Tel Aviv. His newest book, Identity Theft, was released April 16. Follow him at @RonSCantor on Twitter.

God's Peace During a Snowstorm

"When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned" (Is. 43:2, NIV).

On Wednesday, Feb. 12, I drove from home to our church office for a meeting. The drive took me 15 minutes. I arrived at 12:25 p.m., knowing that the weather forecasters were calling for a significant storm to hit our area around 1 or 2 p.m. that afternoon. When I entered the office building, the air outside was icy cold and the sky was heavily overcast, but no

ice or snow was falling.

Without giving the weather another thought, I attended the meeting for 30 minutes, then left. But when I walked out the door, I was dismayed to discover that snow was pouring down and everything, including the roads, was already solid white.

I pulled out of the parking lot, onto the street, and sensed I might be in trouble. I was very grateful I had left when I had and was sure I would be able to get home before the full brunt of the storm hit. I was wrong.

When I turned onto the main highway that goes past the area where our church is located, the 10 lanes were in gridlock. Until the road turned into four lanes, I moved so slowly it took me one full hour to go less than one-half mile. The rest of the journey home was a nightmare of pouring snow, hundreds of abandoned and wrecked cars, jack-knifed trucks, accidents happening in front of my eyes at a dizzying pace, and dozens of people giving up and walking beside the road. Again and again, the line of cars I was in had to wait until stalled or wrecked vehicles could be pushed aside to clear a path for the cars still able to move in the deepening snow and ice. I stayed in that line.

With my car at a standstill for 30 minutes or more at a time, I almost panicked at first. But then I became very aware of God's presence in the car with me. Peace flooded my heart. I knew God was going to get me through all the wrecks, stranded cars, snow and ice. Safely. Home. With my car intact. So I began to praise Him for His faithfulness to see me through ... and He did! Almost four hours after leaving the church office, I pulled safely into my garage, shaking like a leaf but with great joy in what I knew was His deliverance.

And then He seemed to whisper, "Anne, sometimes life is mayhem. Disaster City. Problems, pain, crises, obstacles, diseases, disappointments, battles and brokenness can litter

your path. But if you put your trust in Me, I will lead you through all of the mess. Safely. Home. With your faith and relationship with Me intact. I love you!"

So I am praising Him for His faithfulness to see me through.

Anne Graham Lotz is a best-selling and award-winning author. Her most recent releases are *Wounded by God's People*, *Fixing My Eyes on Jesus*, *Expecting to See Jesus* and her first children's book, *Heaven: God's Promise for Me*. She is the president of *AnGeL Ministries* in Raleigh, N.C.

How Hidden Sugar Slowly Kills

Americans are eating more hidden sugar in their foods than they think, and it is putting their hearts at risk.

That's the warning from one of the nation's top cardiologists in the wake of a new study showing that even moderate sugar consumption leads to a higher death risk from heart disease.

"Most people don't realize how much hidden sugar is in the foods—and what they don't know is killing them," Chauncey Crandall, M.D., tells Newsmax Health.

"We've all been hoodwinked into thinking a moderate amount of sugar is OK, but that theory is falling apart with the new research," says Crandall, author of the No. 1 Amazon best-seller *The Simple Heart Cure*.

"We don't even realize how much sugar we are consuming. We think that sugar is in only candy or ice cream, but manufacturers sneak sugar into almost everything, including soups, catsup, canned salmon, cured meat—even toothpaste," he says.

The new study found that consuming even a moderate amount of sugar translates into a higher rate of death from cardiovascular disease. Drinking only two cans of regular sugar-sweetened soda a day significantly increases death risk, according to the researchers.

Previous studies had linked diets high in sugar with increased risks for non-fatal heart problems, and with obesity, which can also lead to heart trouble. But the new research found that obesity didn't explain the link between sugary diets and death. Even normal-weight people eating sugar were found to have a higher death rate.

"My main concern has been that this higher sugar consumption leads to obesity, diabetes and hypertension, but now this new study shows that sugar can lead to unhealthy inflammatory changes, even in people who are not overweight. This means that everyone is at risk," says Crandall, director of preventative medicine at the Palm Beach Cardiovascular Clinic.

The study, published in the prestigious *Journal of the American Medical Association*, examined the dietary habits and health of more than 30,000 Americans over 15 years.

"The message is clear," says Crandall. "We need to reduce the amount of sugar we consume—especially in soda—because it is more dangerous than most of us think."

For the original article, visit .

Survey Shows Majority of

Christians Unsatisfied With Bible-Themed Film 'Noah'

The group behind the recent movement, which played a leading role in Phil Robertson's return to *Duck Dynasty*, is tracking the commercial viability of major Hollywood films courting faith audiences this year. During 2014, the year of the Bible movie, studios are targeting 46 million Faith Driven Consumers who spend \$ trillion annually.

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film *Noah*, starring Russell Crowe and directed by Darren Aronofsky, Faith Driven Consumer questioned members of the film's target audience about the commercial viability of the \$125 million movie given its widely reported and controversial deviation from the actual biblical narrative.

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Cutting Free the Totalitarian Left's 'BarbWire'

This past week I, along with a group of fellow Christians, embarked on a new venture. In partnership with Liberty Alliance LLC—the No. 1 ranked conservative media conglomerate, according to *Inc.* magazine—launched .

Literally within minutes of the wire going live, the sin-obsessed left swooped in like a swarm of hate-filled locusts (more on that below).

I will, of course, continue my regular weekly exclusive column at Charisma News, but I'm pretty excited about this new endeavor as well.

BarbWire's "About" page explains our mission:

" is a motley mix of breaking news, intelligent cultural analysis, political pontification and cutting-edge opinion—all

fueled by the Word of Life.

“If you’re comfortable under deception, prepare to be made uncomfortable. We’re cutting free the totalitarian left’s barbwire.

“Relativists beware: Truth told here.”

It never ceases to amaze me how the self-described champions of tolerance and diversity always prove to be the most intolerant and hateful among us. With BarbWire just a few hours old, we immediately began getting fan mail from the ever “tolerant” left.

Take this hate mail from “Liberty Columbia,” warning me to prepare for execution. It was emailed via the BarbWire contact page on Monday, Feb. 10:

“You are going to be legally tried in a court of law and sentenced to hang for your crimes against humanity Matt Barber [sic] and when that is done (and it will be done) the world will be a safer and better place having rid itself from a mentally diseased, waste of life, rabid barbarian Nazi whore like you.”

Warm fuzzy.

Brave talk from this man, woman or some combination thereof. Note that he/she/he-she doesn’t even have the guts to give a real name.

Indeed, there are many on the left who, like “Columbia,” would love to see me and every other Bible-believing Christian fired, jailed or even executed. We’re not there yet, but anti-Christian hate is growing in popularity both at home and abroad.

In fact, BarbWire contributor and pastor Scott Lively is actually on trial right here in the good old USA—home of the free and land of the brave—for speaking on foreign soil and

sharing with the love of Christ the biblical truth about homosexual sin. The charge? You guessed it: crimes against humanity.

The trial is a bizarre cross between an Orwellian star chamber and a clownish kangaroo court. The case was brought by a George Soros-funded “civil rights” group and is built on a convoluted misapplication of the alien tort statute. This is a tactic the left has employed in the past in a growing effort to get around the First Amendment and silence dissent. The Supreme Court has already put a halt to these pseudo-legal shenanigans in *Kiobel v. Royal Dutch Petroleum*.

Obviously, the case is a joke. It will eventually be tossed, but in the meantime, the damage is done. Lively is smeared internationally and made to fight it out in court. It’s highly possible that I—along with other high-profile and outspoken Christ followers—will soon find ourselves suffering a same or similar fate.

So be it.

Jesus tells us, “If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you” (John 15:18-20).

For Christians, those times when the right people call us the wrong things are among those times we should “rejoice in our sufferings.” Believers who are unashamed of the gospel and bold enough to speak biblical truth to a world that loves darkness should expect such persecution. It’s heaven’s price of admission.

For the time being, at least, it will be our policy at BarbWire to allow the lost—angry leftists who visit the

site—to spew their vile hate (barring outright profanity). Nothing demonstrates “progressive” hate and anger like letting them demonstrate it themselves. It’s a fantastic educational tool and is quite instructive.

For me, it’s also rather entertaining.

A friendly BarbWire commenter figured this out while wading through the stench of vile hate, abject lies and childish insults posted in the comments section of Scott Lively’s first BarbWire column. Commenter “partiZancratic” wrote, “I see what Matt is doing. Letting these lowlifes ‘express’ themselves in their usual manner. Shootings and hangings so far. Anything else?”

“Zancratic” is right.

You can check it out yourself, but here are just a few loving morsels from BarbWire’s inaugural day:

- “And you deserve to hang at the neck with them and you will.”
- “You are all going to hang at the neck you Nazi maggot.”
- “[You] should be thrown in prison.”
- “I do not want you to hang but you do need to be placed in a mental hospital.” (Well, that’s sweet.)
- “Ok, we’ll stop the mafia-style death threats and move on to hanging you ... which you deserve.”
- “You deserve a bullet to your head you mentally diseased rabid barbarian.”
- “So you must be either a bisexual or (more likely) a closeted, self-loathing homosexual.” (This is a favorite ploy of the homosexualists: Project onto others their own perverted fantasies.)
- Commenters mocked their Creator by calling Him “Jeebus.”
- “Matt Barbaric who cheers and calls for the rape, torture, beating, imprisonment/encampment, silencing, and murder of LGBT people just for breathing.” (Too

absurd to even comment on.)

- Christians “want gays dead.” (Another absurdity.)

You get the point.

Christian commenter Natalie got the point too. She had a message for Scott Lively: “You nailed it, Lively. No wonder why the love and tolerance gang are up and arms [sic] over this article! Keep telling the truth. God bless you.”

And God bless you, Natalie.

Please pray for all of BarbWire’s new “progressive,” homosexualist and anti-Christian fans. God designed them each to know right from wrong. I can’t imagine the struggle they’re going through. Warring with God must be an incredibly exhausting endeavor.

This much we know: It’s a futile one. And it won’t end well for those who refuse to surrender to Him.

Matt Barber is founder and editor-in chief of . He is an author, columnist, cultural analyst and an attorney concentrating in constitutional law. Having retired as an undefeated heavyweight professional boxer, Matt has taken his fight from the ring to the culture war. (Follow Matt on Twitter: @jmattbarber).

Marriage: The Real Fight Has Just Begun

Marriage is very important to me. Personally, it is a covenant that I made with my wife of more than 35 years. It is a sacred **trust** between the two of us, but it is more than that.

Marriage plays a significant part in the health of our society and the future of our children. This is why I have fought so hard to preserve the traditional definition of **marriage**.

In November, Illinois became the 16th state (including the District of Columbia) to change its definition of marriage to include homosexual relationships. You probably didn't hear too much about the fight in Illinois, which dragged on for several months longer than homosexual marriage activists had intended. Why did it take so long for an overwhelmingly Democratic state legislature to approve what homosexual activists promise us is an inevitable part of our future?

The answer is that, for quite a while, the efforts of key **black** clergy members preserved the traditional definition of marriage in Illinois. Their courageous stand—which included placing relentless pressure on black Democratic legislators—had the opposition gnashing its teeth in frustration. The *Chicago Sun-Times* reported on their activity in May, noting, “Stubborn resistance within the House Black Caucus, a 20-member bloc of African-American lawmakers who have faced a withering lobbying blitz against the plan [to redefine marriage] from black ministers, has helped keep Harris' legislation [to redefine marriage] in check, with several House members still undecided.”

In the end, however, the well-funded and aggressive campaign to redefine marriage succeeded. It is worth noting that the margin in the House was razor-thin. The measure would not have passed without the three Republicans who supported it: Reps. Cross, Sullivan and Sandack.

As the Associated Press explained, after the bill failed in May, “Proponents then launched another aggressive campaign with help from labor, the former head of the Illinois Republican Party and the ACLU. ... [Illinois Gov.] Quinn and House Speaker Michael Madigan also persuade[d] lawmakers in the final days.” Shortly after Illinois' decision, New

Mexico's state Supreme Court ruled homosexual marriage a constitutional right.

Homosexual activists have been hailing these victories as an unstoppable tide of change sweeping the nation. They rarely mention the fact that 31 states have already passed amendments to their state constitutions clarifying that marriage is the union of one man and one woman. Even with the Supreme Court striking down key parts of the Defense of Marriage Act in June, the tide may in fact be turning.

From now on, advocates for homosexual marriage face a very different landscape. Only one of the remaining states that have not redefined marriage has a Democrat-controlled state legislature. That state is West Virginia, where recent polls suggest that less than 20 percent of the population supports redefining marriage to include homosexual couples.

Thus far, homosexual activists have relied on bullying and on two major deceptions. The first is that all they want out of the redefinition of marriage is rights for loving, committed couples. The second is that homosexual marriage is so incredibly popular that its universal acceptance is inevitable. To be on the right side of history, we are told we must get on board now.

The first lie is being exposed before our eyes. Illinois had already legalized civil unions. But as a brief, "Civil Unions Are Not Enough: Six Key Reasons Why," from Lambda Legal explains, "Regardless of whether civil unions and marriage offer the same benefits and obligations on paper, when the government relegates same-sex couples to civil unions rather than marriage ... those **couples** lose the respect and dignity that they deserve for their commitment." What homosexual activists want, and have always wanted, is mandatory public approval of their lifestyle.

The widespread support for traditional marriage in the black

community has been very difficult for radical homosexual activists to understand. After all, if we are to believe their narrative, blacks should be nothing but grateful for all their gains in civil liberties since slavery. They believe that their own experience with oppression should impel us to go along with whatever homosexual activists tell us to believe.

But those who feel this way completely misunderstand what the civil rights movement was all about. It was not about radically restructuring society. We appealed to the rights given to us by our Creator, who created not only mankind, but placed us in families. The family was the one institution that held the black community together through slavery and segregation. And it is the black community that has suffered most acutely as marriage has been devalued and the family has begun to fall apart.

Homosexual activists would have us believe that the fight is nearly over and that their victory is inevitable. Yet barring action from United States Supreme Court, it seems most likely that the real fight is only beginning. The battle will be waged state by state, and it will test the patience and perseverance of all. Several of the black Democrats in Illinois who voted to redefine marriage are facing primary challengers, as are all three Republicans. Will they face consequences for their decisions? Only time will tell.

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It's Official: We're in the Ball of Confusion

The Bible tells us "God is not the author of confusion" (1 Cor. 14: 33, NKJV), but He is the revealer of it. The United States of America is in a serious state of confusion, and it is critical that we understand how we got here so we can discover His way out.

Do you recall the 70s song by the Temptations entitled "Ball of Confusion"? Remember the lyrics? "So round 'n' round 'n' round we go/Where the world's headed, nobody knows ... Just a ball of confusion." That's us!

Romans 1 explains how a culture lands in this precarious condition. We started our drift in the late '60s, and today we've officially arrived. Here's the downward spiral outlined in this passage: Reject truth. Lose discernment. Experience moral chaos and confusion. (See Romans 1:18-32.)

It begins when people "suppress the truth" (v. 18). It ends with widespread homosexual behavior and people engaging in all manner of wickedness. The passage says, "Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only continue do them but give approval to those who practice them" (v. 32, ESV). Sound familiar?

Edward Gibbon described the civilizational collapse of Rome as a time when "bizarreness masqueraded as creativity." Surveying the pop culture scene today, does that seem like an apt description of our nation?

Paul's prophetic warning went unheeded by most that lived in Rome. Edward Gibbon's 18th-century classic book *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* outlined the reasons for this superpower's demise. Today there are ominous parallels to developments in that once-shining society, such as:

- Moral decay and a craze for pleasure with brutal violence increasing, even as sport
- An undermining of the dignity and sanctity of the home, along with mushrooming divorce
- Higher and higher taxes

- Rampant, out-of-control spending
- Decay of religion, with faith fading into mere form

How Are We Confused?

We could cite hundreds of examples, but let's consider a few. Our president spoke to 3,500 people at the National Prayer Breakfast, saying, "The killing of the innocent is ... the ultimate betrayal of God's will." This comes from the most pro-abortion president in history, upon whose watch one life is executed in the womb every 26 seconds and 3,200 babies are aborted daily.

On March 27, Planned Parenthood will present 73-year-old House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, a Roman Catholic, with the Margaret Sanger Award for her "outstanding contribution to the reproductive health and rights movement." Planned Parenthood is the No. 1 abortion provider in America, and its founder, Margaret Sanger, advocated for cleansing societies of "inferiors" (Negroes) and spoke at a KKK rally.

Gary Hall, dean of the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., stated in a Sunday sermon, "It is not only just OK to be gay, straight, bisexual or transgender; it is good to be that way because that is the way God has made you."

The front page of *USA Today* published the results of a national survey on singles in America, revealing that 76 percent of single Americans believe that long-term unmarried partners living together is fine.

As representatives in state legislatures are increasingly promoting marijuana legalization, a marijuana convention was just held in California where the illegal drug was celebrated amidst innovative ways to market, eat and smoke it. One vendor who was giving free samples of huge marijuana hits off his vaporizer exclaimed jubilantly, "It's really crazy!"

A Colorado high school forbade students from celebrating a day honoring America because the administration believed it might offend non-Americans. Their spokesman said, "We do not want to be exclusive to other countries." The school hosts Cinco de Mayo celebrations.

Doesn't it seem like almost daily there are reports, trends and developments like these? We are witnessing the ball of confusion gaining momentum as it steamrolls downhill at frightening speed. Let's stop before legitimate discouragement leads to depression.

How Did We Get Here?

The brilliant actor Philip Seymour Hoffman wrote of “demons “in his diary before dying of a drug overdose. Those same demons follow Satan, who is “filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short” (Rev. 12:12, NIV). Demonic forces are pulling out the stops to try and bring as many as they can into confusion, depression and ultimately eternal damnation.

To understand our nation’s rapid cultural decline, we need to rewind the tape to a pivotal time—the ’60s—to discover how this freefall started.

During a turbulent time in 1967, scores of young people were deceived by the seductive “Summer of Love” mantra. Naïve youth fell in line behind pied piper Scott McKenzie and grabbed their love beads and drugs and swayed with the wind to some elusive utopian society with his lyrics, “All across the nation/There’s a new generation ... People in motion, people in motion.”

Millions of idealistic young people and hippies believed they were ushering in the long-awaited “Age of Aquarius” with peace symbols, free love and free speech. American psychologist Timothy Leary took LSD and advocated, “Turn on, tune in and drop out!” Woodstock lured cool guys and gals to come, smoke dope, throw off clothes and experience a foretaste of what was coming.

Casting off restraints to protest and launch the gay, women’s and black power movements, the sexual revolution and the drug counterculture, everything was groovy. “Make love, not war” was the slogan as hipsters flashed the peace symbol and declared, “Never trust anyone over 30!”

A Crash That Was Ignored

Within a few short years of that development, pop idols Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix and Jim Morrison were all dead, overdosing on drugs, sex and unrestrained “freedom.” Sexually transmitted diseases started breaking out everywhere. AIDS soon followed. Bobby Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr. were assassinated. Student riots paralyzed Chicago. The Altamont rock festival degenerated into murderous mayhem right before Mick Jagger’s bloodshot eyes.

Hippie communes and gay bathhouses started folding like houses

of cards as Barry McGuire sang "Eve of Destruction." While demand for abortion intensified in the wake of all the free sex, the years of supposed liberation took their toll and the good times crashed. Would we heed the warning and change or let the ball of confusion keep rolling?

Although God has been long-suffering and merciful, the majority of Americans seem content to keep rolling along into destruction. We are not turning back to God or the principles of morality that served as the underpinnings of our country for almost four centuries. We continue to disregard His Word as "outmoded" and "restrictive," and in its place we've substituted dangerous deceptions that now have gained acceptance. Family advocate Dr. James Dobson identifies six lies that have taken root:

1. Drug use makes great recreational sport.
2. Premarital, extramarital and traditionally abnormal sex are now acceptable.
3. There should be no sanctity of human life in law.
4. God is unnecessary in our enlightened state, so let's systematically "airbrush" Him from society.
5. Divorce offers an easy "escape" from marriage.
6. Marriage should be redefined to include same-sex unions.

Dr. Dobson asks, "Can anyone seriously deny that these ideas have wreaked havoc on our society over the four decades since they gained prominence?"

Here's the Deal

In these turbulent times of unbelievable chaos and confusion, Christians who truly love and serve God must pray, fast and embrace a threefold mandate. These are the three pre-eminent, non-negotiable issues on which we must stand firm:

1. Propagate the truth regarding our heritage and religious freedom. This is the foundation upon which our nation and our history was built. We must have a clear understanding of the origins of America and its Founding Fathers. Any politician, including our president, who disregards our biblical foundations and the rule of law must be held accountable and courageously confronted. Our Constitution states that Congress makes laws, not kings, dictators or leaders issuing unilateral edicts.

2. Protect the sanctity and dignity of human life. This is the

thread that connects all issues of justice and the basis on which they all stand: care for the unborn, elderly, poor, disabled, prisoner, AIDS patient, sexually enslaved or any of life's most vulnerable.

3. Preserve the institution of marriage and family life. This is the cornerstone upon which the future of our nation and the family stands. No matter what liberal politicians, popular celebrities, charismatic sports figures or compromising preachers say, we must remain courageous ambassadors for Jesus Christ and His unchanging standards.

To unravel this ball of confusion and see another Great Awakening, we've got to seize the opportunity before it's too late. As President Ronald Reagan prophetically warned us in 1964, "You and I have a rendezvous with destiny. We will preserve for our children this, the last best hope of man on earth, or we will sentence them to take the last step into a thousand years of darkness."

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