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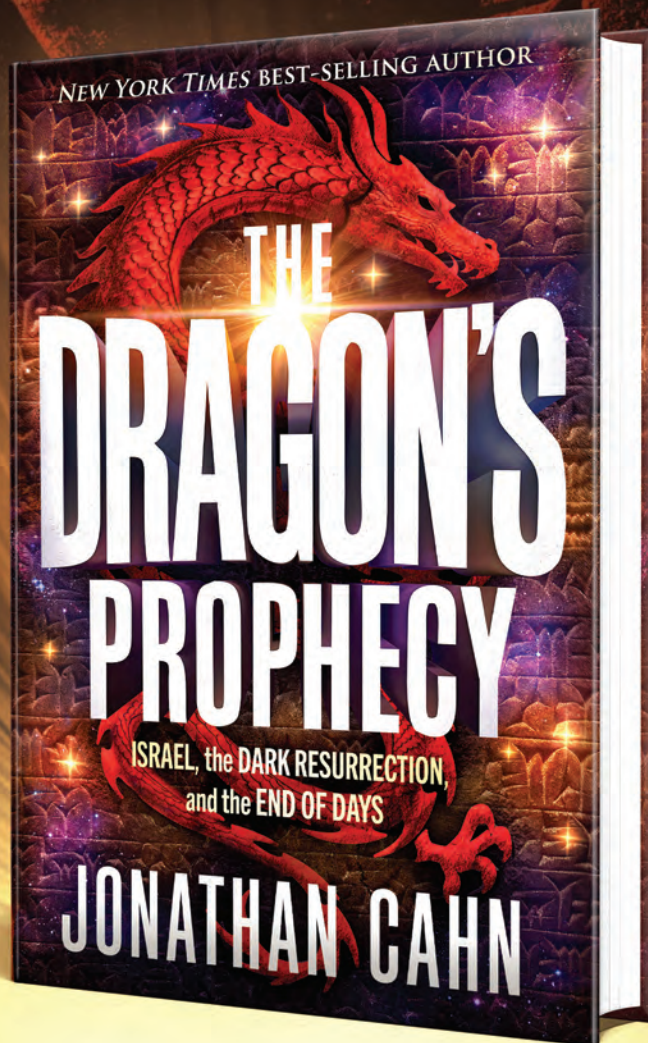
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# American WAKE UP CALL

## A NEW BEGINNING FOR AMERICA

Eight days after Easter, God is sending a sign in the Heavens, the Great American Eclipse of 2024, offering a new beginning for America.

Scientists may say that the Eclipse is an accident of celestial mechanics, but it is no coincidence that the moon is just the right distance from the Earth to produce the awesome Eclipse on April 8.

The Bible says that the Eclipse, or “Dark Sun”, is a sign of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. (See Acts 2:17-20 and Joel 2:28-32).

But for those in the valley of decision who are undecided about following God, the Dark Sun is warning of judgment for those who reject Him and a promise of refuge for those who choose Him. (See Joel 3:14-16)

And we Christians who are watchmen on the wall and laborers in God's vineyard can reach out to those who are lost by showing them the promise and the warning of the Dark Sun.

Millions will be in the streets to wonder at this awesome sign from God. Be there with them.

### **Prepare yourself to be a part of this outreach:**

- Pray for a new beginning for America (See “Praying for a New Beginning”)
- Publicize the Outreach opportunity with your prayer partners, your church and other Christians in your community. (See “Christians Prepare for Great American Eclipse of 2024”)
- Print the “Meet the Artist” flyer attached.
- Plan to take a late lunch on Monday afternoon, April 8, to tell people about God as His sign passes overhead. (See “Praying on Site”)
- You can find these materials at (<https://shorturl.at/yAOR0>) or at [www.AmericanWakeUpCall.net](http://www.AmericanWakeUpCall.net)

May God bless you for partnering with Him.  
And may God bless America!



## DEAR CHARISMA



*"I always looked to Jamie Buckingham and then Lee Grady to see what Charisma was saying."*

*—Charles Jenkins,  
Sioux City, IA*

### AMEN PASTOR STONE!

So glad to see Perry Stone's cover story in the February issue, I've been saying this for years ("Is It Ignorance or Did We Just Get Lazy?" Charisma Magazine Online, February 2024). It isn't too common in my church circles, but it seems like this is the direction many believers and churches are going, more interested in knowing the latest fashion trends than pressing into God's wisdom. I hope this viewpoint of Pastor Stone is the start of a change back to the Bible.

*Louise Parker, via email*

### BICKLE SITUATION

Longtime *Charisma* subscriber, glad to see you all did the column from Lee Grady about church leaders ("One Leader's Failure Isn't An Excuse to Leave the Faith," "Fire In My Bones," Charisma Magazine Online, February 2024). The Bickle episode is sad, but I always looked to Jamie Buckingham and then Lee Grady to see what *Charisma* was saying about these episodes. These things won't cause me to "leave my faith," but I love that Lee Grady has a servant-leader's heart to be thinking ahead and speaking

to those important topics.

*Charles Jenkins, Sioux City, IA*

### BLACK LEADERS

Thank you for the Mark Robinson article from a few months ago ("Mark Robinson: The Lightning Rod of North Carolina," *mycharisma.com*, originally published in *Charisma* magazine, September-October 2022). He's a good man, it's good to see new leaders like him and understand their story in the face of constant criticism from other places in the news.

*Gladys Greene, via email*

**\*EDITOR'S NOTE:** the 2022 *Charisma* article on Lt. Gov. Mark Robinson was re-posted Mar. 9, after Robinson secured the Republican nomination for governor of North Carolina.

### HOPING POLITICIANS HEAR GOD'S MESSAGE

Bunny Pounds' article about God in Washington was a refreshing eye-opener ("Does God Speak to Politicians?" Charisma Magazine Online, February 2024). It's more critical than ever before that DC leadership is connected to God's guidance.

*Bill Crockett, Tempe, AZ*

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## In Darkening Days, Power In Greater Measure

**H**istory is full of times that were difficult for believers—indeed many millions of Christians are being persecuted in our generation. But Christians in America have been living in a sort of bubble. Because of our constitutional rights, we have freedoms not enjoyed in other countries.

There have been terrible times before, but it seems God came through in answer to prayer. Fifty years ago in the hippie era, the Jesus movement (which impacted me) brought millions of rebellious young people to faith in Christ. We now live in a post-Christian culture. Today, evil is called good, and good is called evil. That's the essence of a culture that's upside down.

While many of us believe God raised up America, let's face it, the nation is becoming more and more evil and deserves to be

judged. It's not fun to think about, but we may face persecution in this country. Some Christians already have been cancelled on social media for posting Scripture verses.

If we believe the Bible, we know persecution will come. The question is whether we will see it in our lifetime. Christians over millennia have been expecting Christ to return.

Now the world is so upside down it appears what Jesus prophesied about the end of time is happening before our eyes.

A one-world government, the rise of the man the Bible calls the Antichrist, and even a mark required to buy and sell seem to be the natural result of the "great reset" the World Economic Forum has called for.

We've looked at the Holy Spirit as the Comforter, and He is. But He's more than a friendly Counselor who can help us with our anger issues or deal with disappointment. He can do those things in His power to help us overcome in life. But the reality is, we're in a spiritual war. And when the tribulation comes, it will be the war of all wars.

We must prepare for battle if we are to survive, just as Navy Seals must toughen themselves in a way civilians don't. Because of their training, those Navy Seals stand a better chance of surviving in a combat situation than you or I would!

Though the world seems to be careening toward the last days,

this is not the time to become discouraged. We have the Holy Spirit, and He will never leave us nor forsake us. As Moses told Joshua, "The Lord, He goes before you. He will be with you. He will not fail you nor forsake you. Do not fear, nor be dismayed."

If half the world is going to die as is prophesied, we don't need to be afraid if we've given our lives to Christ. That's the message we must proclaim: When things get bad, call on the name of Jesus, because the Bible says whoever calls on His name shall be saved.

God is our only hope. As Michael Youssef, pastor of The Church of The Apostles in Atlanta, says in his book *Is the End Near?*: "Being a Christian in the end-time will be incredibly difficult. It will mean being hated and persecuted for your faith. But I guarantee that even if you are hunted down, abused and killed for your faith in Jesus, it will have been worth it. You will have eternal life with

Jesus in heaven. When He returns, you will be full of joy at His appearing while the unsaved world despairs. Only Jesus offers true security in a collapsing world."

The Holy Spirit can empower us to stand up to all the evil in the culture and fill us with joy, contentment and vision even in the midst of it. I sincerely believe it's possible to experience God's power to not only survive but thrive, even when the world is upside down.

The Holy Spirit can give us discernment about all that is happening leading to the end of time. But sadly, too many Christians are not pressing into God and are missing the real opportunity to lay hold of the victory and fullness of life available to us in Him. But it's not too late to access this power.

You can be filled with the Spirit—or filled anew—and experience His power and presence at a greater measure than you ever thought possible.

Yes, the world is upside down. But it was upside down before we were born and it will be upside down until Christ comes to set up His kingdom during the millennial reign, as written in the book of Revelation.

Let us be encouraged, choose to be entirely led by the Spirit in new and fresh ways—launch out into the deep and experience the power and strength that come only from knowing Christ in a deep way.

---

*Be filled with the Spirit  
and experience His  
power and presence at a  
greater measure than you  
ever thought possible.*

---

**Stephen Strang** has seen major changes in the church, the culture and technology since he founded *Charisma* magazine in 1975. In addition to being CEO of Charisma Media, he hosts a Strang Report podcast live on YouTube and Rumble at 4 p.m. EST every Tuesday and Thursday. His important new book *Spirit-Led Living in an Upside-World* is available wherever fine Christian books are sold including online at [mycharismashop.com](http://mycharismashop.com).



# Simply Christ

## Gospel Insight

with Keith Surface

### Anointed by Another

Many in our generation try to make out that the apostles were sinful men who were also crowned with the glory of God. Nothing could be further from the truth. The apostles of Christ were manifestations of the gospel they preached. Paul said they “...renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.” II Corinthians 4:2.

Just recently, someone sent me a video of a world-famous preacher who was explaining why those who are greatly anointed of God may go out immediately and commit fornication. He claimed the Spirit that was upon them had nothing to do with the Spirit that was within them. His teaching was that you could be very immoral or even demon possessed, yet the Spirit of God would come upon you and anoint you to do the mighty works of God. It honestly seemed that this man was justifying the condition of his own heart. When asked by the one who sent me the video what I thought of it I did not mince words. I simply replied, “The man is reprobate.”

After God rejected Saul from being King over Israel, the Bible says “...the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him.” I Samuel 16:14. Saul had rebelled against the word of God, so God turned him over to an evil spirit. What is astounding about this is that when the evil spirit came upon Saul he prophesied, just like he had when the Spirit of God came upon him. The difference is that now an evil spirit was the source of his prophesies. King Saul had fallen from being an instrument of God and became the instrument of an unclean spirit. It was while the evil spirit was upon Saul to prophesy that he attempted to kill David with a javelin. I Samuel 18:10-12. A minister who is unclean at heart may

indeed have supernatural manifestations, but you can be certain their “manifestations” are not coming from God, but from the same spirit which works uncleanness in them.

The Apostle John was very clear when he said, “Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil...” I John 3:7-8. A man or woman may be renowned as an anointed prophet or miracle worker, but if they are sinful in heart or action, their “anointing” is not of God.” As John clearly tells us they are “of the devil.”

When the Apostle Paul told us “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God” Romans 8:16, he was declaring that the Spirit of Christ within a child of God and the

Spirit of God upon them speak in unison. A child of God is an open book “known and read of all men.” II Corinthians 3:2. Their spirit and life will manifest Christ, and they are vessels the Spirit of God can come upon to give an even more powerful witness.

However, if Spirit within them is unclean, the Spirit that comes upon will not be of God.

Peter warned of those who come “Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices...” II Peter 2:14. These ministers are very practiced at getting your money, but they have “eyes full of adultery” and they “cannot cease from sin.” Their words sound wonderful but their anointing is not of God. You should not fear nor follow them.

When the evil spirit came upon Saul he prophesied, just like he had when the Spirit of God came upon him.

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## Why We Can't Ignore the Gifts of the Holy Spirit

**M**y friend Rafael invited me to preach in his church in Humacao, Puerto Rico, a few years ago. It was Pentecost Sunday, so I brought a message about the Holy Spirit's power. Then I asked God to use me in a supernatural way because I figure we shouldn't talk about the Spirit's gifts if we're not willing to demonstrate them.

I noticed a young man sitting in the fourth row. I could sense God's love for him. I pointed to him and began to give a word of prophecy about how God wanted to use him.

Later I returned to Puerto Rico to speak at a men's retreat. Guess who showed up? The young man to whom I gave the prophecy. His name is John, and I learned that he had never visited the church in Humacao until the day I met him. Because John felt God speaking to him that Sunday, he has attended that church ever since and is growing spiritually.

One simple word of supernatural encouragement changed John's life. But what would have happened if I had decided to "behave myself" and not step out in faith to prophesy? What if I had let fear stop me and just decided to stick to my notes, preach a nice sermon and play it safe?

I'm afraid that's what a lot of us are doing today in churches that claim to be Spirit-filled. We say we believe the Bible, but when it comes to the Holy Spirit, we've become cowards. In trying to be trendy and relevant, we've replaced spiritual anointing with cool music, graphics, sermons and programs that look and sound great but lack a spiritual punch.

If we are full of the Spirit, the nine charismata, or spiritual gifts mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, should be manifested regularly. But few Christians today have even heard of these gifts; fewer have seen them in operation. We need a refresher course in the ways the Holy Spirit works. And we need these nine gifts in our churches today:

**1. The word of wisdom.** God can give us a supernatural solution to a problem that cannot be solved by man's ideas. The American church desperately needs this gift so we can shift from man's carnal ways to heaven's wisdom.

**2. The word of knowledge.** The Holy Spirit will sometimes reveal information that could not have been known by man.

**3. The gift of faith.** This is not the normal kind of faith we need daily. The gift of faith is a special ability to believe for big things. A person operating in supernatural faith will motivate others to pray until the answer comes.

**4. The gift of healing.** Paul told the Corinthians that there are actually gifts (plural) of healing. The exciting part is that God is still in the business of healing bodies, minds and broken hearts.

**5. The gift of miracles.** The book of Acts is a series of miracles—so why would we ever assume God pulled the plug on that power? He still opens prison doors, breaks chains, releases angels, opens blind eyes, changes weather patterns and delivers people of demons. He is still a miracle worker!

**6. Prophecy.** This is a special gift because God loves to speak to His people. And He wants to use us to relay His message. I consider the gift of prophecy "supernatural encouragement" because it always edifies the person who receives a word from the Lord—even if it is corrective.

**7. Discernment (or "discerning of spirits").** I am grateful that when the Holy Spirit gave His gifts of power, He also provided a way for us to tell the difference between God's work and a demonic counterfeit. Not all that is supernatural is from God. We also need this gift to set people free from demonic bondage.

**8. Speaking in tongues.** There are "various kinds of tongues" mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:10. Believers can have their own private prayer language, but some people are also gifted to speak in tongues in a church meeting.

**9. Interpretation of tongues.** Similar to prophecy, this gift can relay a message from God that was spoken in a foreign or angelic tongue. I love the fact that linguistic barriers don't limit our God; He loves the entire world!

The apostle Paul told the Corinthians: "Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts," (1 Cor. 14:1a). God wants His gifts flowing through us, but He never forces us to use them. He is looking for availability, courage and surrender.

Please allow the Holy Spirit to jumpstart His power in your life.

*God wants His gifts  
flowing through us...He is  
looking for availability,  
courage and surrender.*

J. Lee Grady was editor of *Charisma* for 11 years and now serves as senior contributing editor. He directs [The Mordecai Project](#) an international ministry that protects women and girls from gender-based violence. His latest books are *Follow Me* and *Let's Go Deeper* (Charisma House).



# CELEBRATE MAY WITH HEARTFELT GIFTS!

Make this May a month of meaningful connections, heartfelt gestures, and timeless gifts. The Prayer Capsule is more than a present; it's a symbol of love, hope, and the power of prayer. Let's celebrate the extraordinary loved ones in our lives with a gift that truly speaks from the heart.

As May arrives, it brings the joyous occasions of Mother's Day, First Communion, Confirmation, and Graduation ceremonies. Express your love and support with a timeless and unique gift of prayer.

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## Don't Waste Your Pain

Over the years, I've spoken with a lot of people who have gotten stuck in their place of pain. Whether they were abused as a child or suffered from other disappointments in life, they allowed it to keep them from moving forward.

Painful experiences can leave us bitter, offended and focused on the people who have harmed us. However, just because someone treated us wrong, it doesn't give us the license to treat *them* wrong.

In fact, when we decide to "pay people back" in this way, we're doing the exact opposite of what God's Word says to do. Making progress means giving up all offense, hatred, pain and unforgiveness.

The Lord has used Psalm 37:1-3 (AMP) to literally change my life. It says, "Do not worry because of evildoers, nor be envious toward wrongdoers; for they will wither quickly like the grass, and fade like the green herb. Trust [rely on and have confidence] in the Lord and do good...."

When someone harms or treats us unfairly in some way, our first inclination is to want to get revenge. But if we continue to focus on the injustice and the person who wronged us, it will eat us up on the inside.

I often say that holding a grudge and staying bitter is like taking poison and hoping your enemy will die. It is useless!

I really want you to remember this: Life is not fair, and everything that happens to you is not fair, *but God is fair*. And if you place your trust in Him and do things His way, He will make it up to you (many times over!) and use what happened for your good.

So, what is "God's way"? Psalm 37:3 holds the key: *trust God and do good....*

First, we must trust God with our situation. In the midst of the pain, in the midst of betrayal, rejection or disappointment, we need to say:

"God, I don't understand everything that's happened, but I know *You are good*. Your Word says You are my Vindicator and that You will make wrong things right. I give my situation to You, asking You to fight on my behalf as I continue to seek You and go about helping other people."

Now, the second part is just as important: *do good*.

I really believe this is our secret weapon. Romans 12:21 says that we "overcome evil with good." In fact, we will never move beyond our pain if we repay evil for evil.

The enemy's goal is for us to feel sorry for ourselves and get consumed with our own problems. But during these times, the greatest thing we can do is turn our focus outward and help others with their needs.

I believe when we *continue* to trust God and remain determined to be good to others even while we're hurting, there's nothing the enemy can do to stop us.

The truth is, life isn't always going to turn out the way we want. Jesus Himself said that we will have tribulation. However, even when bad things happen—even when we suffer disappointments and setbacks we didn't see coming—God wants to use it for our good.

In fact, the Lord wants us to let Him use our challenges and difficulties as opportunities to help us grow strong in Him. Look what it says in Habakkuk 3:19 (AMPC): "The Lord God is my strength [my source of courage, my invincible army]; He has made my feet [steady and sure] like hinds' feet and makes me walk [forward with spiritual confidence] on my high places [of challenge

and responsibility]."

I believe God is saying, "Don't waste your pain!" If you allow Him, He will use your challenging times to "make your feet steady and sure" and trust Him like never before.

Each thing we go through helps equip us for our next challenge. Having experience and going through things also help us live courageously. We learn that we can endure difficulties, and that knowledge helps us not to fear the future.

Maybe you've been hanging on to some deep emotional wounds that occurred years ago, and it's preventing you from taking that next step forward. Or maybe some recent disappointments have caused you to want to throw in the towel and give up on the process.

I'm not sure where you are today, but I do know this: If you will put your trust in God and do things His way, He can take even the worst things that have happened and work them out for your good.

*The Lord wants us to let Him use our challenges and difficulties as opportunities to help us grow strong in Him.*

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## Unity, Tribalism—What’s Next?

**T**ruth gets around. “Every house divided against itself shall not stand,” said Jesus, said Lincoln, said historians. Oh, and Satan! Surprised? You shouldn’t be. He used this principle to divide heaven originally and for millennia has reused it on Adam’s unsuspecting children. He has first divided, and then destroyed, many nations, including Israel and countless churches. Ethnic rivalries, envious leaders and doctrinal contentions keep us criticizing and separating when God would have us uniting and fellowshiping—and we stay blind to Satan’s nefarious operations.

To expose his deviousness among us and propose a solution, I pose four questions: (1) What were we once? (2) Where are we now? (3) How did we get here? (4) What’s next?

America was originally a melting pot of all nations and races. Flawed by slavery, we recognized our wrongs and, through ardent abolitionists, a bloody war and brave civil rights activists, righted them. *E pluribus unum* was our motto and, indeed, out of many rose one nation under God. Our prosperous unity peaked in the 1950s, then began unraveling during the Vietnam War era. Race relations, however, steadily improved. As the century turned, it seemed our motto would become our manner.

But today, deep, painful divisions exist. Our culture is a perfect dichotomy, half sanely conservative, half insanely liberal. False race, gender and equity theories, and rampant media lying, poison our national psyche bitterly dividing our house. Millions measure others by color, not character, divide binary from non-binary and fill jobs by demographics over qualifications. Opportunist Black Lives Matters leaders exploited falsified public incidents to foment anti-white hatred, excuse rioters, encourage police resistance and garner vast wealth—promptly spent on themselves!

Tribalism is growing; millions vote only for candidates who look like them. The legal vs. illegal immigration controversy, trillion-dollar budget deficits and the Israeli-Hamas war further divide us. Partisanship has slain justice; politically driven rulings have replaced it. Our formerly magnanimous melting pot has melted, leaving us poured out into many petty cast iron cups. Our new motto is, out of one, many!

We have not arrived here randomly. Diabolical fingerprints are all

over our current body politic. Satan has inspired unceasing chatter emphasizing our differences and ignoring our common interests. Obama’s presidency greatly exacerbated this by encouraging race, gender, wealth and other social divisions. Days before Trump’s inauguration, Obama hatched a White House conspiracy to cripple Trump’s administration. Four years of unwarranted congressional investigations and groundless impeachments followed, narrated by a media propaganda blitz worthy of Joseph Goebbels! Today, Trump seems poised to return to office, but pandemonium looms.

So, what’s next? Three strata need reform: spiritual, social and political. But the spiritual must lead. Only something from above can cure the craziness here below. Unity cannot be restored without Christ’s help. Christians led America’s past great reforms: abolition, temperance, child labor, women’s rights, civil rights. But there is a problem.

Today *we* ourselves are divided! How can divided Christians unify a fractured nation? Churches are separated denominationally, doctrinally, socioeconomically and, yes, racially. Doctor King lamented the most segregated time was Sunday morning, and little has changed.

Second Chronicles 7:14 still awaits our response: “If my people...” If Christians repent and rally around Jesus’ standard—obedience to His teachings before political tribalism—our fervent prayers and gracious social and political interactions will help heal America. For a season. Why not permanently?

Despite our best efforts, Bible prophecy soon will overtake us. The end times are at hand. History ends in God’s glorious kingdom, not our good but inglorious nation. America is not mentioned in end-times prophecy, while primary Tribulation players Russia, Europe and China are rising. Trump’s second election is unsure, but Christ’s Second Coming is sure. His Spirit is preparing His bride, a transformed, unified ecclesia from *all* nations and races. After His return, Jesus’ theocracy, not our democracy, will rule the world; and from Jerusalem, not Washington. Truly, “Our God,” with His prophetic Word, “is marching on!” And no social nor political reforms, however temporarily effective, will halt His steadfast, sacred tramp.

In our day of widespread falsehood, this is the biblical, prophetic truth.

And truth gets around.

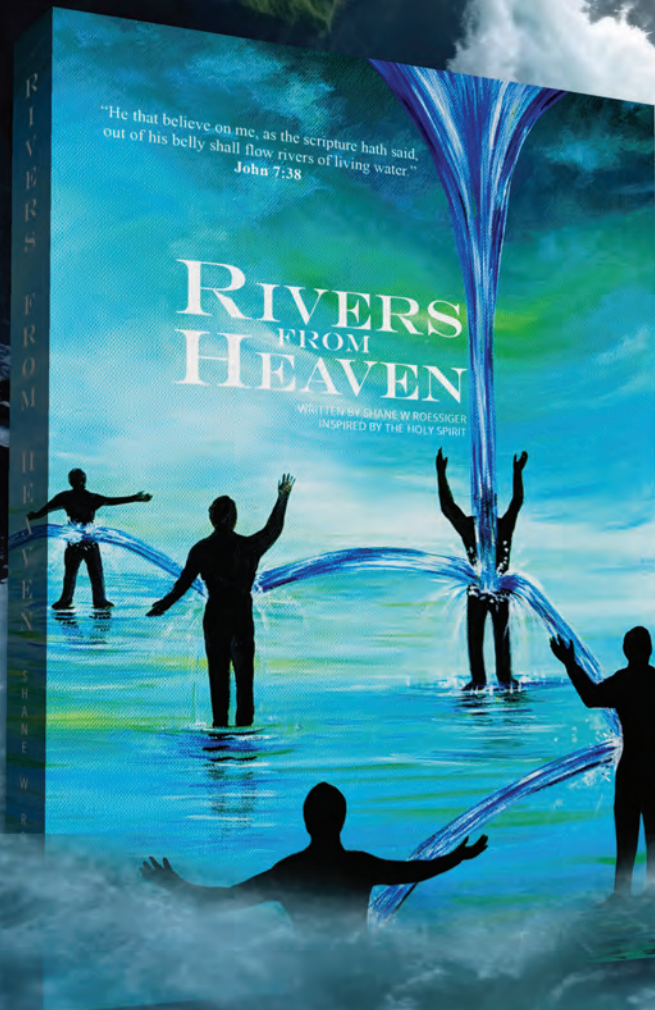
*Only something from above can cure the craziness here below.*

Dr. Greg Hinnant is a bible expositor, teacher and writer who has published numerous books. A long-serving faculty member and regent of Christian Life School of Theology Global (CLST-Global), he speaks at churches and conferences and contributes to christian periodicals. Greg resides in high point, North Carolina.



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Pastor Doug Roberts at Calvary Temple, San Antonio, Texas

## ‘We Live in an Imperfect World’

AG Pastor responds to tragic amputation with faith, humor

**W**hat began as an innocent trip to an amusement park with his family culminated in the unexpected amputation of Pastor Doug W. Roberts’ left leg—but the tragedy didn’t dim his faith or dull his sense of humor.

A May 31 roller coaster ride left Roberts, 65, co-pastor of Calvary Temple in San Antonio, Texas, sore and bruised. Over the next few days, symptoms escalated, leaving him near death in a hospital emergency room. Despite bursting blisters and a high fever, the staff planned to release him until orthopedic surgeon Nicholas E. Gerken ordered tests. “I’m alive today because Dr. Gerken insisted on them running blood work on me right then,” the pastor says.

After a less extensive surgery failed and infection spread to his kidneys, “It’s his leg or his life,” the doctor told his wife.

After the amputation, Roberts remained sedated and intubated with at best a 50% chance of survival—with projected lifetime dialysis. But his kidneys healed without medical explanation, and after 12 days of sedation, doctors brought him back to consciousness. His gathered family wondered: How would he react to news of the amputation?

“Wow, this is really going to mess up my golf game,” he said, reassuring his loved ones with words he believes God gave him. Despite strong athletic ability, he was always a terrible golfer—even when he had two legs.

Today, Pastor Doug uses a power wheelchair and hopes to be fitted with crutches. He misses playing sports, yet he has never blamed God. “We live in an imperfect world where crazy things happen,” he says. “There’s a reason I’m going to discover He allowed me to go through this.”

## New VeggieTales Feature Film Set to Premier in 2026

‘Who doesn’t love a superhero that has plungers on the side of his head?’

An upcoming VeggieTales theatrical release, as yet untitled, promises to bring crime-fighting superhero LarryBoy to the big screen for the first time. Big Idea Content Group and Kingstone studios announced a collaborative agreement for the 2026 feature film.

The VeggieTales franchise, the most successful faith-based children’s series of all time, has generated over \$1.7 billion in retail sales. Big Idea has released two previous theatrical films: *Jonah: A VeggieTales Movie* and *The Pirates Who Don’t Do Anything*, which earned more than \$39 million combined.

“VeggieTales is the absolute gold standard for faith-based children’s animation,” says Art Ayriss, CEO of Kingstone Studios. “We couldn’t imagine a better brand in providing a big screen treatment for kids than to bring LarryBoy and the cast of VeggieTales back into theaters.”

“LarryBoy is a fan favorite—who doesn’t love a superhero with plungers on the side of his head?” says Leslie Ferrell, senior vice president, Big Idea Content Group. She adds, “With LarryBoy in the lead role, we can deliver an entertaining movie for the whole family.”



## Franklin Graham’s God Loves You Tour Returns to the UK

Evangelist Franklin Graham and the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association are partnering with thousands of churches to bring the God Loves You tour back to the United Kingdom this summer and next. Events will take place in Birmingham, England, on June 15, 2024; in Glasgow, Scotland, on June 22, 2024; and in London on June 21, 2025.



“The simple message of God’s love for the people of the U.K. is just as relevant now as it has ever been,” says Graham. “We are grateful to all of the churches here that are doing the important work of evangelism, and it is an honor to come alongside them and support them.”

Graham found himself the subject of controversy in 2020, when outcry over his position on same-sex marriage forced the cancellation of his evangelistic events in various U.K. cities. He returned to the nation in 2022, and in 2023, [more than 10,000 heard the gospel](#) at the God Loves You event in London.

## Birth Family Surprises *American Idol* Singer on Stage

“There Was Jesus” may never have sounded so sweet

Mckenna Breinholt has packed a lot into her 25 years, reaching her dream of singing on the *American Idol* stage, where she performed “There Was Jesus” by Zach Williams and Dolly Parton. But after her audition, God had a surprise for her far greater than the thumbs-up from judges.

Breinholt had already shared her adoption story with the celebrity panel, telling them she recently discovered her birth mother was a singer who died in October 2013. After contacting

her birth family, she was amazed to learn they all sang, too.

“Knowing I have another family who’s equally excited to know and love me was amazing,” Breinholt said. When Perry asked her to invite her family to hear the judges’ decision, she was surprised to find both families, adoptive and birth, waiting in the wings.

Despite her joy in her new-found relatives, Breinholt doesn’t discount the value of her adoptive family. “I have the best family in the world,” she said.





# Evangelical Arrested for Printing Children’s Sunday School Materials

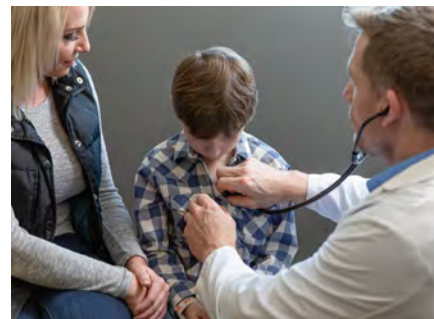
Imprisoned in China, he is charged with “illegal business operations”

**C**hen Yueli, known as “Stephen,” an evangelical believer in Christ from Hong Kong, was arrested late last year with at least eight other Christians for his involvement in printing children’s Sunday school materials. Traveling to mainland China with his two underage children, he was arrested at the Shenzhen West Kowloon Customs office, where the children were later picked up by his wife, who lives in Kunming.

Chen Yueli has been residing in mainland China for more than 20 years, shuttling between Hong Kong and the mainland to serve Christian organizations on the mainland. According to his lawyer, he was arrested on the charge of “illegal business operations” for helping print children’s Sunday school materials in Hubei.

Authorities first detained him in the Jiayu County Detention Center in Chibi City. Early this year, public security officials removed him from a meeting with his lawyer, transferring him to the Chibi Detention Center, where he has had no contact with the outside world.

His family is concerned about his condition and health, and there is no further information on those arrested with him.



## Pediatricians Refuse to Endorse ‘Gender-Affirming’ Care

The group found no long-term evidence that the protocols offer mental health benefits for children and adolescents

**T**he American College of Pediatricians, a 600-member organization of health care professionals, has released a position statement stating the group “cannot condone the social affirmation, medical intervention, or surgical mutilation of children and adolescents identifying as transgender or gender nonconforming.” ACPeds explains that “there is no long-term evidence that current ‘gender affirming’ medication and surgical protocols” offer mental health benefits for individuals who struggle in this way.

“Many individuals who have been treated with [gender affirming therapy] later regret those interventions and seek to align their gender identity with their sex,” ACPeds notes.

The organization reviewed more than 60 studies on the issue that assessed more than a million minors in the U.S. and Europe, finding that children with gender confusion are at higher risk of mental health issues including depression, anxiety, autism, eating disorders, self-injury and suicide, “both before and after ‘gender affirming therapy.’” ACPeds also said the data reveal many adolescents will come to feel comfortable with their biological sex if allowed to go through the “natural course of puberty.”

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# TAKE MY HAND

## Out of the fires of trials and storms

BY JONI LAMB

**T**he man was now certain he was drowning, that he was going under. And to think, mere moments ago he was full of courage, stepping out in faith, obeying his Master's call to come. A miracle was happening before his very eyes. Not only was his Master walking on the water, he was! But then something else happened. His eyes shifted away from the One beckoning him and onto the storm raging all around. Wind whipped and waves hammered, as pounding pellets of rain stung his face. He was sinking fast and fought frantically to keep his head above the turbulence. Fear was engulfing him along with the sea. Surely, the Master could be trusted? Surely, He wouldn't call him out of the boat only to let him drown. Surely? With one, final, desperate lunge before submerging into the depths, the man cried, "Lord, save me!" If he could but cling to his Master's hand, he knew he would be safe. "Immediately Jesus reached out his

hand and caught him." Safely in His grip, Jesus told the man, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" (Matt. 14:30-31, MEV).

### Stormy Weather

I'm sure most of you are familiar with the above story. The disciples were in their boat crossing the Sea of Galilee after Jesus had given them unmistakable instructions to go and He would meet them on the other side. They were simply obeying His word when around 3 a.m. a violent storm blew in, catching them off guard. With no satellites to predict the weather, this was common on the Middle Eastern seas. Wind and rain beat against the boat, tossing it back and forth. Likely the sail was twisted, and the vessel taking on water. Everything in the external pointed to them going down. But then, off in the distant darkness they see a figure, perhaps glowing, walking toward them on the sea. A different kind of



The Lord is teaching me day-by-day to take courage in His power.”



fear grips them as they assume it's a ghost. And it wasn't their imagination because they all saw it. However, as the ethereal form drew closer it became clearer—Jesus. It was Jesus. He was coming to them in the storm. "Take courage!" He called out. "It is I. Don't be afraid." Undoubtedly, they must have remembered the episode not long before when they'd been in the boat during another raging storm. Fear had

it through.

The Bible doesn't say much about what Peter thought concerning that specific experience and how it impacted his life going forward. It does say the disciples were amazed and claimed, "Truly You are the Son of God." Of course, they had said that the first time, too. But don't you think that after Peter had clung to Jesus's hand as He walked him through the storm, that the

those previous fears had been replaced with the assurance that Jesus was with him, in him, still holding his hand, and would take him across to the ultimate "other side."

### Cling to Your Navigator

You don't have to live very long to know that life is challenging under the best of circumstances and downright overwhelming at times. Storms of life are inevitable.

They come in a variety of ways, with varied intensity. Some threaten to blow us away, sink us and drown us, while others are minor inconveniences that seem huge in the moment. One thing is certain, regardless of the intensity, we all experience storms. We are either coming out of one, in the middle of one, or about to go into one. At some point all of us will go through severe storms. This is not a negative statement. It's simply the reality of living in our broken world. Jesus said, "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who

built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock," (Matt. 7:24-25). It is not a matter of if storms will come, but how is your foundation built when they do. Jesus also said, "In this world you will have trouble." That's a promise not many of us have taped

gripped them in that moment too as Jesus was sleeping soundly in the stern. Shaking Him awake they cried hysterically, "Lord, save us! We're going to drown!" He replied with similar words, "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?" Then He got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm (Matt. 8:23-27).

Now, outside the boat standing atop the cutting waves, Jesus, the Creator of the elements, calls to Peter to step out and come to Him. Full of faith and courage, Peter jumped out of the boat and walked on the water toward Jesus. It was one of the most miraculous moments in his life. It was then, however, that he took his eyes off Jesus and focused on the turbulent storm.

That's when he began to sink.

That's when we begin to sink, too. Yet, after crying out for the Lord to save him, and reaching for His hand, Jesus grabbed it and walked with Peter on the water back to the boat. As they climbed in, the wind and rain died down and they crossed over to the other side. From the first moment He instructed them to go to the other side, Jesus knew the storm was going to come and that they were going to make

next storm he went through he would have a little more courage, a little more assurance, and cling a little closer? I think so. Actually, I know so. Though Peter would continue to have his struggles, he would eventually come face-to-face with the resurrected Jesus and then be filled with the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus inside him, who became his empowerment. Something He didn't have before.

As believers, we have that same Holy Spirit inside us. Peter would one day write, "For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty," (2 Pet. 1:16). Peter was speaking of the transfiguration, the Resurrection, but certainly he remembered all of the times Jesus had delivered him from the storms. How could you forget walking on water? Peter wrote the above passage as he was about to go through the greatest storm of his life, being martyred for the One who had walked with him. Now, facing a certain and brutal death,



**Life is challenging under the best of circumstances and downright overwhelming at times.**

to the mirror. The good news is He also said, "Be of good cheer, I've overcome the world," (John 16:33b). With Jesus as our

foundation, we can face the storms of life courageously, without fear. The Lord is in the storm with you. Before He made that statement, Jesus said, “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace,” (v. 33a). With Him holding your hand, you can experience peace in the middle of the storm. Jesus doesn’t always stop the storm from coming, but He is always with us and will calm the storm and lead you through to other side.

## Many Storms Lead to Many Peaceful Days

Taking hold of Jesus’s hand and letting Him walk me through the storms has become a theme in my life. I’ve known firsthand His peace in the turbulence. With each storm the Lord has brought me through, the more confidence I have in His absolute faithfulness. Over the years of walking with Him, a calm assurance has grown in me that we can absolutely trust Him in the most turbulent of circumstances. Not only that, with each storm He brings us through we grow stronger in that trust. It’s like a notch in our life belts. It’s not that we are somehow better. We are still human vessels, but our trust becomes more secure in Him.

Personally, the Lord has brought me through so many storms that I could write a book. I did! After 40-something years of being in public ministry and particularly, Daystar, that is now reaching over 2.2 billion households worldwide, many of my storms were public, though the details of what I went through behind the scenes were not. Other storms were private. In all of those cases there was a deeper story that the public didn’t see. As a result, people talk, speculate and create lies. So many have speculated, “Well, what happened to Marcus and Joni?” Or “What happened when Marcus was in the hospital?” Or “What’s Joni doing now?” All these questions, and people deciding they know the truth or looking at the internet. I understand that’s part and parcel of being in a ministry like this and that’s a storm in itself. Well, I’m now telling the true story, and this is my story. And God has been faithful through it.

With the big platform, you’re going to get criticism, but at the end of the day, I don’t have to please everybody. I have to please God. And that’s my goal. And

that’s for people who know me, people who walk with me. They know my heart. And people that watch me regularly, they know that. What people don’t see, though, is the crying out to the Lord in private until you can’t cry anymore, then eating too much ice cream and crashing with the pillow over your head. They don’t see the desperate prayers to the Lord for wisdom and then the supernatural confirmation and guidance. They don’t see the personal surrendering to the Lord, the courage it takes to obey and keep going when everything in you wants to quit, especially when you know the whole world is talking.

In my new book, *Through the Storm: Courageous Faith in Turbulent Times*, I am sharing some of my deepest thoughts and reflections, the truth that gets to the bottom of so much speculation. Ulti-

what? I can make it through anything, because God is faithful.”

Thankfully, none of us have to go through our storms alone. Jesus shows up on the threatening waters holding out His hand saying, “Take it. Trust Me. I’ve got you.” But we have to grab hold and not let go. My grandfather Trammell told me many times when growing up, “Joni, hold tight to His hand. He will never let go.” I certainly don’t have all the answers to the zillion questions of “why?” but Jesus promises not just peace, but “perfect peace” in the midst of extreme distress and suffering. He is real and fully present, even when we don’t feel it. He sees and listens. He hears our cries. And He directs.

My wounds sting like everyone else’s. Yet, the Lord is teaching me day-by-day to take courage in His power, grab hold of His hand, like Grandpa told me, and trust



Joni and her family

mately, the goal is encouraging you in your own storms. If the Lord can do it for this South Carolina gal, He can do it for you.

Being in ministry for all these years, I’ve not only watched the Lord walk with me through my storms, but I’ve watched Him walk others through theirs, often much more turbulent storms than what I’ve been through. I’ve learned a lot, especially from the people I’ve been privileged to interview on *Table Talk* and *Ministry Now*. I want to let you know that, “The Lord is faithful, no matter what you go through.” I pray you will see, “You know

Him when everything around me screams, “I’m going under!” ◀

**JONI LAMB** is the president of Daystar Television Network, co-founded with her late husband, Marcus Lamb. The network reaches over 110 million homes in the U.S. and over 5 billion people worldwide. She is executive producer and host of her daily talk show, *Joni Table Talk*, which has earned 10 Telly Awards, three Lone Star Emmy Awards and five Daytime Emmy nominations. Lamb also co-hosts Daystar’s daily, live flagship broadcast *Ministry Now* with her husband, Dr. Doug Weiss. Her new book *Through the Storm* releases this month.



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# 5 Power Strategies to Defend Your Mind

*How to call out the  
enemy's lies and **resist**  
destruction*

## BY KENZA HADDOCK, LPCS, BCPC

A recent new mental-health related TikTok trend has gained traction across the app's approximately 1.5 billion followers, claiming to "help" people overcome the pain of intrusive thoughts. The TikTok trend encourages users to give in to their intrusive thoughts, whether their own thoughts or from other people, calling the trend "Let Your Intrusive Thoughts Win."

So, what exactly are intrusive thoughts? Intrusive thoughts are unpleasant urges, thoughts and images that come to our mind, to act on something compulsively. We all experience intrusive thoughts, but for some, these thoughts can be debilitating and disruptive.

Where do they come from? Intrusive thoughts are a direct product of what mental health professionals refer to in a group of diagnoses under the umbrella of anxiety disorders. These include obsessive compulsive disorder, panic disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or social anxiety, among several others. Each one, though they may differ in terms of symptoms, all share the common symptom of "intrusive thoughts." To clarify: just because you experience intrusive thoughts does not automatically mean you meet the criteria for a mental health disorder.

Over the last decade, anxiety has accounted for the majority of mental health diagnoses given by professionals on any given day, making it the number one mental health epidemic of our day. It is not surprising, then, that another new social media fad involving intrusive thoughts quickly gained such popular traction.

So, if the trend aims to help people, what's the big deal? As a clinical counselor, I see red flags all over this trend. And as a pastoral counselor, I see where the enemy, disguised as an angel of light (Rev. 12:9), is using this trend to bring destruction upon its followers' lives.

Throughout this article, we're going to dive into the top five most common groups of intrusive thoughts plaguing our minds today. Using each category we cover, I'm going to shed light from both a clinical and a spiritual perspective on where each type of intrusive thought is rooted, why taking the stance of "letting it win" is dangerous, and how to handle it in a way that is both clinically and biblically sound. Let's get started!

### #5 Health Fears

Do you ever have thoughts like "I'm going to die of cancer" or feel a bump somewhere on your body and think "This is cancer!?" Or perhaps, experience moments of forgetfulness and think, "What if I'm experiencing the first signs of Alzheimer's?" Next thing you know, you're convinced that you're going to die prematurely. Believe it or not, this is a very common type of intrusive thought that falls under the group of health

related-fears.

Part of the consequences of mankind's fall is wanting to be in control of our own lives and our own destiny. Unfortunately, since that's not possible, it is often the case that when we undergo a stressful situation, the enemy exploits the fact that we've been under stress for a certain period of time to inject thoughts that exacerbate our already heightened sense of powerlessness. This is because the enemy is trying to capitalize on our stressful state in the hopes that we take his bait by believing one of his lies so that he can disrupt our lives for as long as we're willing to believe those thoughts.

I've had patients who were convinced they were going to die of car accidents or they were going to prematurely die of cancer and leave their children orphans. Listen, in Christ, you have the authority to not listen to everything that comes to your mind. God's Word has the power to destroy lies the enemy tries to introduce to you. But you must apply it by not letting a thought get to your heart until you filter it through God's Word.

Here's how to know if it is from the enemy: if a thought you're having is producing fear and anxiety, it is not from God. Refuse delivery—don't let it in. Refuse to believe it. Say out loud, "I don't believe you" and keep moving forward.

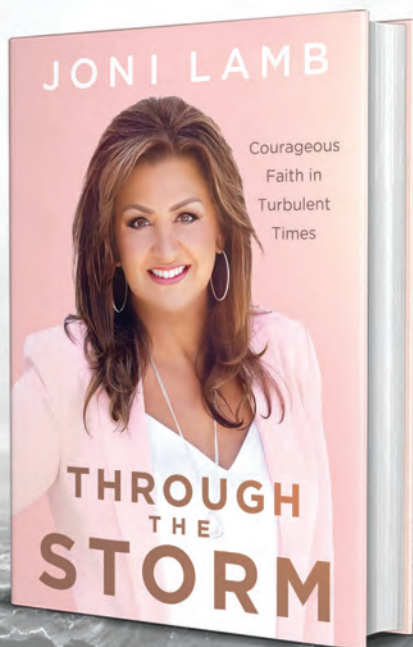
### #4 Self Doubt

This group of intrusive thoughts often begins with "What if..." Our brain continuously works hard to protect us from perceived pain, while continuously seeking avenues for perceived pleasure. Part of our brain is a paired structure called the Amygdala, also known as the emotional wheelhouse of our brain. The Amygdala triggers a surge of emotions when we're in danger, enabling us to quickly escape a potentially dangerous situation and seek safety. The enemy of our souls, who has been studying humanity for centuries, knows how our brain operates so he exploits us by inducing fearful thoughts that correlate with our human needs. For example, to threaten our need for acceptance, our enemy whispers thoughts like, "Nobody likes you," or "Nobody even cares about you." He knows that thoughts like these, once entertained and allowed into your mind and heart, will either make you try to work harder to prove that you are "good enough," which on one end of the spectrum relies on your use of willpower alone to rise above the intrusive thought; or, you will align with this new TikTok trend of letting "intrusive thoughts win," thereby succumbing to the enemy's whispers, and further sink into a state of despair. Either way, he wins.

What steps can you take when dealing with intrusive thoughts rooted in self-doubt? First you have to choose who you're going to believe: either God or an outside source. It cannot be both. If it's God and your intrusive thoughts say "You're a loser," knowing that that's not at all what God calls



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you in Christ, you have to identify the thought as a lie originating from the enemy, who seeks to steal, kill and destroy (John 10:10). Stand firm (1 Pet. 5:8), and remind yourself of truths in 1 John 4:4 and Romans 8:31-39.

The devil can't fight against the Word of God, because the Word exposes him as a liar. When you stand against his lies by identifying them, and strengthening yourself using God's Word, like David once did (1 Sam. 30:6), your enemy loses his grip on your mind.

Now that doesn't mean he's not going to try to use any of the other intrusive thoughts, but through time and experience walking with God and pressing in to His Word, you're more capable of identifying when a thought has come to your mind that is not congruent with God's Word, and then cast it down (2 Cor 10:5).

### #3 Identity and Sexual Orientation

I have treated patients who have had disturbing thoughts that try to convince them they are gay, even though they are happily married or in a heterosexual relationship. These thoughts are more common among teens and young adults because this is the identity developmental stage in your life. It is during this stage that we begin to explore who we are and try to establish our own identity, separate from our parents.

Unfortunately, this stage of our lives makes it prime territory for the enemy to sweep right in and start inserting deceitful lies into our minds to warp our sense of identity with thoughts like "How do you know you're not gay?", "Have you ever tried to see if you're at least bi?" or "What's the harm in at least trying?" The enemy whispers lie after lie hoping you

take the bait.

Giving in to thoughts like these opens the door for the enemy to wreak havoc on one's sense of identity and sexual orientation. One of the first main things God set in stone in Genesis when He created

people was that He created us male and female (Gen. 1:27). And for those He destined to have a spouse, He destined for them to marry someone of the opposite sex. Any thoughts that are contrary or contradictory to this are straight from the pit of hell, and must be renounced immediately in the name of Jesus. The Bible is very clear that giving in to our sinful nature leads to death, while following the leading of the Holy Spirit leads to life and peace (Rom. 8:6).

Let me be clear: It's not a sin in itself for evil thoughts about identity confusion or sexual orientation to come to your mind. The enemy is the tempter with no power to make you sin. It is however a sin to willingly entertain unholy thoughts and then act on them. I suggest stopping the thought at the entertainment part by saying "Thank You Father, that according to Genesis 1:27, You have created me male/female," (whichever applies to you). And if the thought aims to confuse your sexual orientation, renounce it immediately by saying something to the effect of "I rebuke that thought in the name of Jesus, it is written, 'If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination,'" (Lev. 20:13).

### #2 Morality

This cluster of intrusive thoughts deals with acting upon behaviors that violate your morals. The most common one I have observed is a person having thoughts about cheating on their spouse. Unfortunately, there's unwise counsel out there that seeks to claim that having thoughts like these are the way one's subconscious mind is trying to communicate to them that they're unhappy in their marriage and therefore they should seek happiness elsewhere.

My friends, this is why we must filter any counsel we get through the lens of Scripture.

Entertaining lies can lead to a state known as “sensory acuity.” This means that if you believe a false statement and don’t reject it, you will become overly fixated on a specific idea or concept that relates to that lie. For example, if you fall for the lie that the reason you’re experiencing intrusive thoughts about cheating on your spouse is that deep down you’re unhappy, you will become hyper-focused on everything your spouse does that makes you unhappy. Soon enough, that’s all you will think about. Meanwhile, the enemy is pulling strings and possibly even presenting an alternative to your spouse to you so that you can act on the intrusive thoughts he sent you in the first place.

How do you combat these types of intrusive thoughts? Understand that the enemy works in the dark. Therefore, he’s going to induce feelings of shame so that you’d shy away from talking to anybody about this. Resist the urge to keep your thoughts a secret. Do the opposite, and expose the lie as a lie to a person in your life who is Spirit-led, someone you are certain spends time with the Lord and can understand that your mind is under attack so they can stand in the gap with you and for you to pray against such attacks.

Understand that your enemy is deceptive in nature, the prowling lion desperate to devour every victim it can. So if you don’t expose his lies immediately, he’s going to use deceitful measures to amplify these intrusive thoughts. He will induce negative thoughts when you’re around your spouse by trying to get you to focus on things that you may not like about them. Meanwhile the enemy will start introducing someone, a coworker perhaps or a friend of the opposite sex, who is desirable to your eye. Flee any sort of temptation (1 Cor. 6:18), be on guard (1 Cor. 16:13), and most importantly, understand that this thought absolutely did not originate from your subconscious

mind as if it’s trying to send you a message. Rather, rebuke the enemy’s lie that originated from that enemy of our souls, who is trying to bring destruction on you, your marriage and your life.

## #1 Harm

Whether it’s the urge to jump in front of an oncoming train, or images of you harming someone, these thoughts are distressing to their recipients, and can even create confusion and fear where you feel like you can’t trust yourself. You may even find yourself questioning your sanity, or asking if you’re really capable of doing any such gruesome thing. Much like the other groups of intrusive thoughts, letting these thoughts have free reign will bring

nothing but destruction to your life. Intrusive thoughts in general are disturbing, but ones specific to inducing harm on yourself or to others, are particularly painful; especially when they come out of nowhere.

From a clinical standpoint, thoughts like these often indicate that your fight or flight response has been activated. If you take a step back, there must be some external stressors that you have been experiencing in your life recently, over a period of weeks to several months. You’ve likely tried your best to persist through the stressors and so what’s happened is your brain has been so exhausted trying to persevere through stressful situations that it is in a vulnerable state.

Much like we’re more prone to get sick when our immune system is down, this is when the enemy of your soul comes in, exploits your state of exhaustion and induces thoughts of self-harm and/or thoughts of harming others.

Through the years, I’ve had people say “These thoughts/images came out of nowhere!” which makes them very disturbing to their recipient. If you’re experiencing these types of intrusive thoughts, please understand that this is not who you are as a person. These thoughts, however gruesome they may be, do not attest to your character. Talk

with a professional Christian counselor.

One of the best ways to resist these thoughts is to make sure that you are getting enough rest and making sure that you are eating healthy. Think about the prophet Elijah when he was feeling hopeless and suicidal, he needed rest and food (1 Kings 19). Those two alone can do wonders for our mental well-being.

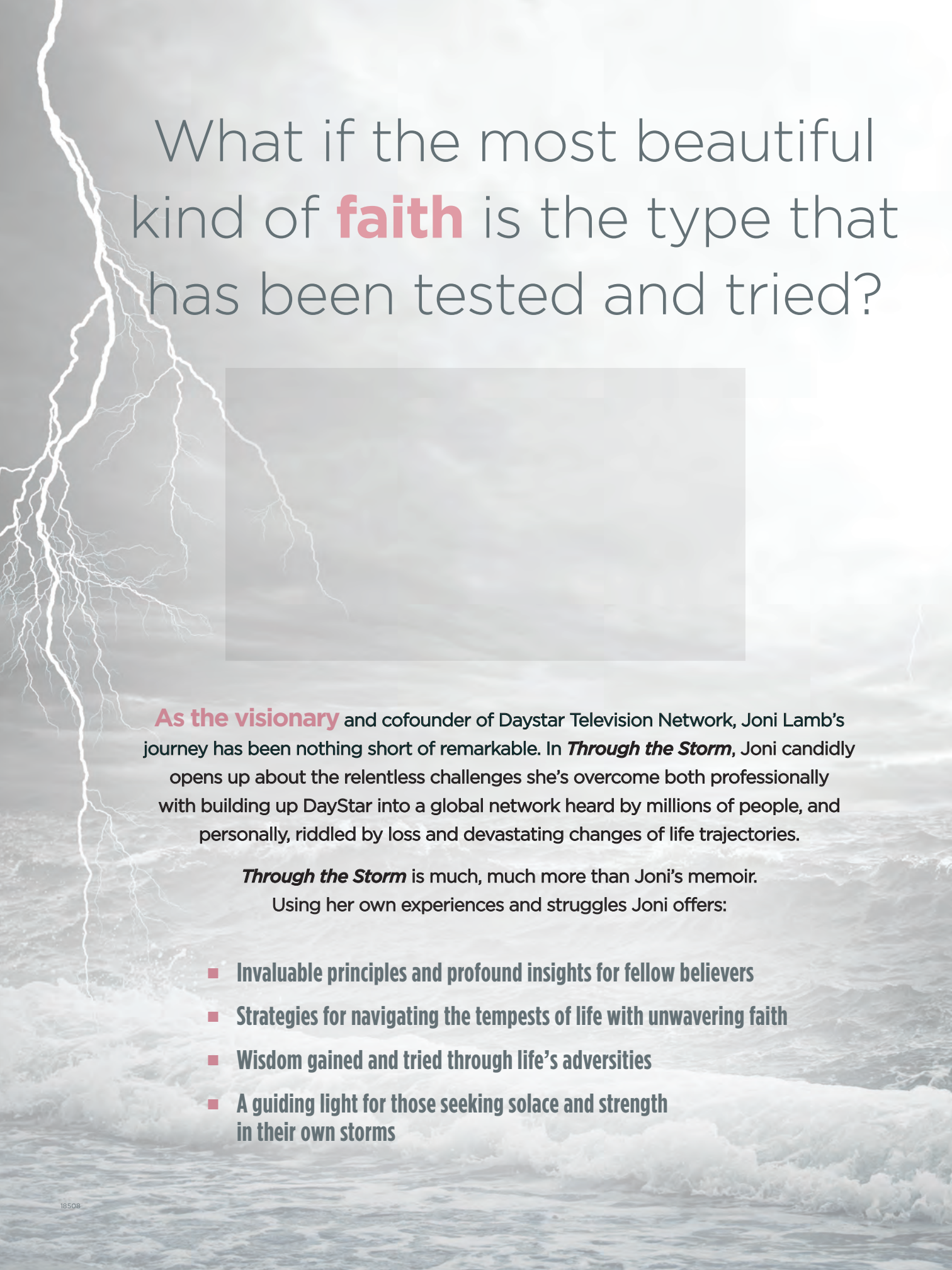
Keep in mind, harm-related intrusive thoughts, especially if they’ve come out of nowhere, are an indication that there are unprocessed stressors going on. Unprocessed emotions make you vulnerable for the enemy to insert awful thoughts in your mind. So definitely talk to a professional Christian counselor to work through these stressors. And never ever act on the compulsions.

## Next Steps

You may not be able to control when your enemy shows up trying to tempt you or deceive you with lies. What you can do, however, is exercise authority over the thoughts he tries to insert your way. And remember, no matter how bad the thoughts may be, you are not helpless to them, because in Christ you are not defeated—your enemy is (Col. 2:15)! By planting intrusive thoughts in your mind, he is trespassing where he doesn’t belong. When you sense an intrusive thought, start praising the Lord out loud and thank Him for all He has done for you. Then watch the enemy flee as fast as he came in. ◀

**KENZA HADDOCK, LPCS, BCPC**, is a licensed professional counselor supervisor and an accredited clinical trauma specialist with expertise in treating complex mental health conditions through both clinical and biblical methods. A former Muslim, she has spoken at conferences and churches and been featured in numerous news outlets regarding the intersection of Christianity and mental health counseling. Haddock and her husband own Oceanic Counseling Group LLC, an outpatient mental health agency headquartered in South Carolina. She also was a cofounder of the #healSC campaign, which raised awareness about mental health issues. Her new book, *The Three Enemies of Your Mental Health*, releases this October and is available now to be pre-ordered through Amazon.





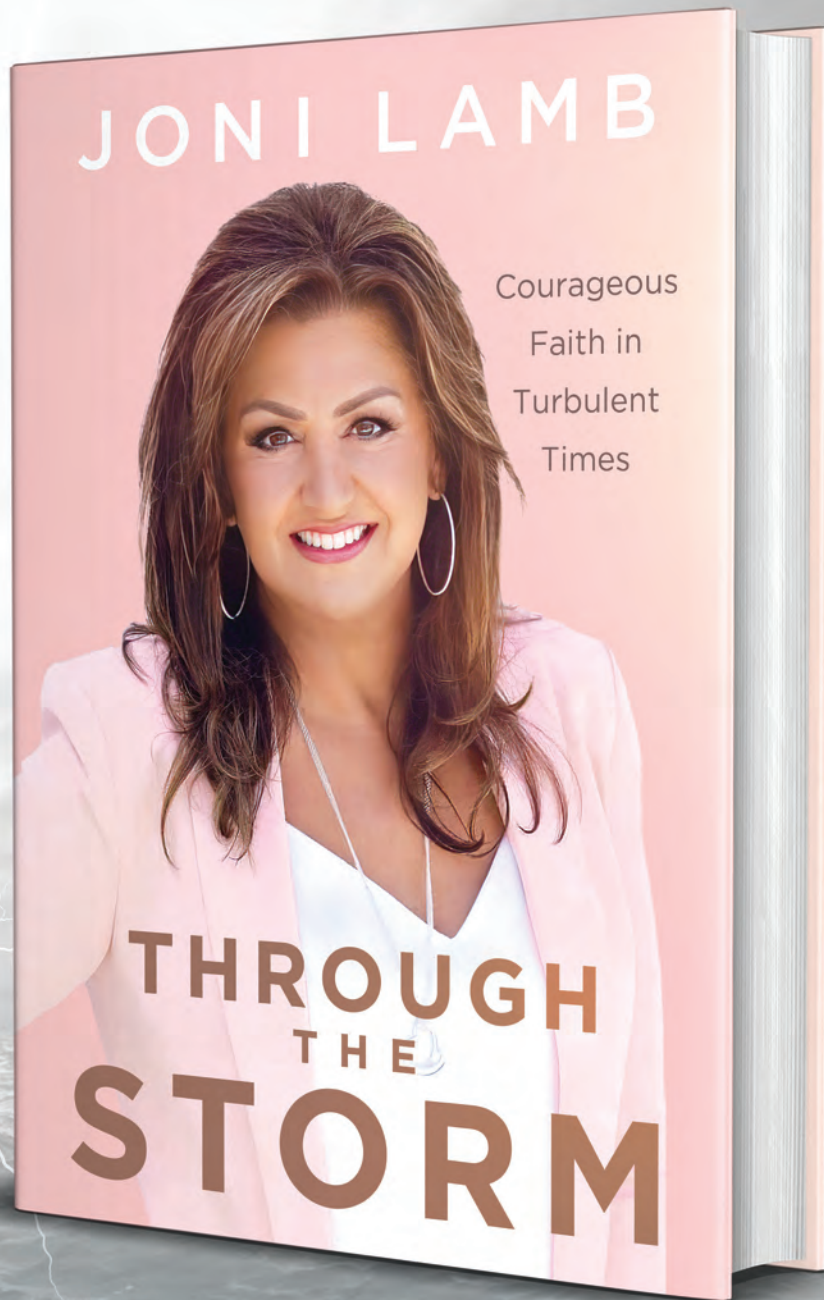
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| RESTORATION

# WHERE Have All the Blacksmiths





# GONE?

## Standing strong with courage and confidence in End Times persecution

BY PHIL HOTSENPILLER

**I**t's midnight in America!

The church is asleep and slumbering in the night. Like Samson, we haven't realized that the power has departed, and like those who sleep, we are unaware of what is happening around us. We cling to our comfort like a child holding a toy.

It's midnight in America!

The spirit of fear has paralyzed us into believing the ancient lie that appeasement is better than courage and conformity is preferable to freedom. The church is so hungry to be accepted by the world that it has relinquished its power, forfeited its birthright and accepted its place as nonessential.

It's midnight in America!

Lost in a maze of appeasement, the church expects little from God. Gone are the Elijahs of old who called down the power of God. Gone are the days of bold prophets who spoke out against the sins of a nation. Is it any wonder why we don't see more signs, wonders and miracles?

It's midnight in America!

We are on the doorstep of the return of Christ. Each day we see more and more signs of His return.

But are we ready?

continued »



## Will It Be a Happy 4th of July, 2026?

America will celebrate its 250th birthday in 2026. Or will it?

I'm beginning to wonder if we'll still be a nation by the time we celebrate that anniversary. Rabbi Daniel Lapin has been asking the same question. He has conducted a study of history and confirmed that when large numbers of people unite to build a society, their efforts seem to last an average of 250 years. Many of the dates can't be precise, but he cites several examples:

- » Babylonian Empire (approx. 1780 B.C. to 1530 B.C.): 250 years
- » Assyrian Empire (approx. 860 B.C. to 612 B.C.): 246 years
- » Pax Romana of the Roman Empire (27 B.C. to A.D. 213): 240 years
- » Spanish Empire (approx. 1492 to 1742): 250 years
- » Pre-Communist Russian Empire (1682 to 1916): 234 years
- » British Empire (1700 to 1950): 250 years

What's the significance of 250 years? Estimates for the length of a biblical generation can vary, but Rabbi Lapin notes with interest how in Genesis we see 10 generations as repeated blocks of time: specifically, the 10 generations from Adam to Noah (Gen. 5:1–29) and then from Noah to Abraham (Gen. 11:10–

“ *I believe America needs more blacksmiths.* ”

best of days

» Sixth Generation: extending influence beyond borders with money instead of military

» Seventh Generation: rising political power of women and of the intellectual and academic elite

» Eighth Generation: influx of foreigners

» Ninth Generation: eat, drink and be merry

» Tenth Generation: internal political and civic fracture

A democracy cannot exist as a permanent form of government. It can only exist until the voters discover that they can vote themselves largesse from the public treasury. From that moment on, the majority always votes for the candidates promising the most benefits from the public treasury. That results in a democracy collapsing over loose fiscal policy, always followed by a dictatorship. If you look back into our history and review the courage and faith of our founders, and then return to our present governments and society, it doesn't take long to detect selfishness, complacency

changes. I believe if the church leads the way in effecting change, it's not too late to reverse the decline, yet we need to face some hard truths.

I hear people saying, "I just want everything to get back to normal." By that, they usually mean easy, comfortable Christianity. I don't believe we'll ever go back to easy Christianity. Our faith must be more than a hobby in our lives, more than a tepid complacency where we expect God to bless us for what little commitment we show. It's time to rise up and be warriors for God—to prepare ourselves for battle.

I have a theory of my own: I believe America needs more blacksmiths.

The blacksmith used to be a respected and revered figure of society. My granddad was a farmer who did his own blacksmithing to make his tools. He took me out to the garage one day to show me how to make a chisel. I never was very good at it, but I learned a lot. We would heat up the coals to get them red-hot while I put on a mask and gloves. I would put the steel into the fire until it was glowing and then pull it out and begin to pound it with a hammer. When it started to cool, I'd put it back into the fire, let it get red-hot again, and resume pounding. I quickly learned that the blacksmith's job isn't an easy one, but it's a necessary one.

The enemies of Israel realized the influence of a blacksmith during the days of King Saul. The Philistines had invaded and overrun Israel and implemented a strategy to prevent the Israelites from rebounding. By eliminating all the Hebrew blacksmiths, the Philistines not only ensured the Israelites couldn't produce new weapons, but they also charged exorbitant fees for basic tool maintenance, which imposed a financial burden. The absence of a blacksmith implies a society bereft of its tools for change, defense and progress. It's an image of vulnerability, subjugation and loss of self-sufficiency. *continued »*

“ *The blacksmith is a beacon of hope against 'the spoiler to destroy'.* ”

26). More than seeing generations merely as specific time spans, he observes the significance of the Hebrew names provided and discerns a pattern of how empires grow and then decline:

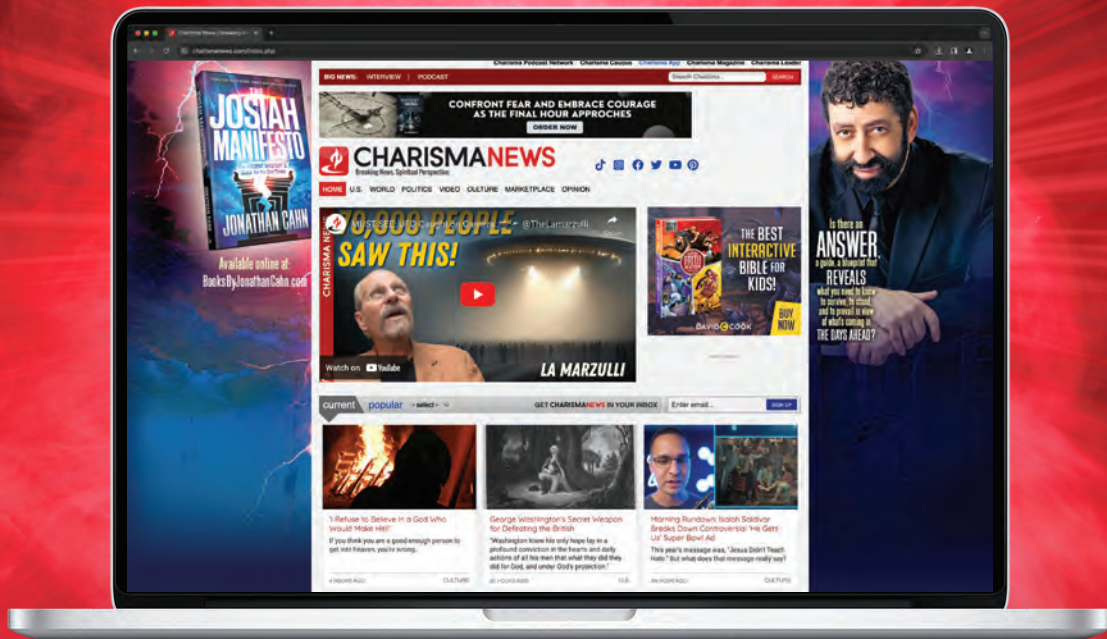
- » First Generation: bold breakout and conquest
- » Second Generation: commercial expansion
- » Third Generation: large-scale splendid buildings
- » Fourth Generation: wide-spread affluence
- » Fifth Generation: zenith and the

and apathy, with underlying motivations of greed and lavish lifestyles. We appear to be at the tail end of a cycle that has eroded many empires of the past. Maybe we've come to expect that from our secular institutions. But I fear we're seeing this same pattern spreading through our churches.

### Where Strength Is Forged

So, as we approach our 250th year, is America already on borrowed time as a democracy? We might be, if we ignore the lessons of history and don't make any

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The strategy of the enemy is much the same today. I see the godly pastors across our land as blacksmiths. They're the ones who are calling you to forge the swords, make the plows and stand in the presence of God. If you remove the blacksmith, then there is no gathering place, no prophetic voice to be heard. An

unification or the forging of alliances. Whether it's combining our strengths with others to achieve common goals or integrating various aspects of our personality into a harmonious whole, welding symbolizes unity and connection.

Finishing involves smoothing and polishing the forged metal, removing any

in the larger context, it signifies a society's capacity for self-reliance, innovation and sustained development. The Philistines realized that by removing the blacksmiths from Israelite society, their subjects would remain helpless and unable to retaliate. By removing the blacksmiths—metaphorically, the creative, transformative force—they leave a void, hindering societal progress and growth.

The enemy's strategy to remove the blacksmith as a means of conquering is a powerful metaphor for suppressing the tools and mechanisms of resistance in a society. This could take the form of censorship, limiting access to education, or stifling the voice of the people. By removing the blacksmith, the enemy attempts to ensure that society cannot defend itself or form any substantive resistance.

The blacksmith in this metaphor embodies not only literal weapon-making but also the fostering of ideas, innovation and resilience. He represents the capacity of a society or individual to adapt, change, stand firm in the face of adversities and fight back when necessary.

“*The blacksmith embodies ideas, innovation and resilience—the capacity to adapt, change, stand firm in adversity and fight back when necessary.*”

online voice in the air is not a sufficient replacement. A blacksmith with no fire has little to offer.

The blacksmith holds a symbolic significance that goes far beyond the literal. The profession itself is a craft that requires skill, strength and meticulous attention to detail. As the blacksmith works, the raw material is transformed in the crucible of creation, under the hammer and against the anvil, in the heart of the forge. The transformative processes of blacksmithing represent stages of character formation, resilience and creative adaptation.

**Forging.** The process of shaping metal through heat and hammering. In a metaphorical sense, life's trials and challenges are the heat that tests us, and our responses are the hammer strokes that shape us. We're formed and defined by how we respond to adversity just as the raw iron is shaped under the blacksmith's hammer.

**Bending.** Occurs when the metal is softened by heat, making it flexible and malleable. It symbolizes adaptability and resilience in the face of changing circumstances. In life, we often have to bend and adapt to new situations, changing our perspectives or strategies without losing our fundamental essence, just as metal retains its nature despite its change in form.

**Welding.** Involves joining separate pieces of metal into a single cohesive whole. This stage can represent

rough edges or imperfections. Similarly, our personal development is an ongoing process of refinement, of continuously improving ourselves, smoothing out our flaws, and polishing our skills.

### Weapons Check

Isaiah has more to say about the significance of the blacksmith. He portrays the blacksmith as a divine creation: “Behold, I have created the blacksmith who blows the coals in the fire, who brings forth an instrument for his work; and I have created the spoiler to destroy. No weapon formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue which rises against you in judgment you shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is from Me,” says the Lord,” (Isa. 54:16–17).

In this passage, God says He is the one who creates the blacksmith, a figure who “brings forth an instrument for his work,” symbolizing the human capacity for creativity, invention and transformation. The blacksmith here is also a beacon of hope against “the spoiler to destroy,” indicating resilience and the power to rebuild in the face of destruction.

The blacksmith metaphor thus captures the essence of personal and societal growth and transformation. It emphasizes our ability to shape our own destiny through resilience, adaptability, unity and continuous self-improvement, regardless of the adversities we face. And

### This Is Your Wake-Up Call

If we want our nation to continue to its 250th year and beyond, we need more blacksmiths to emerge in our tumultuous landscape—not just as a maker of weapons, but as a symbol of steadfastness, creation and renewal. Forging, bending, welding, finishing—these actions define the process of building resistance, of creating change, yet there is always the threat of the blacksmith's absence, a warning of a society left defenseless, without tools or weapons for survival, much less revival. ◀

**PHIL HOTSENPILLER** is cofounder and senior pastor with his wife, Tammy, of *Influence Church in Anaheim Hills, California*. He has been interviewed on such media outlets as the Washington Post, USA Today, Fox News, CNN, the Christian Post, the History Channel and The Telegraph. *Hotsempiller is the author of 12 books and a graphic novel series. He and his wife live in Orange County, California, and have three adult children and seven grandchildren. His new book, It's Midnight In America, released this month and is available at MyCharismaShop.com.*

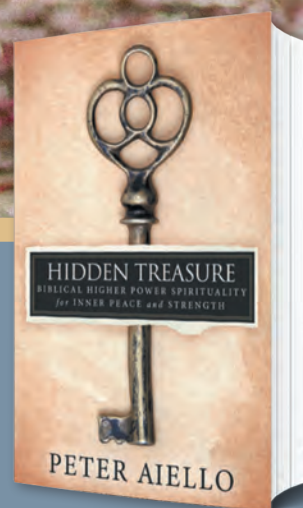
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*Peter Aiello*



THE GREAT  
NORTH AMERICAN

ECLIPSE

IS THIS AMERICA'S *Nineveh* MOMENT?

**BY TROY ANDERSON  
COLONEL DAVID J. GIAMMONA  
PASTOR PAUL BEGLEY**

**X**marks the spot. Seven years after the awe-inspiring Great American Eclipse in 2017, a total solar eclipse on Apr. 8 will form a giant “X” in the heart of America, passing through multiple cities named Nineveh after a planetary alignment. Is God sending a message to Earth? Is this what Billy Graham foresaw as America’s “Nineveh Moment?”

### **Is This America’s Final Warning?**

In an exclusive interview with renowned evangelist Billy Graham in 2013, he said when God sent the prophet Jonah to Nineveh to warn the city of judgment that the king and the people repented, sparing Nineveh. Graham said he believed the same thing could happen again today, this time in America.

Flash forward to Apr. 8, when the Great North American Eclipse of 2024, as compared to the Great American Eclipse of 2017, will form a giant “X” in the middle of America centered in Carbondale, Illinois, famously known as “Little Egypt.”

This total solar eclipse will traverse the United States from Texas to Maine, just days after a planetary alignment, captivating millions as the moon steals the sun’s spotlight, transforming the sky into a mesmerizing ethereal twilight.

Remarkably, this total solar eclipse will intersect with seven cities named Nineveh in the United States, with three directly in the path of the eclipse, alongside Jonah, Texas, and an additional Nineveh in Nova Scotia, Canada. This follows the Great American Eclipse of 2017, which passed through seven cities named Salem or Jerusalem in Hebrew.

Between these two eclipses, an annular eclipse occurred on Oct. 14, 2023, shortly after the Hamas-led attack on Israel. Strikingly, the paths of these three eclipses form the letters “Aleph” and “Tav,” the first and last letters in the Hebrew alphabet—or “Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End,” the title of Jesus Christ in the last chapter of Revelation.

Is the Apr. 8, eclipse the “Nineveh Moment” Graham foresaw? Is Christ telling America, shortly before the pivotal 2024 Presidential Election between Joe Biden and Donald Trump, that we’re facing judgment or revival?

“I believe, as you (Troy Anderson) and Pastor Paul Begley wrote in *Revelation 911*, that we’re about to enter the greatest harvest of all time,” says Pastor Mark Biltz, founder of El Shaddai Ministries. “This is the Super Bowl of human history. I don’t want to miss out on the greatest thing God is doing in history.”

As followers of Jesus, are we being called to action? Does the destiny of America and the world lie in our hands? If we truly repent, turn away from our sins, and completely devote our lives to serving in God’s army of warriors, could we witness one last great revival before Christ’s return?

“I think God always warns before he strikes,” says Biltz, an expert on the blood moons phenomena and author of *America at War 2024-2026*. “He gave us a seven-year warning from the 2017 eclipse, and this one is His final warning. With the 2017 eclipse passing through the cities named Salem, I think God was saying, ‘This is my hand. This is me. It’s not a coincidence.’ Too many people put things off as a coincidence, but I believe God’s hand was all over that. That’s what people need to realize. We’ve had a seven-year warning and so now we better be careful, alert and ready to repent because we’re in a war cycle. We’re in a season of war.”

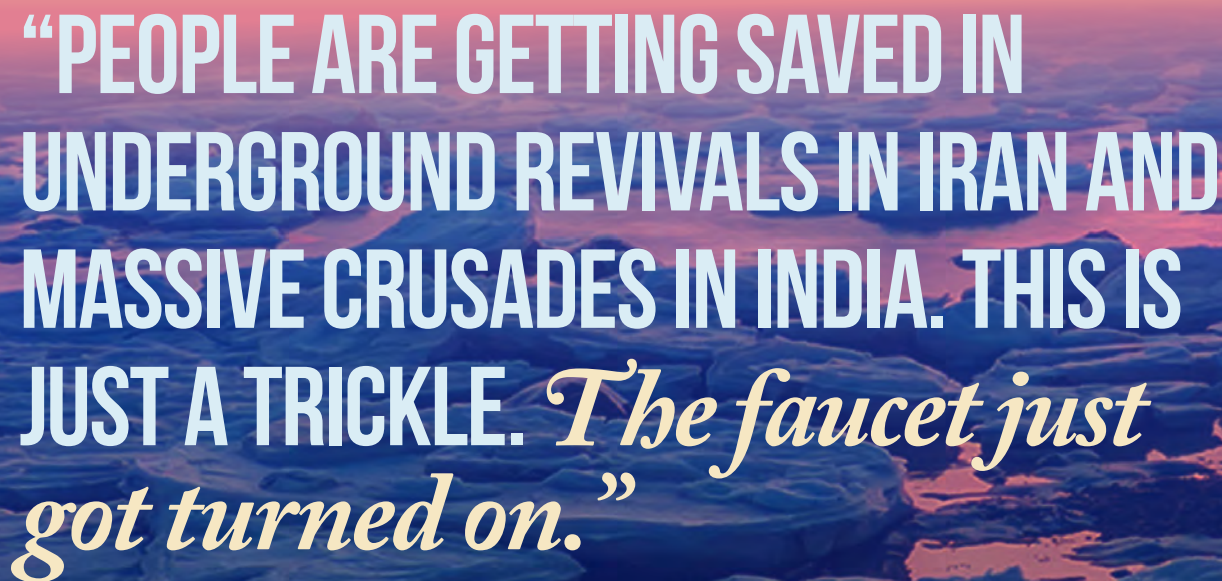
Biltz is especially concerned about tens of thousands of military age men, many from China, invading America via our open southern and northern borders.

“I think we could see our electric grid go down,” Biltz says. “That’s their specialty. But I also see civil wars on different levels. I think with Trump winning the Republican nomination, you could see a political war between the right and left. I think we’re going to see a religious war between pro-Israel and pro-Palestinians, especially if the war goes on. I believe we’re going to see race wars between undocumented immigrants and legal immigrants who are upset because they’re losing government benefits that are going to support illegal immigrants.

“I would not be surprised if we have suicide bombers in the United States this year. I would not be surprised if they blew themselves up in grocery stores, at gas stations and on bridges. Can you imagine what that would do to the psyche of Americans? People would go into a grocery store, and they would be afraid of who is on the other side of the aisle.”

continued »





# “PEOPLE ARE GETTING SAVED IN UNDERGROUND REVIVALS IN IRAN AND MASSIVE CRUSADES IN INDIA. THIS IS JUST A TRICKLE. *The faucet just got turned on.*”

As the Russian-Ukraine war has sparked fears of nuclear war and military experts say China may soon invade Taiwan, potentially triggering World War III, the Great North American Eclipse has captured the attention of millions of people across the globe, sparking discussions about its prophetic significance and potential implications.

“Jesus told us in Luke 21 in the times just before His return that we should expect there to be signs in the sun, moon and stars, and for an eclipse to happen, you’re going to have the sun and the moon involved,” says Michael Snyder, founder of The Economic Collapse Blog and author of the book *Chaos* exploring the prophetic significance of the eclipses. “So, we’ve got this tremendous eclipse on Apr. 8 and they’re saying it’s going to be the most watched astronomical event in all of U.S. history in terms of the number of Americans that are going to watch it.”

## Behold, Signs in the Heavens

The Bible is replete with Scriptures indicating that God communicates with humanity through celestial phenomena. When Christ’s disciples asked Him about signs of the end times, He said (Luke 21:25-26 NIV), “There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea.

People will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken.”

While eclipses are not uncommon, the rarity of a total solar eclipse crossing land, as opposed to sea, as seen in 2017 and now in 2024, is a cosmic event that should garner our contemplation.

“Don’t let anyone fool you into thinking the 2017 eclipse was nothing out of the ordinary,” says A.C. Katz, author of a book about the eclipse, *The Great American Writing on the Wall*. “While people were watching, day was turned to night all across the United States. It had been 99 years since a total solar eclipse crossed the entire United States, and having another total solar eclipse cross the entire United States again in 2024, just seven years later, is unprecedented.

“Lunar eclipses (blood moons) are of prophetic significance for Israel, whereas solar eclipses are of prophetic significance for Gentiles.... Two total solar eclipses spaced seven years apart, crossing the entirety of the United States that form an ‘X’ over the largest and main Gentile nation on earth should not be ignored—it should at least be thought-provoking.”

## Signs of the End Times Unveiled

In *Revelation 911*, 50 biblical signs of the end times are listed. These are the

signs that Jesus and the prophets told us to watch for that would indicate we’re approaching His return to earth.

These signs include things such as increasing lawlessness and violence (Matthew 24:12), increasing immorality (Matthew 24:37), depraved entertainment (2 Timothy 3:2), calling evil good and good evil (Isaiah 3:4), signs in the heavens (Luke 21:11, 25), increasing apostasy within the church (Matthew 24:5), increasing persecution of Christians (Matthew 24:9), weapons of mass destruction (Luke 21:26), increasing pestilence (Luke 21:11), computer technology (Revelation 13:16-17), virtual reality (Revelation 13:14-15), movement toward a one-world government (Daniel 7:23-26), reestablishment of Israel as a nation (Isaiah 66:7-8), denial of the Second Coming (2 Peter 3:3-4), and preaching of the gospel worldwide (Matthew 24:14).

When you read the list, and compare it to today’s headlines, the similarities are uncanny. Many biblical prophecy experts we interviewed said we are witnessing an unprecedented acceleration and convergence in signs of the end of the age. Meanwhile, existential risk experts at Harvard and Oxford universities and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology said the world is facing the end of human civilization unless dramatic actions are

taken to reduce the threat of nuclear war, extreme climate change, artificial intelligence and other dangers.

“There’s a great deal to say in the Bible about the signs we’re to watch for and when these signs all converge at one place, we can be sure that we’re close to the end of the age,” Graham said. “And those signs, in my judgment, are converging now for the first time since Jesus made those predictions.”

### Your Assignment in God’s Army

So then, how shall we live in this end time environment? Some, as in history, want to run to the hills and wait in white robes until the coming of the Lord. Others would rather bury themselves in busyness or hide in an underground shelter in the middle of nowhere.

The real answer, however, comes from the very words of Christ: “As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who

rabbis. These are important steps we must take to join God’s army and fight against spiritual darkness and deception so prevalent today.

**Timing.** The first point is preparation. The Bible says that, immediately following this incident, Jesus “kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men,” (Luke 2:52 NIV).

**Listening.** We learn from the story of Jesus being found in the Temple by His parents the importance of listening—especially listening to others, to those you trust and to those who may have traveled the path before you. This is an important part of the assignment process in the U.S. Army. As an assignments officer, I (Col. Giammona) had to listen to my superiors, my peers and those to whom I was making an assignment.

**Obedying.** A third and final point we learn from Jesus in the Temple story is obedience. Notice that, after His parents found Him, Jesus “went down with them and came to Nazareth, and He continued in subjection to them,” (Luke 2:51 NIV).

Yes, His parents were angry and worried about Him. They had been searching for Him in Jerusalem for three days. Can you imagine all the things they were thinking and going through to find their lost son? When they found Him, He did not put up an argument. He could have said, “This is My Father’s house, and I am staying here to do the work My Father has given me to do.” But it was not time yet, so He simply subjected Himself in obedience to His parents.

All of us who desire to be a part of God’s end-time army must prepare by studying God’s Word, listening to the Holy Spirit and those with godly wisdom, and obeying the direction that God gives us for our lives. We are all called by God for the assignment He has for each of us.

In this tumultuous epoch, believers are summoned to action, not retreat. The path forward lies in preparation, listening to divine counsel and obedience to God.

The prophet Joel foresaw a great harvest in the end times as the Lord said He would pour out His Spirit amid celestial events: “And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men

will dream dreams, your young men will see visions,” (Joel 2:28-31, NIV). We’re beginning to see this with great moves of God taking place around the world. I (Pastor Paul Begley) have seen thousands upon thousands accepting Christ. People are getting saved in underground revivals in Iran and massive crusades in India. This is just a trickle. The faucet just got turned on. The outpouring is about ready to completely saturate the earth with the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Remember the words of Jesus: “I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest” (John 4:35 NIV). That’s where we’re at. God is saying, “Hey, the harvest is ready. Pray for more laborers to be in this vineyard. We’re going to see this now.”

The Great North American Eclipse is part of the signs of the last days. This is the beginning of what we call the “Great Harvest Revival.” ◀

**TROY ANDERSON** is a Pulitzer Prize-nominated journalist, bestselling author of *Revelation 911* and other books, founder of the *Inspire Literary Group*, vice president of *Battle Ready Ministries*, co-founder of *Revelation Watchers*, and former executive editor of *Charisma* magazine and reporter at the *Los Angeles Daily News* and other newspapers. He lives with his family in Irvine, California. Find out more at [www.troyanderson.us](http://www.troyanderson.us) and [www.revelationwatchers.com](http://www.revelationwatchers.com).

**COLONEL DAVID J. GIAMMONA**, a retired U.S. Army chaplain, is an end-times expert, scholar, author, writer, speaker, host of *FrontLine*, and president of *Battle Ready Ministries*. Find out more at [www.davidj-giammona.com](http://www.davidj-giammona.com) and [www.battlereadyministries.org](http://www.battlereadyministries.org).

**PASTOR PAUL BEGLEY**, host of the syndicated television show *The Coming Apocalypse* and a YouTube program with over 250 million views, is a fourth-generation preacher and musician. Ordained by evangelist Lester Sumrall, he has been in ministry for nearly four decades, now co-pastoring the *Freedom Fellowship Church in The Villages, Florida*, and the *Community Gospel Baptist Church in Knox, Indiana*. He’s co-founder of *Revelation Watchers*. Find out more at [www.paulbegleyprophecy.org](http://www.paulbegleyprophecy.org) and [www.revelationwatchers.com](http://www.revelationwatchers.com).

“ALL OF US WHO  
DESIRE TO BE A  
PART OF GOD’S  
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listening to the  
Holy Spirit.”

sent me. The night is coming when no one can work (John 9:4 NIV).

In our (Col. David Giammona and Troy Anderson’s) new book, *Your Mission in God’s Army*, we outline three important steps found in the story of Jesus’ parents looking for Him at the age of 12, for three days in Jerusalem, and finally finding Him in the great temple teaching and listening to the



# SHOULD CHRISTIANS CELEBRATE PASSOVER?

Finding the blood of the Lamb in the meaning of the feast

BY CURT LANDRY

Jesus is called the Passover lamb, the Lamb of God, the lamb without blemish and the lamb led to slaughter. Jesus is at the center of this feast. So, should Christians celebrate Passover as an opportunity to understand our covenant relationship with God better, drawing nearer to His Father-heart?

Yes!

Passover this year is from Monday, Apr. 22, through Tuesday, Apr. 30. As Jesus' blood covers our iniquities and His stripes heal our diseases, let's explore what Passover means to all believers.

## Understanding the Blood of the Lamb

When the Jewish people were in slavery in Egypt, the God of Israel invaded their captivity. He provided deliverance, and it started by issuing a blood covering: "The blood shall be to you for a sign on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you when I smite the land of Egypt. This day shall be a memorial to you, and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord. Throughout your generations you shall keep it a feast by an eternal ordinance," (Exod. 12:13-14, MEV).

## A Lasting Ordinance: A Festival Unto the Lord

This is only the beginning of the Passover story! If you've ever asked, "Should Christians celebrate Passover?" then you've likely felt called to go deeper into your faith journey—into the roots of your faith. Maybe you've felt there was something more to this appointed time but are unsure what it is.

First-century believers never had to ask these questions because they understood the connection between Passover and their covenant relationship with God. However, due to a devastating rupture from the Jewish roots of our faith, we have been robbed of our inheritance as those grafted into the house of Israel; as people nourished by the root (Rom. 11).

If you belong to Jesus, Passover belongs to you, too. It is part of your inheritance. Notice how God does not call this a feast unto Judaism, but unto Himself.

## Why Is This Distinction Important?

Throughout Jewish history, Jesus the Messiah, Yeshua Hamashiach, is central to Israel's present moment and promised future. His centrality is foundational in all things. His eternal covenant with the Jewish people is for His name's sake (1 Sam. 12:22). Through Israel, He reveals to all humanity something critical about His character, nature and heart. Likewise, in each of the holy days He called them to keep. In each, He shows us Himself and our need, revealing a gaping breach that, apart from Him, has no remedy.

## This Is Why Christians Celebrate Passover!

Look what Paul tells us about Jesus in Colossians 1:15-16: "He is the image of the invisible God and the firstborn of every creature. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they are thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers. All things were created by Him and for Him." Jesus is the firstborn over all

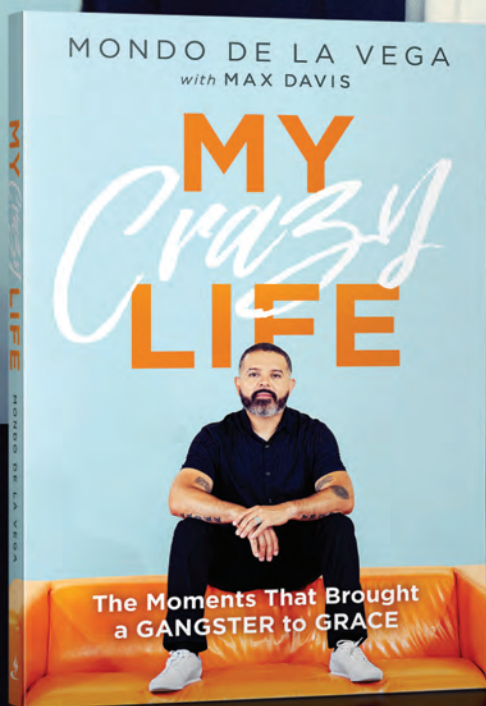


“If you belong to JESUS,  
PASSOVER belongs to you.”





If *Jesus* can change  
the life of a **gangster**,  
what could He do  
with *you*?



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creation (hold onto that). All things were created through Him and for Him.

Jesus tells us this in Matthew 5:17: “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I have not come to abolish, but to fulfill.” He came to fulfill. He is central. This is a foundational framework when approaching the feasts, especially Passover.

### The Story of the First Passover

To grasp the beauty of Jesus' perfect fulfillment of this feast, let's circle back to the first Passover story found in Exodus. If you are unfamiliar with the full Exodus story, I encourage you to read through it as we approach this year's Passover. In summary, God saw the oppression of His people in Egypt and heard their cries. He raised up a man, tested in the desert, to return to Egypt and confront Pharaoh with a message. The message being, “Let my people go.”

Pharaoh's heart was hard, and in response God sent 10 plagues, each intentionally designed to make a mockery out of Egypt's gods. Pharaoh would not relent, and the last plague, “the death of the firstborn,” was the most severe. This is where we find the institution of the Passover: “Now the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, “This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you. Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: “On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household...Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats. Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight. And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it,”” (Exod. 12:1-3, 5-7). Death would pass over those who put the blood of a spotless lamb on the doorposts of their homes.

Can you feel the weight of this? Again, this is why Christians celebrate Passover—to remember the Lamb without blemish that was slain for us!

The Jewish people know better than

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anyone the unimaginable cost of sin. The gravity of innocent blood shed on behalf of others. For the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23). They carried the holy burden of the sacrificial system as a people set apart to God. But God did not create people to die. We were created for relationship. We were made to be connected to a Holy God, and yet all creation has been tormented by death since sin tore us from Eden. Only God can save us from death, and yet the cost to Him is that He must go there Himself.

## The Fulfillment of Passover

Jesus' earthly ministry began with a bold declaration from His cousin, John the Baptist. He looked up to see Yeshua, Jesus, approaching him one day and declared loudly, as the voice of one "crying out in the wilderness," "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world," (John 1:29). From the beginning, the one ordained to make straight the way of the Lord was telling us, this is God's Lamb.

In Matthew 26, at the end of Jesus' earthly ministry, His disciples approach Him with a question: "Where will You have us to prepare for You to eat the Passover?" (Matt. 26:17). He told them to find a large upper room. Hours before His death, Jesus sat down to His Passover. This moment is often referred to as the Lord's Supper, but in full context, it was a Passover seder meal.

This is how Luke 22:15-20 records it: "And He said to them, 'I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will never eat it again until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.' And He took the cup and gave thanks and said, 'Take this and divide it among yourselves. For I tell you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.' Then He took the bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is My body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of Me.' In like manner, He took the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood which is shed for you.'"

This was the appointed moment. The blood of His covenant. The initiation of the satisfactory, eternal, atonement and

covering. As the blood of lambs filled the Jewish temple, the blood of the Lamb of God filled time and space. He cried out, "It is Finished."

Death passed over you and took the firstborn over all creation. The firstborn became the Passover Lamb. As He faced death, He "disarmed authorities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them by the cross," (Col. 2:15).

Multitudes of angels now encircle the throne of the resurrected, living, breathing Messiah proclaiming: "Worthy is the

plagues (judgment), redemption and healing and praise. Though many Jewish people do not yet see Yeshua Messiah in the Passover celebration, He is right there, waiting to be found by them. As we approach the appointed time of Passover, pray for the Jewish people to encounter Yeshua as the Lamb in the seder. Seek out a local seder demonstration and experience the sacred feast for yourself.

## The Invitation: Will You Have a Meal with Jesus?

Under Jesus' blood covering and His

**“Will you have a meal with HIM this Passover, the LAMB OF GOD who has taken away the sins of the world?”**

Lamb who was slain, to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing!" (Rev. 5:12). Worthy is the Lamb!

## Coming to the Table: The Symbolism of the Seder

There is power in Jesus' fulfillment of Passover: "...For even Christ, our Passover, has been sacrificed for us," (1 Cor. 5:7). Discover what He invites you into in this annual feast unto Him, this holy convocation. There is rich meaning for believers to draw from the Passover seder. The word *seder* means "order" in Hebrew. The title shows us more about His character. He is not a God of disorder but of peace (1 Cor. 14:33).

The Passover tradition and the seder meal itself include several key elements, including the seder plate that symbolizes God's deliverance of His people from slavery, and pointing to how Jesus rescued us from spiritual captivity. There is also the symbolism of the four cups of the Passover, representing sanctification,

fulfillment of Passover, keeping this feast is not a requirement, it's an invitation. As Christians celebrate Passover, let this be our heart posture! We don't participate to be saved. We participate to celebrate how we've been saved.

In Revelation, He tells us He stands at the door and knocks. And if we open to Him, He will come in and have a meal with us, and us with Him (Rev. 3:20). Will you have a meal with Him this Passover, the Lamb of God who has taken away the sins of the world? He's waiting for you.

Come and see. ◀

**CURT LANDRY** is founder of *Curt Landry Ministries and My Olive Tree*. He and his wife, *Christie*, travel extensively, teaching about the Jewish roots of the Christian faith. Curt is also active in raising support for Israel throughout the evangelical community. For more information about *Curt Landry Ministries* or to help support projects in Israel and around the world, please visit [www.curtlandry.com](http://www.curtlandry.com).



# Refresh Your Spirit



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Advocate Cross necklace



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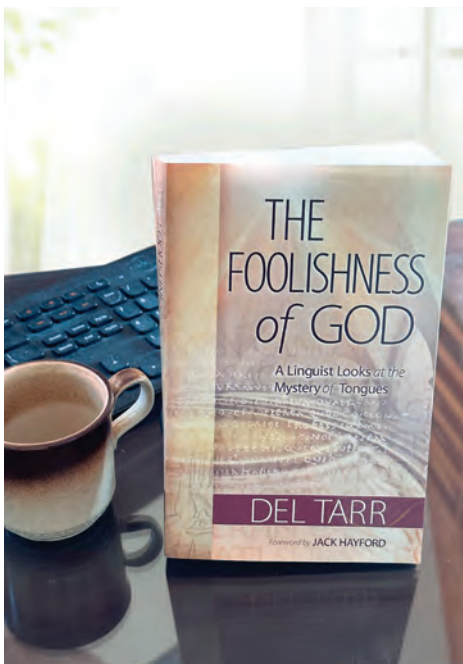
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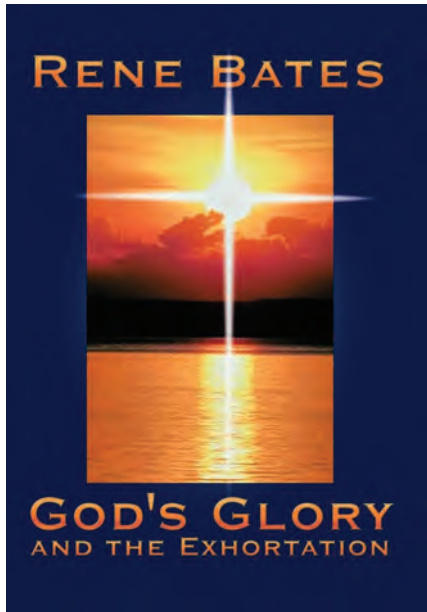
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## The Foolishness of God

The foolishness of God comes from 1 Corinthians 1:25, which describes how God often operates in ways that the world would define as "foolishness." Speaking in tongues (or glossolalia) is a perfect example of God operating in what the world might see as foolishness or senselessness. In Acts 2:1-13, God gives us an example of a crowd interpreting tongues as "being drunk," and even those speaking in tongues being made fun of. Similarly, much of the Western world's thinking is rooted in logic, making it difficult for some to believe in a God that would work in and with humans in an illogical way. In addition, the world has also embraced a more written version of communication, getting further away from the oral communication of Biblical times. In this book, Dr. Del Tarr takes the reader on an academic journey to understand the mystery of speaking in tongues through the Biblical lens of God's foolish workings in an oral context.

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## THE FINAL TESTAMENT

A Warning from God to the Saved and Lost.

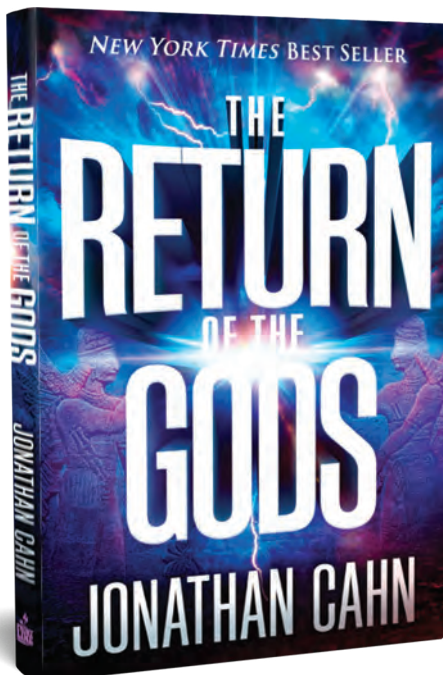
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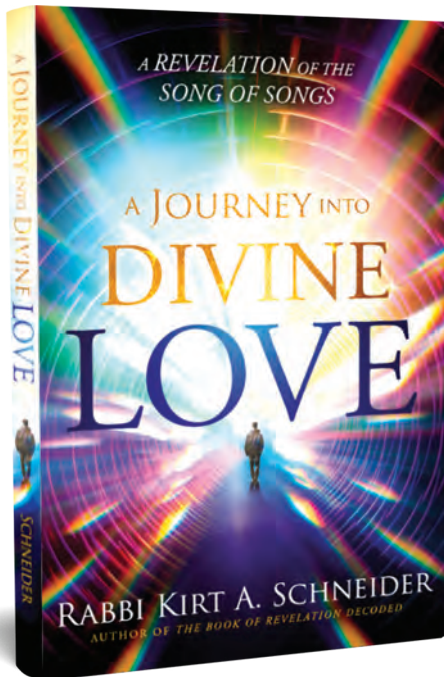
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# Refresh Your Spirit

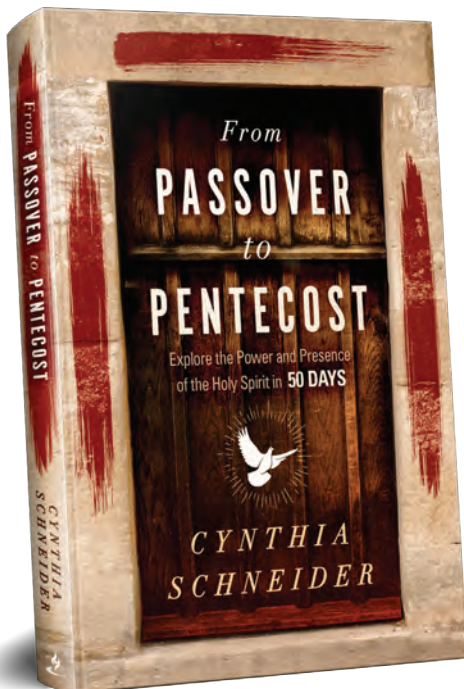


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## ***From Passover to Pentecost*** by Cynthia Schneider

Are you ready to go deeper in your relationship with the Holy Spirit? If you're looking for a deeper, more meaningful relationship with the Holy Spirit, this is the perfect time to dive into this fifty-day journey by Cynthia Schneider. Carefully designed to help prepare you for a fresh awakening with the Lord, *From Passover to Pentecost* examines the Scriptures focused on the time frame starting with Passover and ending with Pentecost.

If you want to sharpen your relationship with God and reach new levels of your understanding of the Holy Spirit, then this book is perfect for you. Discover how you can receive a fresh endowment of power and revelation through the ever-present living Spirit of God! Experience the holy anointing of God's precious Spirit in your life today.

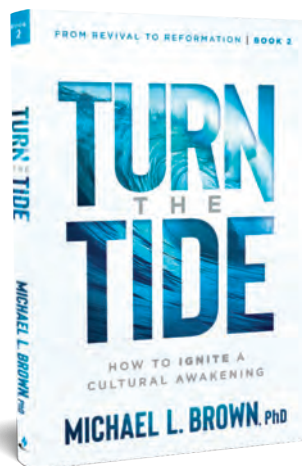
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Revival is dependent upon how much we allow the Holy Spirit to move. With Michael Brown's book, *Seize the Moment*, you will gain 25 proven ways to cultivate and sustain revival that goes beyond an emotional experience to creating a lasting, eternal flame for Christ. Revival doesn't have to stop at emotionalism. It can be transformed into everyday living that endures a lifetime.

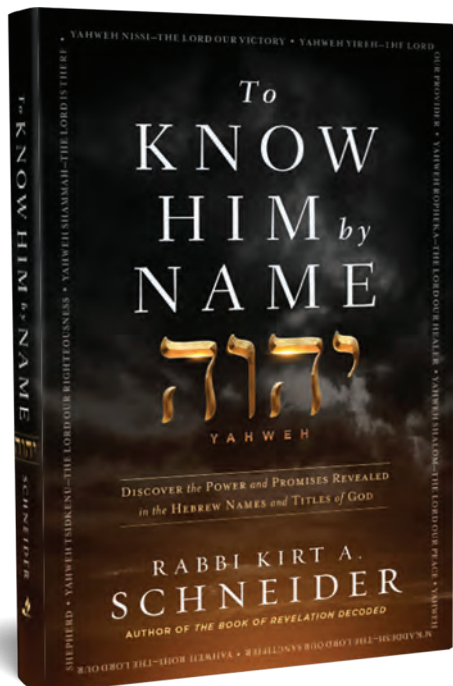
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## Turn the Tide by Michael L. Brown

With the power of the Holy Spirit, we can change the world instead of the world changing us. With Dr. Michael Brown's newest book, *Turn the Tide*, you'll discover how you can practically take your revival experience and be apart of the movement to turn it into reformation that will permeate in our culture, nation, and the world. Drawing from historical revivals and scriptural insights, Dr. Brown will help you move beyond the church walls to share the good news of the gospel and see change take place in our politics, culture, and so much more.

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## To Know Him by Name by Rabbi Kirt A. Schneider

When you know what name to call on, you know more of *whose* you are. In Rabbi Schneider's book, *To Know Him by Name*, you'll discover the power and purpose behind the various Hebrew names of God.

When readers see God from this perspective, they'll see him for who he truly is: provider, counselor, savior, shepherd, victorious healer, and so much more. No longer do you have to live in fear and anxiety—once you spend time in His great presence, you will see how much greater life truly is with Him.

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## Healing the Hurts of Life (May 1990)

In his book *A Few Things I've Learned Since I Knew It All*, Jerry Cook tells the story of his open-heart surgery.

When he had his heart attack, Jerry was pastor of a large church in Oregon that believes in and practices healing. During his recovery, a woman in his church asked him, "Were you embarrassed to have a heart attack?"

Jerry replied that he was not embarrassed. But the woman was. She was unable to handle the totality of life's experiences—including the fact that pain and suffering are real.

Later, after he recovered, Jerry had a visit from a man who was fearfully facing the prospect of his own bypass surgery. "I want to see your scars," the man said shyly.

Jerry took off his shirt, the man gently traced with his finger the violet scar that ran vertically down Jerry's chest.

The man went on, "The doctor says the most painful part of the operation will be the surgery on my legs. They're going to take out veins from my calf to use in the heart bypass." Looking up at Jerry, he asked, "Can I see your legs?"

Jerry rolled up his pants. The man got on his knees. Without shame, he put his hands on Jerry's legs, touching the scars with his finger. When he rose to his feet, there were tears in his eyes.

"Thank you. Now I have hope."

Seeing and touching the scars gave him hope for survival.

On Easter night, Jesus appeared to His disciples. They were frightened and thought He was a ghost.

"Look at my hands and my feet," He said. "Touch me and see," (Luke 24:39).

Thomas was not in the room that night, later he wanted to see His scars. Again Jesus obliged: "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe," (John 20:27).

Jesus understands our need to see, to touch the scars. Once we do we know we can survive.

Sometimes our lives get scarred. And sometimes we're embarrassed because of them.

We think our scars are ugly—evidence of imperfection. We go to great expense and trouble to hide them with clothes and cosmetics. Sometimes we have them surgically removed.

*Scars, though, are not evidence of imperfection, but evidence of healing.* Scars glorify God, who has brought us through.

I remember the afternoon I stood in our kitchen listening to our pregnant and discouraged daughter talking to her mother. It was Sandy's first baby, and she was afraid. In high school she had been president of her class, homecoming queen, the belle of all the balls. Now she was married, and although still beautiful, her stomach was expanding far beyond what she thought possible.

"I'm afraid I'll just explode," she told her mother tearfully—reaching out to hold her large and awkward tummy with both arms.

"No," Jackie said, "you won't explode. Your skin just stretches."

"Then I'll go through life with baggy skin," she wailed.

Jackie chuckled and said, "Everything including your skin returns to normal. But there may be scars."

I stood on one side listening to this remarkable conversation. Marveling in the miracle of pregnancy and birth. Marveling even more in Jackie's ability

to put her daughter's fears to rest.

Then Jackie did something absolutely wonderful. Standing there in the kitchen, she showed Sandy her waist and her abdomen. After five children, she's scarred.

"Stretch marks," she smiled, running her fingers along the ridges. "I call them love marks."

Reaching out her hand toward Sandy, she said tenderly, "Touch them."

Hesitantly, Sandy reached out her hand. Gently she let her fingers trace the scars along her mother's belly.

"They look funny," Jackie said, "but every time I see them I think of you... and Bonnie and Tim and Robin and Bruce. Pregnancy has left me scarred. But my love for you has always made it all worthwhile."

Most Christians are scarred. We're not proud of them, but we're not ashamed of them, either. When you're hurt, I pray God will send someone who will take your finger and let you trace their scars. Then, after your wounds are healed and scars appear—and praise God they will heal—do the same for someone else.

Scars are not ugly—they are evidence of God's healing power.

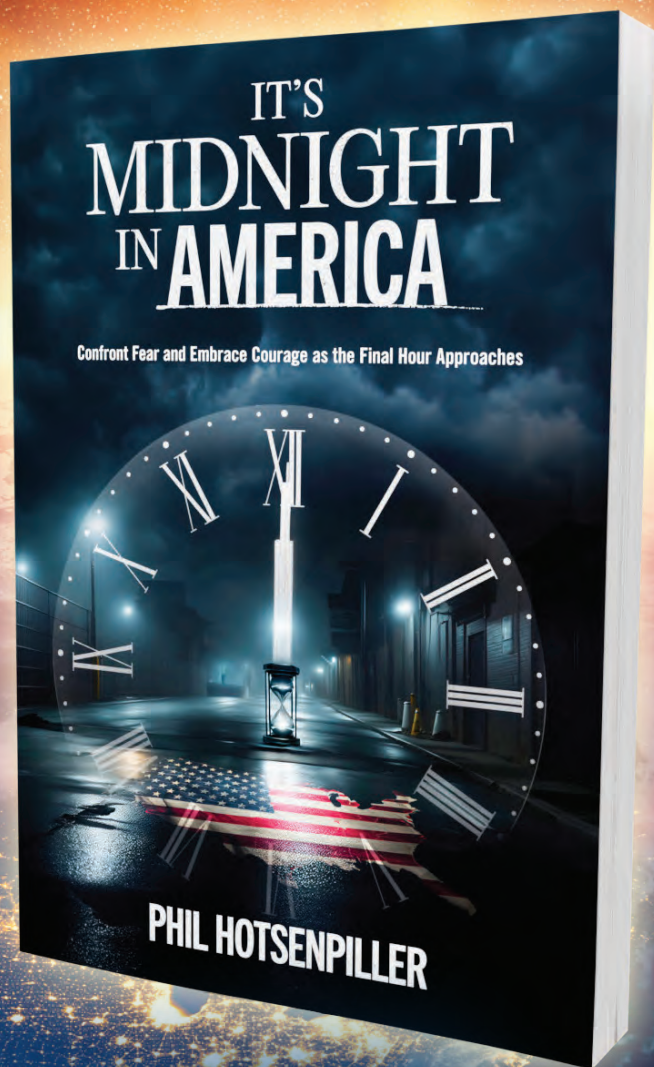
*My love for you makes it all worthwhile.*

Jamie Buckingham wrote 153 columns for *Charisma* over 13 years, first known as "Dry Bones" but later as its most recognized "Last Word." His singular voice was animated by a heart for Jesus baptized in the power of the Holy Spirit in 1967 at a Full Gospel Businessmen's convention. Buckingham provided a steadying force during the scandals of the 1980s, penning the seminal article on the PTL scandal, "God Is Shaking His Church" in May 1986.

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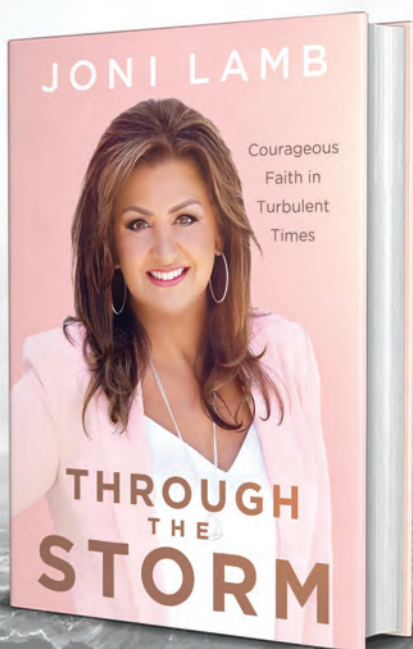
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## BIBLE READING GUIDE

Follow our daily reading plan in each issue of *Charisma* to read through the Modern English Version Bible in one year. The plan is also available online at [mycharisma.com/bible-reading-guide/](http://mycharisma.com/bible-reading-guide/).

*“Therefore be imitators of God as beloved children. Walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave Himself for us as a fragrant offering and a sacrifice to God.” —Ephesians 5:1-2*

### APRIL

Apr. 1	Judg. 11-12; Ps. 50; 2 Cor. 1
Apr. 2	Judg. 13-16; 2 Cor. 2
Apr. 3	Judg. 17-18; Ps. 89; 2 Cor. 3
Apr. 4	Judg. 19-21; 2 Cor. 4
Apr. 5	Ruth 1-2; Ps. 53,61; 2 Cor. 5
Apr. 6	Ruth 3-4; Ps. 64-65; 2 Cor. 6
Apr. 7	1 Sam. 1-2; Ps. 66; 2 Cor. 7
Apr. 8	1 Sam. 3-5; Ps. 77; 2 Cor. 8
Apr. 9	1 Sam. 6-7; Ps. 72; 2 Cor. 9
Apr. 10	1 Sam. 8-10; 2 Cor. 10
Apr. 11	1 Sam. 11-12; 1 Chr. 1; 2 Cor. 11
Apr. 12	1 Sam. 13; 1 Chr. 2-3; 2 Cor. 12
Apr. 13	1 Sam. 14; 1 Chr. 4; 2 Cor. 13
Apr. 14	1 Sam. 15-16; 1 Chr. 5; Matt. 1
Apr. 15	1 Sam. 17; Ps. 9; Matt. 2
Apr. 16	1 Sam. 18; 1 Chr. 6; Ps. 11; Matt. 3
Apr. 17	1 Sam. 19; 1 Chr. 7; Ps. 59; Matt. 4
Apr. 18	1 Sam. 20-21; Ps. 34; Matt. 5
Apr. 19	1 Sam. 22; Ps. 17,35; Matt. 6
Apr. 20	1 Sam. 23; Ps. 31,54; Matt. 7
Apr. 21	1 Sam. 24; Ps. 57-58; 1 Chr. 8; Matt. 8
Apr. 22	1 Sam. 25-26; Ps. 63; Matt. 9
Apr. 23	1 Sam. 27; Ps. 141; 1 Chr. 9; Matt. 10
Apr. 24	1 Sam. 28-29; Ps. 109; Matt. 11
Apr. 25	1 Sam. 30-31; 1 Chr. 10; Matt. 12
Apr. 26	2 Sam. 1; Ps. 140; Matt. 13
Apr. 27	2 Sam. 2; 1 Chr. 11; Ps. 142; Matt. 14
Apr. 28	2 Sam. 3; 1 Chr. 12; Matt. 15
Apr. 29	2 Sam. 4-5; Ps. 139; Matt. 16
Apr. 30	2 Sam. 6; 1 Chr. 13; Ps. 68; Matt. 17



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