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AUGUST 2024

THE MAGAZINE ABOUT SPIRIT-LED LIVING

Key Lessons

For **CHRISTIANS** in Face of
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DOUG HERSHEY

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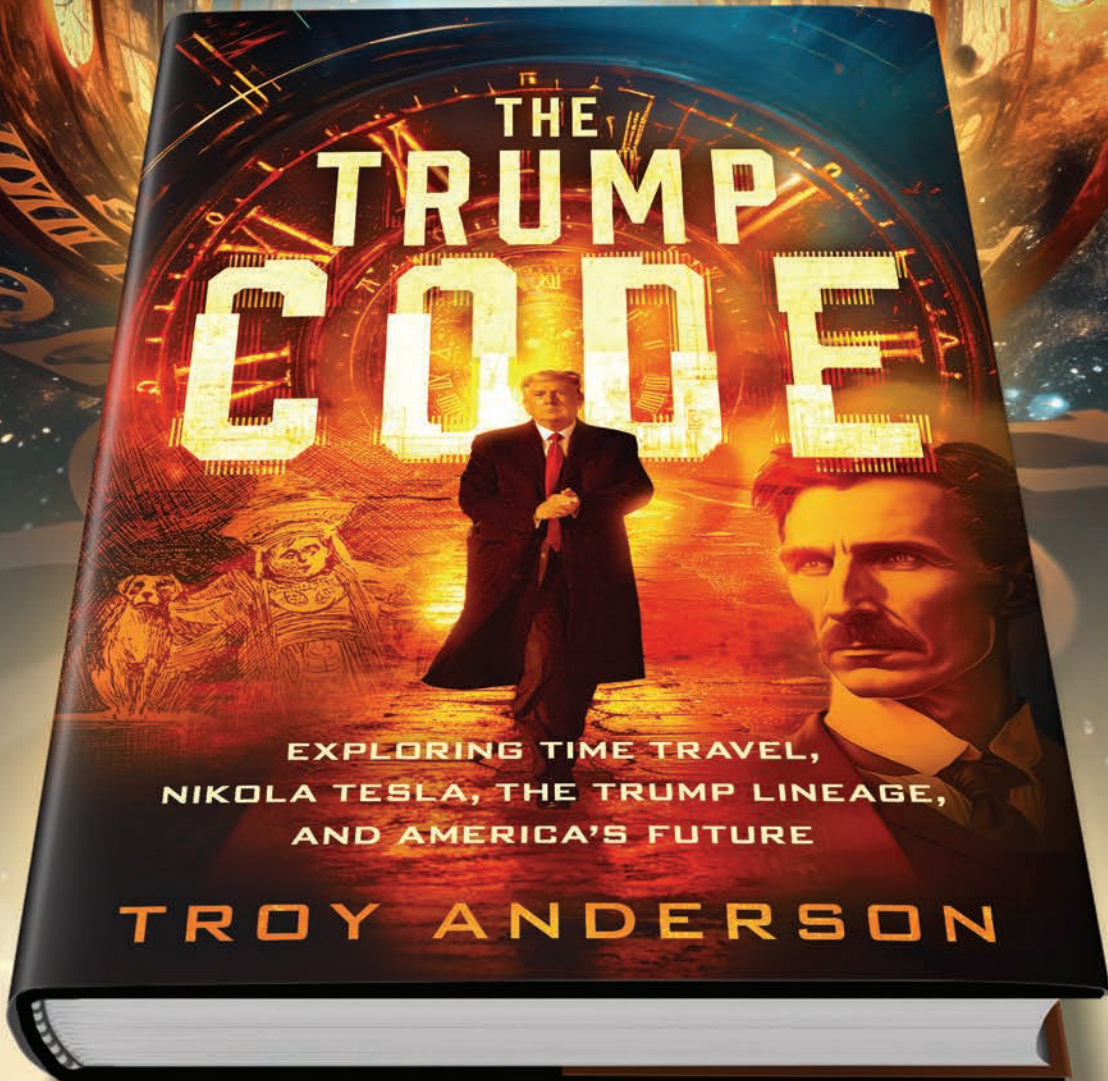
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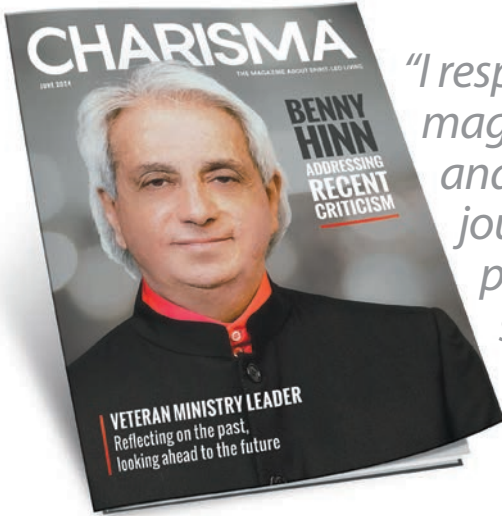
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DEAR CHARISMA



"I respect Charisma magazine's honest and Spirit-filled journalism for presenting all sides to a story."

—Mulsanne Chieffson,
South Bronx,
New York City

"VETERAN LEADER"

The article on Benny Hinn was helpful ("Benny Hinn Addresses Recent Criticisms," Charisma Magazine Online, June 2024), especially with his courage in talking about issues and criticisms he has had to face for most of his career. I respect *Charisma* magazine's honest and Spirit-filled journalism for presenting all sides to a story and doing that in a way that's fair with some graceful gentleness. Please keep up the good work.

Mulsanne Chieffson,
South Bronx, New York City

SPIRIT OR SPECTACLE? SPECTACULAR!

Manny Rosario's take on the nature of over-produced and maybe even misguided church is extremely timely and amazing ("Spirit or Spectacle?" Charisma Magazine Online, June 2024)! I've been saying this for at least the past few years, and so many churches are overdue to fix this. If I wanted a concert with loud music and smoke machines, I'd go to Vegas and pay to see Wayne Newton. Just give

me a humble preacher who tells me about Jesus.

Edith Laudeh, *via email*

MAX LUCADO IN CHARISMA!

Thrilled to enjoy the Max Lucado's story in *Charisma* ("Is This the 4th Quarter?" Charisma Magazine Online, June 2024). Since I started my first *Charisma* subscription back in 1988, I've always loved when *Charisma* had some of the big-name writers making guest appearances in the magazine. Same as with *Charisma's* big books by authors like Mr. Cahn. Thank you, *Charisma*.

Leonora Palmolivio, *Woodruff, OR*

BREAKING THE 3 DEPRESSION TRAPS

Cannot wait to buy Kenza Haddock's new book on mental wellness, *The 3 Enemies of Your Mental Health*. Her article on depression traps is timely from the chaos in the world today ("3 Depression Traps You Can Beat," Charisma Magazine Online, June 2024).

Neals Wermze,
Bonn, Germany, via email

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SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION: 24 digital issues for \$19.99; If you want to renew online or need additional subscription information, go to mycharisma.com. Contact customer service by email at customerservice@charismamedia.com or write to *Charisma*, PO Box 954027, Lake Mary, FL 32746, USA subscribers can call 1-800-837-0378. All foreign subscribers can call 407-333-7163. Leave a voice mail.

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Falling Stars

Recently, a minister asked for my thoughts concerning what seems like a continuous stream of well-known ministers being exposed for sinful activity. I had no immediate thoughts, but for the next two days in my spirit I heard the record John gave when the sixth seal was opened, saying, *“And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.”* Revelation 6:13. I then understood that a great wind is blowing through the church and casting many religious *“stars”* to the ground.

None of us are exempt from the words of Jesus, who said, *“...if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.”* John 8:24. This was not spoken to the prostitute or street vandal, but to those who thought they were the elect of God. Although they had climbed to the top of their religious system, all their religious activity and wisdom would end up failing them. Why? The answer is simple. They refused to believe that Jesus was the Christ whom God promised would come into the world.

These same people had spent their lives looking for one who would fulfill the prophecy of *“Messiah the Prince,”* which was given to the prophet Daniel. At the heart of this prophecy was the declaration that Messiah would come to *“...make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness...”* Daniel 9:24. While the religious leaders of the Jews believed Christ would make an end of sins when he came, they rejected that Jesus of Nazareth was in fact the Christ. In rejecting Jesus, they were rejecting the deliverance God had prepared for them. All their religious efforts and wisdom

would change nothing. Their religious devotion could not make them free, so they died in their sin.

Today, there is an equal but opposite condition in the church. Jesus is believed upon and extolled, but the work of deliverance God promised he would accomplish is rejected. Few accept or believe that Jesus died to *“make an end of sin”* in anyone. In fact, the greatest boasting of religious leaders seems to be that we are all sinners and sin every day. It is then no great wonder that these religious *“stars”* end up proving it to us over and over through their shameful deeds.

You do not have to live or die in sin. The Apostle John told us, *“And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.”* 1 John 3:5. The truth, which Jesus said, *“shall make you free”* John 8:32 is the knowledge that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, and that on the cross he truly did *“...make an end of sins, make reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness...”* This same work is what he will do today in the heart of anyone who will actually believe him.

John the Baptist described Jesus as *“the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”* John 1:29. If I offered to take away your money, you would not be confused about what I meant. Yet people twist God's word inside and out seeking to deny that Jesus actually takes sin away. But he does! He takes it out

of our heart, out of our life, and out of our nature! You will continue to struggle with sin until you believe God's word and trust in Jesus to take it all away. He is the Christ; therefore, this is his purpose; this is his promise; this is what he has done!

Some may be sincere, but every time a religious *“star”* falls in shame, it is evidence that what they taught and believed has not worked. If it had, they would not be in the darkness of sin. We must remember, however, that for anyone who will believe the truth and trust in Christ, there is a Savior who *“is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy...”*

Jude 24.


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Gifts of the Spirit Series: How Faith & Healings Work

The earliest mention in Scripture of the gifts of the Spirit is when Isaiah prophesies of the Messiah. The reason we receive these gifts, all embodied in Jesus, is so the body of Christ will function with diverse gifts, each “according to the grace that is given to us.”

As Paul tells us, “If prophecy, according to the proportion of faith; if service, in serving; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with generosity; he who rules, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.” Most Evangelicals would agree that the gifts of the Spirit are unique skills and abilities given by the Holy Spirit to faithful followers of Christ to serve God and benefit His people, the church. However, many seemingly sincere Christians twist their beliefs into pretzels to say that these gifts ended with the death of the last apostle, or otherwise with the establishment of the New Testament church. This is known as cessationism across the body of Christ.

Gift of Faith

One of the most powerful is the gift of faith. The Bible says every believer is given a “measure of faith.” The writer of Hebrews tells us, “Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” And Jesus told us that if we have faith as tiny as a mustard seed, we can speak to mountains and they will be removed and cast into the sea. This type of faith is available to all believers.

But the gift of faith is something more. It’s not saving faith but an extraordinary faith to see the impossible done. Without realizing it, I believe God gave me faith to believe *Charisma* magazine—and all the things we’ve done since its founding—into existence.

I can remember once lying flat on my face, praying for a financial miracle at an important time, and what I prayed for came to pass. Another time I fasted for 40 days during a time when I needed to hear from God. It wasn’t easy, but I was desperate for an answer, and I believe the answer came.

Although not everyone operates in the gift of faith, as each of us walks in the Spirit we can believe and be inspired.

Gifts of Healings

Another spiritual gift is the gifts of healings. These gifts (plural) are given to the church to restore healing in a miraculous manner. Every believer may not operate in this gift, but it’s for the church as a whole.

In the last chapter of her book *I Believe in Miracles*, Kathryn Kuhlman shared what she believed to be the key to healing. Her quest to know this truth started with her heartbreak over some of the practices among faith healers she encountered early in her ministry. Often if people received prayer and weren’t healed, they were told they didn’t have enough faith, and Kuhlman said the looks of despair on those people’s faces haunted her.

She remembered sobbing and asking God why some were healed and others were not. She knew God was a healer because she had seen people healed with her own eyes, but one question plagued her: What was the key? She knew God

could do anything, but there were those who were bringing reproach to the cause of Christ “through ignorance and lack of spiritual knowledge.” But what was the answer?

Kuhlman said the answer came one night during a series of services. A woman in the audience stood up and asked if she could share a testimony from the previous night’s service. “As you were preaching on the Holy Ghost,” she said, “telling us that in Him lay the Resurrection power, I felt the power of God flow through my body. Although not a word had been spoken regarding the healing of the sick, I knew instantly and definitely that my body had been healed. So sure was I of this, that I went to the doctor today and had my healing verified.”

The fact is that God’s Word is true today. And it will still be true a thousand years from now. You must believe it, just as you must believe the other promises of God as you walk in the Spirit. Hear Jesus’ words to Thomas in John 20:27, “Do not be faithless, but believing.”

“God’s Word is true today and will be true a thousand years from now.”

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 recent book *Spirit-Led Living in an Upside-World* is available wherever fine Christian books are sold including online at [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).

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Presidents Don't Save Us, Jesus Does

People didn't vote in ancient Israel, nor did they put "KICK THE ROMANS OUT!" bumper stickers on their chariots. But there was plenty of political anger seething in Palestine, even without Fox News, CNN and MSNBC around to stir the pot. After the attempted assassination of former President Trump last month, we need to smother the fires of political rage more than ever.

Jews especially abhorred tax-collectors since they worked for the Roman Empire. Yet when a chief tax-collector named Zaccheus showed up to hear Jesus preach in Jericho, Jesus called Zaccheus down from a sycamore tree and proposed a meeting at his house.

I'm sure the crowd was shocked that a holy rabbi would fraternize with one of Caesar's cronies. They probably expected Jesus to give Zaccheus a lecture on the evils of embezzlement. But the Bible doesn't say Jesus talked to him about his fraud or the injustice of Roman occupation. Their meeting wasn't about politics.

After one visit with Jesus, the infamous Zaccheus repented of his crimes and pledged to give half his possessions to the poor (Luke 19:1-10). Jesus' act of kindness led to a big heart change.

This was Jesus' style. He looked beyond race, class, sectarian divisions and social labels. He was as comfortable talking to prostitutes and condemned criminals as He was to synagogue officials and Roman centurions. He looked into men's hearts with a piercing laser beam, not so He could judge their sins but so He could shine the light of His mercy.

Jesus calls His followers to love everybody that way—and "everybody" actually includes everybody, Democrats and Republicans, liberals and conservatives. I'm saying this because too many of us lost our religion during recent presidential campaigns. While political commentators screamed at each other like banshees on Sunday-morning talk shows, Christians unfriended each other on Facebook because campaign rhetoric grew so hateful. These days it seems we can't even eat a Chick-fil-A sandwich without arguing!

In November, the political theater will end and voters will elect the next commander in chief. And hopefully we will choose a leader who has the qualities needed to guide this nation wisely for the next four years. Do your own evaluation. If you are a Christian, character should matter when you go to the polls. Don't vote for a candidate

just because you like his or her sound bites, blistering attack ads or over-the-top promises. Vote for character. That's what America needs.

Regardless who wins, we all need to make some attitude adjustments back to being less world-like and more Christlike:

Love people regardless of their political views. I'm involved in a Christian ministry that confronts the abuse of women globally. Yet there are many people in the secular arena, including Hollywood celebrities such as Susan Sarandon and George Clooney, who share my concern about domestic violence and sex trafficking. Recently, I had to face the ugly fact that I had made bitter judgments against some people because of their left-leaning views. I can't be a vessel of Christ's love if my heart is full of hate.

Quit making politicians into gods. At the root of today's angry rhetoric is the notion that politics can solve our moral problems.

Christians in the United States, especially since the early 1980s, have embraced an unhealthy infatuation with political power. We clamor for King Saul to save us when God wants us to trust Him.

News flash! Ronald Reagan didn't save us. Neither did Bush No. 1, Clinton or Bush No. 2. Neither Biden nor

Trump will deliver us this year. And let's not forget that the Jesus movement occurred during the terms of Johnson (a Democrat!) and Nixon (a Republican!).

Frame your words with kindness. In our culture it has become in vogue to be hot-headed. Candidates and commentators throw vitriolic barbs like grenades, and when the discussion is moved online, cyber-zealots drop F-bombs to prove their point. In American politics, we thrust, jab, kick, punch, skewer and impale each other with our words.

There is a higher way. The apostle Paul called us to season our conversation with grace (Col. 4:6) and to put on a heart of kindness (Col. 3:12). But we can't express kind words if our hearts are full of judgment, racism, hatred or anger toward those we disagree with. If you hold judgments in your heart, they will become like buried land mines. When someone walks near them and pushes your button, you will go boom!

We must speak the truth, but we must say it in love. It would be better for us to keep our mouths shut if we can't say what Jesus is saying, and do so in His tone of voice.

"Say what Jesus is saying, and do so in His tone of voice."

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).

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One Surefire Way to Love Your Life

If someone asked you if you love your life, what would you say? It seems most people would say they don't love their life. But as believers in Christ, we can learn to love the life we have.

I know what it's like to have a miserable life, and how wonderful it is to live with God's peace and joy. I remember when God spoke to my heart and told me, "You're not happy because you're selfish." It wasn't easy to hear, but facing that truth helped me surrender my will to God, so He could begin working in me and help me make the changes I needed to make.

I discovered that the key to loving my life is making God's love the central theme of my life. God is love. It's not just what He does, but who He is. He loves us unconditionally, and when we believe that, it changes us; it makes us confident and secure.

Knowing you are loved gives you courage and boldness to step out and try new things, so you don't have to be stuck with a negative attitude about life in general, or in a situation you hate.

It gives you security that enables you to confront unhealthy relationships, knowing you'll be OK—and even better than before—however things turn out.

Here's how God's love works in our lives: We receive His love for us, then we see ourselves the way He does and love ourselves in a healthy way, and finally, we let His love flow through us to others.

The goal is to take in the good things God offers us, and then go out in the world and give to others what He has given to us! God wants to give us His love, mercy, grace and forgiveness, and He expects those things to flow through us to the people in our world.

God created us to be loved and to love others. First John 3:11 (AMPC) says, "For this is the message (the announcement) which you have heard from the first, that we should love one another." That's real Christianity.

If we really get down to it, how much do we really think about what we can do for other people? I've learned that when I'm selfish or too focused on myself—what I want or how I can get others to do what I want them to do—I am frustrated, easily offended and upset much of the time.

In fact, if you're having a bad day, one of the worst things you can do is to keep thinking about yourself and all of your own problems. It only makes things worse! So, what should you do? Get your mind off yourself and help someone else.

Helping others isn't something you will normally feel like doing—it requires a decision. But making a choice to be good to others has the power to help you and them. It's a spiritual principle.

The apostle Paul says in Acts 20:35 (NIV): "In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

So, if I'm having a bad day, this Scripture tells me I can be happier by simply getting myself off my mind and helping someone else.

It's actually amazing how just a few words of encouragement can change someone's entire day. Sometimes it can even change their life! It can be as simple as picking up the phone and calling a friend who's been going through a rough time, letting them know you're thinking about them and praying for their situation. Or maybe you can send

someone a text message to let them know how valuable they are and how much you care.

Think of the story of the paralyzed man whose friends tried to bring him to Jesus to be healed. When the friends were blocked by the crowds who came to hear Jesus, they actually lifted their friend and his bed up onto the roof. From the roof they were able to then lower him down through the tiles to the floor before Jesus.

The story continues as Jesus saw the man and the effort his friends took to help him, "When He saw their faith, He said to him, 'Man, your sins are forgiven you,'" (Luke 5:20, MEV).

Would you like to make every day better? Would you like to find joy even in the midst of difficult times? Then begin taking even just a few minutes every day to think about what you can do to help someone else.

Because when you give your life away, you'll find that it comes back to you in the most marvelous ways.

“When you give your life away, you’ll find that it comes back to you in the most marvelous ways.”

Joyce Meyer is a *New York Times*' bestselling author and founder of Joyce Meyer Ministries Inc. She has authored 130 books, including *Battlefield of the Mind* and her newest devotional, *Quiet Times With God* (FaithWords). She hosts the *Enjoying Everyday Life* radio and TV programs, which air on hundreds of stations worldwide. For more information, visit joycemeyer.org.

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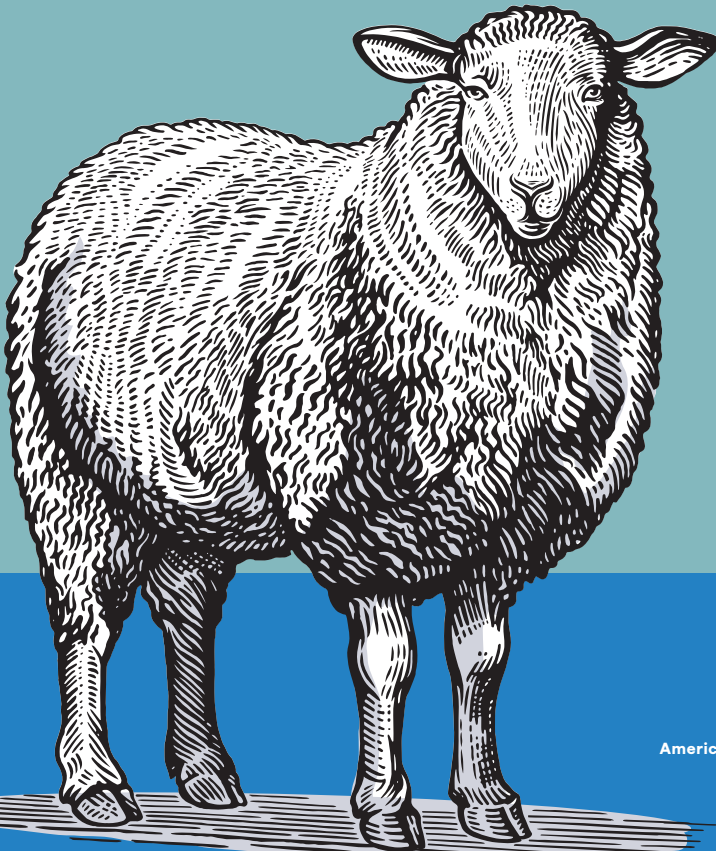
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Are You Ready for the Kingdom Fight?

In 2014, I was offered a job as a local evangelist for a prominent church in Northern Ireland. I went on to stand on those cold, rainy, wet streets five days a week for three years, leading people to Christ and learning what it is to be a one-to-one evangelist. I was schooled by the Holy Spirit in this unique way we call Jesus at the door.

As I prayed for the sick and tried to articulate the gospel, the Spirit dropped phrases like raindrops from heaven into my spirit, that when shared with these strangers changed the atmosphere and resulted in a tangible reviving to all who were touched by these words of life. I went on to lead thousands to Christ in a one-to-one fashion, using this gift from heaven called Jesus at the Door, an imagery-laden gospel presentation that takes a matter of minutes to walk your recipient from introduction to salvation.

As there was no wineskin in which to disciple these baby believers, my wife and I opened our home and looked to Jesus—which resulted in the birthing of our Revive New Believers groups. Many of these babes in Christ found family there and began to fill many rows on a Sunday morning as we witnessed an incredible 45% growth in our church in those first two years.

In 2018, I'd only been to two nations (one being the U.S.). The Lord told me in 10 years Jesus at the Door will go global, and the nations will come knocking. This felt like an impossible word. Then in 2020, evangelist Daniel Kolenda invited me to come and record a podcast about my new book for which he graciously provided the Foreword. Afterward, he told me that he wanted me to bring our ministry to Orlando to be a partner with Christ for All Nations. I went home and prayed, and the Holy Spirit said, "I told you the nations would come knocking." The nations have been opening to us in many unique ways. Our Jesus at the Door app now has users in 170 nations. We know His Word will not return void.

King's Army

In 2021, I began to feel the Spirit hovering over the waters of my heart. Just like we read in Genesis 1:2, I could feel the Spirit, but the vision was without form. In this brooding season I felt the Lord wanted to do again what He once did in the early years of the Salvation Army well over 100 years prior. They reminded the body of Christ that the Great Commission (which wasn't given to evangelists, but to disciples) wasn't a

deployment to the playground but to the battleground!

In Sept 2022, this hovering became a tangible reality when I heard the Spirit say, "Call it The King's Army!" The next morning as I sat in my prayer closet meditatively pondering those three words, I noticed a Salvation Army book sitting on my table given to me as a gift some nine months earlier. As I flicked through it, my eyes landed on three words that I'd underlined many months before—The King's Army!

In that moment the Spirit illuminated my room with His presence, and I began to weep. I then saw a vision of Jesus on a horse in a shield, and He told me, "I'm raising up an army for the end times to push back darkness!" He told me to go to Revelation 19:11-18, as He then confirmed His Rhema spoken word through His Logos written Word. I was undone as I read of Jesus' return coming strong on a horse in battle with the armies of heaven behind Him.

The Holy Spirit gave us the slogan: "Raise the standard—Push Back Darkness." Scripture says, "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him," (Isa. 59:19, MEV). The enemy has entered this

generation like a tsunami, unleashing a torrent of sin into every heart and home wherever possible. Many (including Christians) are drowning in this flood.

The Lord is responding to this flood by raising the standard, seeking out the brave Christian men and woman who will stand against this tyranny and fight! This fight for the very souls of men rests in the hands of every man, woman and child who identify as a disciple of Christ.

The apostle Paul said in 2 Timothy 2:3-4, suffer as a good soldier of Christ, don't live like civilians concerned with civilian affairs, but live like soldiers concerned with pleasing your commanding officer—the One who enlisted you! King Jesus! The standard of a soldier compared to that of a civilian is considerably higher in every single area of life. We have a church culture that is reflective of a civilian Christianity rather than a soldier Christianity. Civilians don't win wars, and I'm sure I don't need to convince you're in one right now! Therefore, we need a radical army (church) to beat a radical enemy (devil).

The question isn't whether you want to enlist in the King's army. You already did that, the day you surrendered your life to the King. The question is, will you fight? As a chosen, commissioned soldier of Christ, will you raise the standard and push back the darkness?

"The question is, will you fight?"

Scott McNamara is the founder of Jesus at the Door and Director of Evangelism at Nations Church in Orlando, Florida.

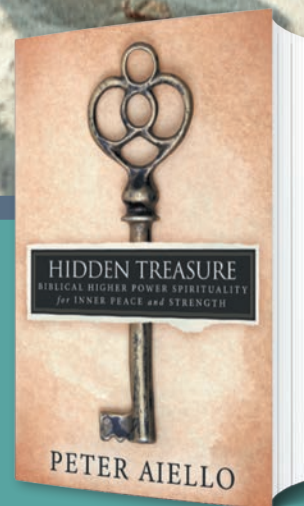
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Peter Aiello

The Ten Commandments (below) that will appear in a poster in Louisiana public schools

INSET: Louisiana governor Jeff Landry before signing Ten Commandments law



Louisiana First State to Mandate 10 Commandments Display in Schools

Proponents say legislation has both historical and religious significance

The Ten Commandments will now be displayed in every public school classroom in the state of Louisiana, thanks to a bill signed into law by Republican Governor Jeff Landry on June 19. “If you want to respect the rule of law, you’ve got to start from the original lawgiver, which was Moses,” the governor said. The new legislation makes Louisiana the first state to pass a law requiring such a display, but similar bills have been proposed in states including Oklahoma, Texas and Utah.

The American Civil Liberties Union has vowed to challenge the law, and the case could go all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. Proponents of the law say the

measure is not solely religious but has historical significance. The law’s own wording describes the Ten Commandments as “foundational documents of our state and national government.”

The legislation requires a poster-sized display of the Ten Commandments in “large, easily readable font” in all public classrooms, from kindergarten to state-funded universities. The poster will be accompanied by a four-paragraph “context statement” describing how the commandments “were a prominent part of American education for almost three centuries.” Barring legal challenges, the poster and statement must be displayed in classrooms by January 2025.

Biblical Drama 'House of David' Coming to Amazon

'The Chosen' creator Dallas Jenkins is adviser and large shareholder



A new series about the life of King David is coming to Amazon Prime Video, thanks to a partnership between Amazon MGM Studios and The Wonder Project, which was recently launched by veteran producer Jon Erwin (XX) and former Netflix and YouTube executive Kelly Merryman Hoogstraten. Dallas Jenkins, creator and producer-director of popular biblical series *The Chosen*, is a large shareholder and special adviser to the company.

"*House of David* follows the once-mighty King Saul as he falls victim to his own pride," reads the show's logline. "A prophet prepares to overthrow him—anointing the outcast shepherd boy David as a second king. As Saul's fury grows, David navigates love, violence and politics in the court of the very man he's destined to replace. Two kings. One Kingdom. The outcome is war."

"When we met with Jon, Kelly and Dallas, their clear and passionate vision for The Wonder Project and their ambition to nurture universal stories of love, triumph and spirituality moved us," says Vernon Sanders, head of television for Amazon MGM Studios. "We are very excited about the scope, scale and storytelling involved with *House of David* and look forward to sharing this epic and many others with our global Prime Video customers."

Production of the biblical drama is currently underway in Greece.

New Exec Takes CRU's Top Spot

David Robbins, former FamilyLife CEO, became the ministry's fourth president

One of the world's largest evangelism and discipleship ministries has a new president. After an extensive search process, Campus Crusade for Christ International/Cru, announced its unanimous choice of David Robbins, 46, most recently CEO of FamilyLife, a Cru branch, to lead the ministry beginning July 18. Before joining FamilyLife, he served Cru in various other capacities and leadership roles.

"I am deeply humbled to get to serve the Lord in this new role alongside faithful and

faith-filled staff, volunteers and partners around the world," Robbins says. "Together, we will continue to trust God to pursue our mission so that people in every tongue, tribe and nation can come to know and follow Jesus."

Robbins replaces Steve Sellers, who announced his July departure from the presidency in January. The ministry's third and shortest-tenured president, Sellers, who has been with Cru since 1976, was named president in 2020. He remains with Cru in another role.

Back to School—With the Bible?

ACLJ says it's a constitutional right

When your child or grandchild returns to the classroom for the new school year, can their Bible come with them? The American Center for Law and Justice, known for defending constitutional rights, has answers for all these questions—and wants to share them with everyone.

Because anti-Bible actions are becoming more common in public schools, the ACLJ has written a legal memo addressing why, in general, public schools cannot ban students from bringing their Bibles to school. It begins with the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which says in part, "Congress shall make no law ... prohibiting the free exercise thereof [of religion]; or abridging the freedom of speech."

The Supreme Court has long held that these two clauses work in tandem, the memo notes. "Where the Free Exercise Clause protects religious exercises, whether communicative or not, the Free Speech Clause provides overlapping protection for expressive religious activities," the ACLJ memo explains. It points to the Supreme Court's instruction in *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District* that "state-operated schools may not be enclaves of totalitarianism. School officials do not possess absolute authority over their students."



Ultimate Wedding Gift Seven Times Over

The lead pastor of an Illinois church performed seven weddings in one day, all at no charge

Living together without the benefit of biblical marriage is not only commonplace in the secular world, but a rising trend among Christian couples as well. One Illinois church, however, chose to help counteract this trend by blessing seven couples with the offer of a free wedding experience.

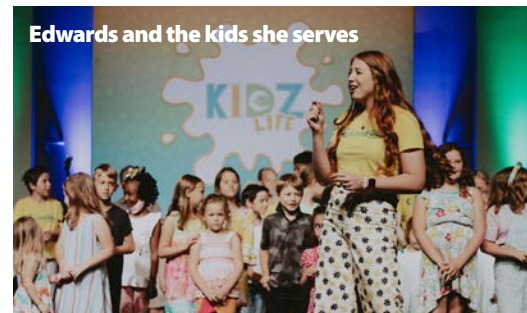
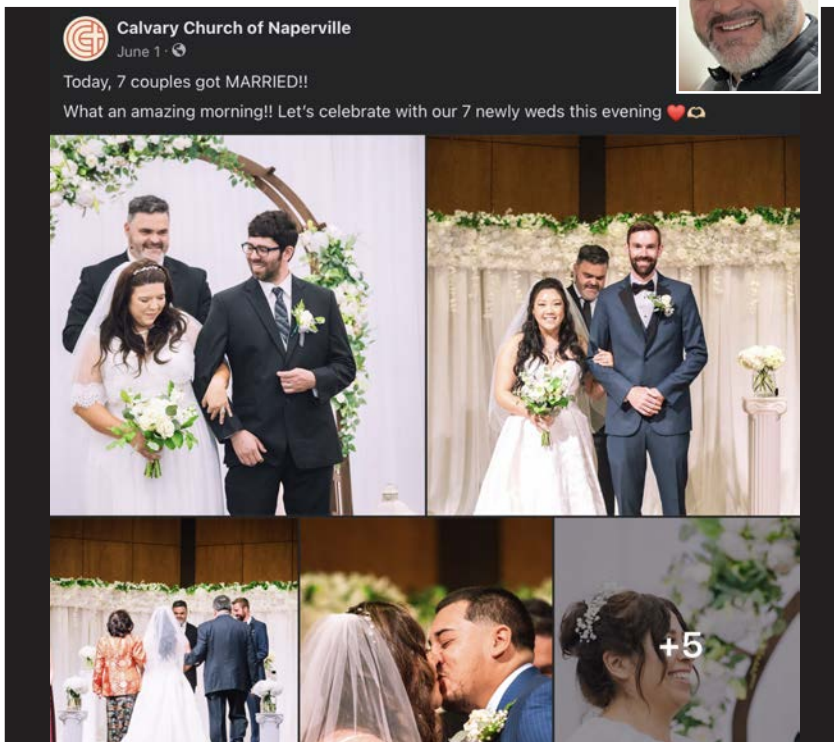
After preaching on the sacredness of marriage, Pastor Marty Sloan, lead pastor of Calvary Church in Naperville, Illinois, made an astounding offer. For any couple attending the church and living together who wanted to get married, the church would provide not only the venue (the church), but also flowers, photography, videography and a light reception.

The offer came with some requirements. Couples needed to contact the church; only those who wanted to invite God into their family via marriage would be considered. They were also charged with completing the church's required premarital counseling program.

"We don't want people to get their definition of marriage from culture; we want them to get their definition from God," Sloan says. Seven couples completed the process and joined a nonstop series of weddings, all of which he officiated, on Saturday, June 1, beginning at 10 a.m. and running throughout the day.

To help them take their marriages to the next level, the grateful newlyweds also received complementary tickets to the church's two-day fall marriage conference.

Facebook post of seven weddings Pastor Marty Sloan officiated
INSET: Marty Sloan



Edwards and the kids she serves

Fresh Outpouring Unto the Little Children

A South Carolina church learns the Holy Spirit isn't just for adults

The power of the Holy Spirit knows no age limitations. Children's Pastor Bella Edwards of Christian Life Church in Columbia, South Carolina, not only believes this, but she has also seen it lived out among the kids she serves. Earlier this year, a Holy Spirit outpouring began among them that continues to this day.

It started with Edwards and her team introducing first- through fifth-graders to the Holy Spirit via a series of lessons focused on genuine connection "rather than just us always talking about it," she says. "The gift is for them, too."

One February morning, she invited the kids to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. At first, no one moved—until a tiny first-grader came forward, unleashing a flood of others. In all, 17 children received the baptism of the Holy Spirit at the altar that day.

"Everybody was touching, crying out to the Spirit, pure emotion and joy and beautiful yelling, exalting who Jesus is," Edwards says. Since the initial outpouring, eight more children have received Holy Spirit baptism at the church.

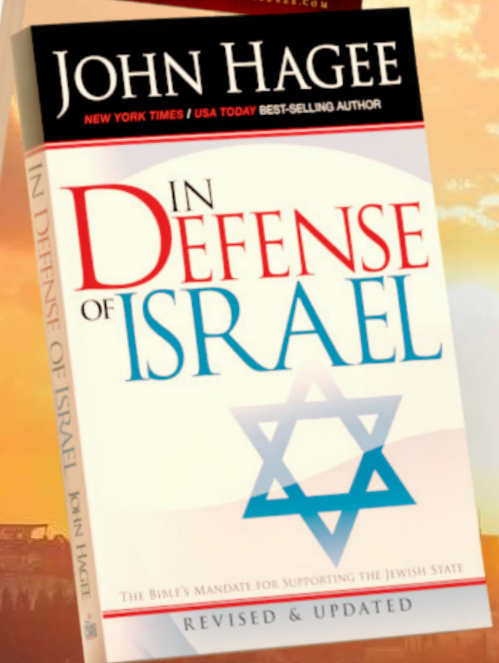
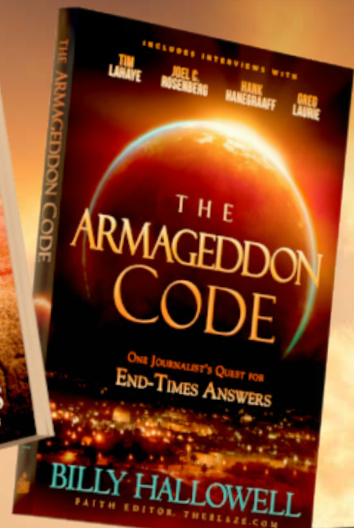
The day also marked a complete turnaround in the church's children's ministry. "Not one Sunday have we not seen our kids in the presence of the Lord," Edwards says.

BELLA EDWARDS-FACEBOOK | CALVARY CHURCH OF NAPERVILLE-FACEBOOK

ARE WE LIVING IN THE *Last Days?*

HATE ISN'T A
THING FROM
HISTORY—IT'S
HAPPENING
IN THE HERE
AND NOW

While anti-Semitism surfaces in America and war rages in Israel, Biblical End Times seem increasingly close at hand. With these four books, you will not only know *what to expect* during the End of Days but also *who to support* in this spiritual war.



CHARISMA 

ISRAEL vs.

KEY LESSONS for CHRISTIANS in the FACE of SOARING ANTI-SEMITISM



BY RABBI CURT LANDRY

Hamas formed in 1987 as a Palestinian rejection of Israel's right to a homeland; they combined Palestinian nationalism with Islamic fundamentalism that sought to establish another Islamic state. The First Intifada, the uprising of such beliefs, began in 1987 and ended in 1993. The Second Intifada began in 2000 and, by most accounts, ended in 2005. This is where our personal story with Gaza begins.

continued »

HAMAS

الارهاب
الاسلامي
المقاوم
في
القطاع
الغربي
لشمال
الجنوب



BOTTOM LEFT: Man standing in front of building damaged by Hamas attack that killed his son. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** Rabbi Landry in doorway of building damaged by Hamas attacks.





Rabbi Curt Landry and wife, Christie, hand a wounded soldier a gift at Sheba Medical Center in Ramat Gan, Israel

The Expulsion of Gush Katif

In August of 2005, on Tisha B'Av, my wife Christie and I were on the Israeli border of Gaza and Gush Katif (a bloc of 17 settlements in the southern Gaza Strip). We were ministering to families who were being forcefully removed from their homes by the IDF. This removal was the result of a disengagement plan initiated by then-Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon under tremendous pressure from the Bush administration, calling for a withdrawal of the IDF and dismantling of Israeli settlements in Gaza. As a result, we watched over 8,000 Israelis dragged from their homes in a forced eviction—the most painful thing we observed in Israel and remains the single most traumatic experience for us, simply as observers—until our visit shortly after October 7, 2023.

Following this withdrawal in August of 2005, Hamas took over the Gaza Strip in 2007, ultimately leading to the Swords of Iron War. This is the history of the conflict in the most recent and basic terms—but why should it matter to you as a Christian?

What You See Depends on What You Feel

“For our fight is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities...against spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places,” (Eph. 6:12, MEV). As believers, we can learn valuable lessons from this history and how the enemy takes advantage of us when we step away from the promises God has given us. We often struggle to walk in our destiny because we see the giants in the land and ourselves as grasshoppers, not our God-given identity as heirs and overcomers.

During the Hebrew Month of

Tammuz, which often falls in July and August of the Gregorian calendar, we focus on the principle of the power of vision, for how we see ourselves and our circumstances, which directs our steps. Sight is a curious thing. We all can look at the same thing, yet what we perceive is unique to our life experience. It depends

“REPLACEMENT THEOLOGY IS THE BELIEF THAT THE CHURCH HAS FULLY REPLACED ISRAEL AND SHE IS NO LONGER THE RECIPIENT OF GOD’S PROMISES ACCORDING TO SCRIPTURE.”

on the condition of one’s heart. If you want to see the good, you often see the positive aspects; if you have negative feelings toward something or someone, you see things from a pessimistic vantage point.

Tammuz 17 was when the 12 spies departed to spy out the Promised Land. All 12 men went on the same journey and saw the same thing with their physical eyes, but their interpretations and understandings were completely different. Ten men saw giants who devoured

one another, ignoring the good of the land that flowed with milk and honey, disregarding the gift of Hashem (“the name” in Hebrew, a title used for God). Two men saw the abundant harvest, recognized the richness of the opportunity and trusted God was “well able” to lead them to victory.

A Seer Has Great Power Over What He Sees

According to Jewish scholars, when the spies saw “a land that devours its inhabitants,” they saw the occupants turning on each other, creating a distraction and an opportunity for the land to be taken (Mark 3:25). Instead of seeing this diversion as a tool in God’s hand, 10 spies sinned with their sight and brought back a bad report of fear. Ultimately, this report was linked to a heart condition that lacked trust in God.

The Hebrew month of Tammuz represents sight. It is followed by the month of Av, representing hearing. When the children of Israel heard the bad report, they sinned by receiving and accepting it. Again, this sin was ultimately rooted in a heart condition and a wrong belief system. What you see, hear and believe is filtered through the state of your heart.

The Danger of a Wrong Belief System and Unknown Identity

“And it will be on that day that I will set Jerusalem as a weighty stone to all the peoples. All who carry it will surely gash themselves, and all the nations of the land will be gathered against it,” (Zech. 12:3, MEV).

Anti-Semitism takes root in hearts that harbor wrong belief systems and struggle with their own identity. According to CNN: “Anti-Semitism ‘skyrocketed’ across the United States in the three months after the October 7 Hamas attacks on Israel...the ADL tracked a total of 3,283 anti-Semitic incidents between October 7 and January 7, the group said. This marks a 361% increase in reported anti-Semitic incidents.” As Americans, we have witnessed an unprecedented rise in left-leaning college campuses nationwide, mimicking the radical activism of the 1960s. These mobs are calling for the annihilation of Israel while attacking Jewish students and faculty.

The Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, said: “This is reminiscent of what happened in German universities in the 1930s. It’s unconscionable. It has to be stopped.”

Watchmen on the Wall

“I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem, who shall never hold their peace day nor night. You who remind the Lord, do not keep silent,” (Isa. 62:6, MEV). We must ask ourselves what the rise in anti-Semitism means for believers. I fear the enemy will use these sentiments to separate churches from the blessing of being rooted in praying for and blessing the nation of Israel.

If churches align themselves with an anti-Semitic belief structure in the name of humanitarianism or being politically correct, they will release the opposite of the blessings stated here. Therefore, we must choose to align our beliefs according to the Word and not according to our feelings or what is popular. There is no room in the body of Christ for replacement theology. Supersessionism, or replacement theology, is the belief that the church has fully replaced Israel and she is no longer the recipient of God’s promises according to Scripture.

“For the sake of Zion I will not keep silent, and for the sake of Jerusalem I will not rest until her righteousness goes forth as brightness and her salvation as a lamp that burns,” (Isa. 62:1).

Israel’s 76th Year

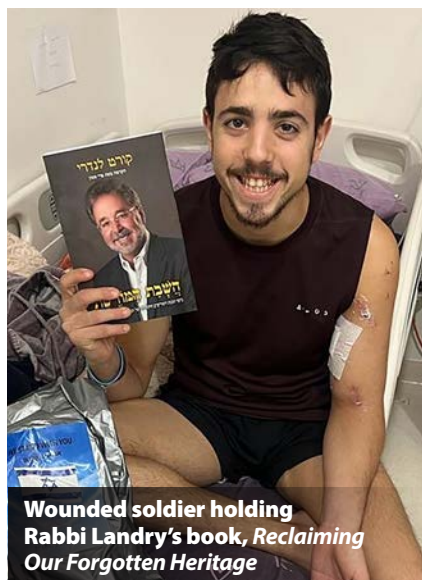
The 76th year of the modern state of Israel may be one of her more challenging years as they continue defeating Hamas, searching for and rescuing 120 hostages, and preparing for possible war with Hezbollah in Lebanon.

We must turn our eyes toward Psalm 76:1-3: “In Judah God is known; in Israel His name is great. In Salem is His abode, and His dwelling place in Zion. There He broke the fiery arrows of the bow, the shield, the sword, and the weapons of war. Selah.” Let’s pray for Israel amid a challenging 76th year and pray for her continued safety and the safety of innocent people, as a war with Hezbollah in Lebanon could result in high casualties on both sides.

“ANTI-SEMITISM TAKES ROOT IN HEARTS THAT HARBOR WRONG BELIEF SYSTEMS AND STRUGGLE WITH THEIR OWN IDENTITY.”

Same Enemy. Same God.

Since 1991, we’ve visited Israel more than 40 times. During our visit after October 7, 2023, we witnessed some of the most traumatic horrors and crimes against humanity we have ever seen. We visited the kibbutz, where innocent pioneering families were massacred. We visited the army bases in the south that



Wounded soldier holding Rabbi Landry’s book, *Reclaiming Our Forgotten Heritage*

our ministry has supported for years. We have seen the power of hate and anti-Semitism firsthand.

The enemy’s evil desires toward God’s chosen people met us face-to-face. Most concerning is the disconnect between our understanding as the body of Christ that the same enemy who did this to Israel is the same enemy that seeks to steal, kill and devour us.

It is the same enemy.

But it is also the same God.

The Chinese General Sun Tzu said: “Know thy enemy and know yourself.” The body of Christ needs to remain awake and aware of the truth of the enemy we are facing.

Miraculous Intervention

Even amid so much loss, we also heard testimonies of families who saw

miraculous intervention: lives spared, families saved, soldiers protected and people who saw the hand of God move on their behalf. The day we spent at Shiva Hospital in Tel Aviv was a day of testimony upon testimony of God’s miraculous power. These IDF soldiers praised the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and expressed gratitude to Christians who pray for Israel and the IDF around the globe. They recognized the miraculous intervention.

Heart Posture of Prayer and Repentance

What can we do? Pray for:

- » Israel
- » The body of Christ
- » The nations we call home.

Most importantly, I encourage you to embrace a heart posture of repentance and pray for God’s mercy and the peace of Jerusalem: “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: ‘May they prosper who love you! Peace be within your walls and security within your towers!’ For my brothers and companions’ sake, I will now say, ‘Peace be within you.’ Because of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek your good,” (Ps. 122:6-9, MEV).

May we take this summer season, the month of Tammuz and Av, to repent and turn our hearts back to the Father, embracing our true identity and unlocking covenant promises. ♣

CURT LANDRY is the 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 and the *One New Man*. *Curt* is also active in raising support for Israel throughout the evangelical community, as he desires to be a bridge of unity and restoration between Israel and the church. For more information about *Curt Landry Ministries* or to help support our projects in Israel and around the world, please visit www.curtlandry.com.

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| WAR IN ISRAEL

**HOW
DARE YOU
STAND**

**THE SUPERNATURAL FOUNDATION
OF THE WAR IN ISRAEL**



BY DOUG HERSHEY

It has been 10 months since the brutal massacres and horrifying videos of what Hamas did to Jewish families in Israel on October 7th. Unfortunately, much of the world has already moved on. Many have all but forgotten the graphic scenes that dominated world headlines for the month of October 2023. Perhaps more shocking is how world opinion has turned against Israel in their response to defending their nation from further massacres that have been promised by Hamas, Hezbollah, Iran and other Islamic terrorist organizations.

The question that many rational people are asking is, How is the world obsessed with Israel waging an unwanted defensive war, who makes up less than 1% of the world population, while ignoring openly evil regimes slaughtering and enslaving millions?

Furthermore, how has this led to a stunning worldwide rise in anti-Semitism and outright Jew hatred, whose levels already have exceeded what they were in World War II while international protests openly call for more massacres of the Jewish people?

If you try to rationalize this somehow, it makes no sense. If you actually read and believe the Bible, world events are becoming quite clear. The problem is that the answers to these questions are not logical ones, but ones with spiritual roots and biblical promises foretold by the prophets.

What Exactly Did Biblical Prophets Foretell?

Let's put aside the twisted media reports, biased social media influencers and deceptively edited IG reels. What exactly does God promise in the Bible?

God has made an everlasting covenant between Himself, the Jewish people and a particular piece of land. *Forever*. That includes today (Genesis 15; 17).

One of the most repeated promises in the Bible is that God will return His people back to this land. It is repeated by almost every prophet in the Bible, most notably Jeremiah 31. It's happening right now and has no historical equal in human history between an ancient people group and their historical homeland.

When the Jewish people return, it will no longer be two kingdoms but one nation (Ezekiel 37). No other sovereign nation today is called by the same name, on the same land and speaking the same language as it was 3,000 years ago.

Once considered a dead language, the Hebrew language will be revived (Zephaniah 3). No other people group in history has revived a dead language, originally spoken by their ancestors, as their common unifying tongue. Not one.

When the Jewish people return, the physical land will respond and produce in a way that it never has before (Ezekiel 36). It's happening. I have visually and historically documented this stunning and ongoing process in my best-selling photo book *Israel Rising*.

The Jewish people will be multiplied on the land again (Ezekiel 36). It's happening. At no other time in recorded history has

a national population absorbed immigration that doubled its size in three years. In 1948, 650,000 Jews were in Israel. Three years later in 1951, over 700,000 more immigrants arrived, more than doubling the population. The Jewish population has multiplied many times over since then.

The waste and forgotten biblical cities will be rebuilt, most notably Jerusalem (Ezekiel 36; Zachariah 8). This is another area I have visually and historically documented of this amazing ongoing process in *Jerusalem Rising*.

An exceedingly great army will stand to their feet from dry bones and be called “the whole house of Israel,” (Ezekiel 37). For the first time since Ezekiel spoke this, the “house of Israel” is again an exceedingly powerful army, standing in its biblical homeland.

At some point, all nations will gather against Jerusalem and Israel (Zachariah 12; 14). Perhaps for the first time ever, right now nations are beginning to openly choose sides, either for or against Israel, in the UN, in international courts and in public opinion.

Prophetic Plotline Unfolding Before Our Eyes

While this prophetic list could continue for several pages, I’m going to stop here. These are not symbolic, metaphorical or allegorical references, but are rooted in the historical and verifiable facts. (For more of these prophecies, I’ve created an online course called *10 Prophecies Fulfilled in Your Lifetime*, filmed on location in Israel where they are happening for the first time ever.

On top of this, no other ancient people group in history have any type of ancient writings foretelling this entire process of the destruction of their homeland, scattering of their people to then the regathering to the same location as a thriving strong and independent nation. Not the Romans, the Chinese, the Persians, the Greeks—no one. Proven to be true and historically accurate, this fact alone should lead us back to the biblical narrative where these prophecies are found.

Against any historical comparison, God is doing exactly as He said—the people are returning, the exiles are

again one nation, the physical land is responding, Hebrew is again being spoken, the people are multiplying, biblical cities are being rebuilt, the army of Israel is again standing strong on their homeland... and the nations are starting to choose. As that is happening, there is an ancient evil intensifying who hates God, is challenging His promises and is trying to deceive as many as possible on his way to kill, steal and destroy anything connected to God and Israel as His covenant people. This is what we are seeing in the news and the root of this skyrocketing

“THE ONLY WAY TO TRULY UNDERSTAND THIS WAR AGAINST THIS BLIND HATRED AND EVIL IS THROUGH SPIRITUAL EYES.”

hatred of Israel and Jews.

According to the New Testament, Christians are grafted into Israel and are part of the commonwealth of Israel. You are in the family and a part of these promises. Israel are your brothers as well as the brothers of Jesus. This is His family and *your* family. With all this chaos, what can believers in Jesus do?

It Has Been a Spiritual War from the Beginning

I’m not suggesting this, it is verbatim fact. Hamas has been openly saying it from its beginning in December 1987. They clearly state in their charter in Article 7, “The Day of Judgment will not come about until Muslims fight the Jews.” It goes on to describe the goal of the indiscriminate killing of Jews, just as the world has witnessed. Hamas leaders have been openly saying it and praying it to their god for years, on a doctrine in fighting the Jews, their slaughter, extermination and annihilation until not one Jew is left alive, the Jews and all their

supporters! Did you catch that last part, “Jews and all their supporters”? Who do you think they are referring to? Even Hamas believes that Christians and Israel are part of the same family.

For years the Islamic jihadist call in the Middle East has been “First we come for the Saturday people, then the Sunday people.” No one listened. The West disregarded this as the bluster of a radical minority. Now it has become the growing battle cry of the Islamic world and the deceived progressive masses in the West, believing they are fighting for freedom of the perceived oppressed.

The only way to truly understand this war against this blind hatred and evil is through spiritual eyes. God has made an everlasting covenant with the Jewish people, to be their God and give them a piece of land forever. After thousands of years, He is keeping that promise and bringing His people back to this same land. And the enemy hates it.

At the same time, there is a very real evil who hates God and His promises. Historically speaking, there is a direct correlation between the establishment of the state of Israel (as foretold by the prophets) and the rise of an increasingly violent form of Islam hellbent on killing Jews and destroying Israel. Even among the Islamic terrorist groups worldwide, most don’t like each other because they aren’t “Islamic” enough. Yet, only one thing unifies them—abject bloodlust driving a pure evil desire to kill Jews and destroy Israel.

But what can be done?

Hear Obadiah’s Message

While this is the shortest book in the Bible, Obadiah’s message is clear and for today. Obadiah lived during the time of Jeremiah and wrote his prophecy after the fall of Jerusalem and the exile of the people. Yet unlike Jeremiah, Obadiah’s message isn’t to Israel but to Edom.

The Edomites were descendants of Esau. In biblical times, Edom was located directly east of Israel, in present day Jordan. His name came from Genesis 25:30 (MEV) which tells us that it was after Esau sold his birthright to Jacob for “some of that red stew, for I am famished.” Therefore, his name was called Edom.” So, Esau becomes Edom

and later, Jacob becomes Israel. Israel and Edom are brothers.

Obadiah's primary message to Israel's brother Edom was judgment for violence against his brother Israel. How? This is the first charge against Edom in verses 11-12 (MEV): "On the day that you stood aside, on the day that strangers carried off his wealth, and foreigners entered his gates and cast lots on Jerusalem, you also were like one of them. But you should not have gloated on the day of your brother, on the day of his misfortune; you should not have rejoiced over the children of Judah on the day of their destruction; you should not have boasted on the day of distress." The issue the Lord had with Edom was what they did while their brother Israel was suffering: nothing.

In Hebrew, the word for aloof is *neged* and means to be in someone's presence. The original language gives the impression that Edom showed up to watch but did not get involved. He remained silent in the face of their brother's suffering while Jerusalem was invaded and exiles were taken. They even gloated over watching Israel "get what they deserved."

God said that because of this, He counted them as one of the Babylonian invaders. In other words, the brothers of Israel today cannot just watch these current events and do nothing. God will hold accountable those that are "aloof" as the same as the attacking invaders.

Christians Must Respond

Believers in Jesus are brothers in Israel's family. Christians cannot remain silent in the face of Israel's suffering from the invaders' horrors. If you are in this family by faith, this is what you can do:

1) PRAY: fulfill the biblical mandate to pray for the peace of Jerusalem, for peace within her walls and palaces (Ps 122). They need and are asking for it. Pray.

2) CARE: Check on your Jewish friends. With over 1,200 dead, 150+ taken captive, and now young soldiers dying in combat to defend their families, everyone knows someone who has lost a loved one. Ask if they are OK, weep with those who mourn and love them like your family. They are.

3) GIVE: Romans 15:27 (MEV)



“GOD MADE AN EVERLASTING COVENANT WITH THE JEWISH PEOPLE—AFTER THOUSANDS OF YEARS, HE IS KEEPING THAT PROMISE—AND THE ENEMY HATES IT.”

says "It has pleased them indeed, and they are their debtors. For if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, they also ought to minister to them in material things." If you have enjoyed your Bible, then you have shared in Israel's "spiritual things." Now you owe a debt and how you repay it is ministering to Israel in material things. If there was ever a time to find a way to give and help, it is now.

4) GO: Right now. In the most tangible sense in Israel, the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. To learn more about how to join practical work teams to go help Israeli farmers in their harvests, that in turn feed both Jewish and Arab communities in Israel, subscribe at EzraAdventures.com. Three successful teams already have gone in 2024, three more are scheduled for this Fall, with several more forming in early 2025!

Friends, hear the message of Obadiah as you watch the news. While it may feel overwhelming and Israel seems so far away, we simply cannot

just stand aloof or just show up to watch. We cannot say how awful things are, then quickly move on or even entertain questions if Israel somehow caused this.

To speak frankly, there is an entire book in your Bible, whose message is about how God feels when we do nothing when Israel is suffering, invaded and captives are taken.

This is your family. Israel needs you. We *must* act. According to Obadiah, God will notice your decision. ♣

DOUG HERSHEY is the author of the best-selling photo books *Israel Rising* and *Jerusalem Rising* that provide historical and visual documentation of biblical prophecy coming to pass in our day, and *The Christian's Biblical Guide to Understanding Israel: Insight Into God's Heart for His People*. When not in Israel, he resides in Portland, Maine. Check out more information on books, event requests and Israel tours on his website DougHershey.co, as well as his e-course to join God in his plan to fulfill his ancient promises as told in Scripture.

A close-up photograph of a person's hands clasped together in a prayerful gesture. The hands are positioned in the center-right of the frame, with fingers interlaced. The person is wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt. The background is a dark blue field filled with numerous small, bright white and light blue specks, resembling a starry night sky or a nebula. The overall mood is one of hope, faith, and spiritual longing.

A Plea for HAPPINESS

Up from the depths & Down from the heights, God shows up with hope at every turn

BY LARRY HUCH

Everyone else had gone into town leaving me home alone in the ranch house. “Now is my chance,” I thought. “This time I’m going to push the limit and really get high.” My friends and partners in the drug smuggling business had been worried about me. Sure, we were all users, but I had taken it to a whole new level and my body and mind were showing the effects. Thin and drawn, scars from needles dotted my tattooed arms. Hair down to the middle of my back and an earring highlighted the dark circles around my glazed eyes sunken into my callous face. No one would have guessed that I had once been a robust college football player.

I was slowly killing myself and didn’t know it. Or maybe I did. I’d already been snorting coke, smoking weed and drinking all day long. That was pretty much my existence. I lived to get high. But all the snorting, smoking and drinking that day hadn’t given me enough and I needed more. So, now I would shoot the cocaine straight into my veins, what we called mainlining.

To ensure I would get extra high, I doubled my normal portion. When I shot it up, however, the needle missed my vein, and I didn’t realize it. “Wow,” I thought. “I didn’t feel a thing.” So, I doubled that amount and missed the vein again and didn’t know it. Still feeling nothing and growing frustrated, I did something only a foolish addict would do. I doubled the portion a third time. This time I hit the vein, sending a lethal amount of pure cocaine directly into my bloodstream.

Almost instantly, my heart exploded into a rush of rapid, violent palpitations constricting my chest, causing labored breathing, trembling and profuse sweating. As my body collapsed to the floor, I cried, “I’m dying. I’m dying.”

Then, something strange happened.

Something surreal.

In those split seconds hovering between life and death, it was as if time stood still. I was acutely aware. My mind was clear, clear enough to speak to my Creator, whoever it was. “God,” I pleaded, “don’t let me die until I find out what happiness is.”

Nowhere Left to Go But Up

Now, I’ll be the first to admit that a plea for happiness was a strange request when dying, but I had no church or religious background as a reference point. I wasn’t asking for salvation, but happiness. Let me live to find happiness. You see, I had no happiness as a child, none. Growing up was brutal, abusive and violent. In my ongoing desperation to find meaning and happiness I had tried an assortment of things—sports, which I was pretty good at, immorality, drugs, loads of money from selling

“This time I hit the vein, sending a lethal amount of pure cocaine directly into my bloodstream.”

drugs, and finally using the hardest drugs in search of the ultimate high. All of it left me with an echoing void in my soul.

“God,” I implored Him again, “please don’t let me die until I find what happiness is.” Suddenly, almost miraculously, I started breathing normally and began coming out of it. Pulling myself up off the floor I staggered outside and dropped into a chair on the front patio looking out over the mountains of Colombia, South America.

I can’t believe I’m alive.

The thought kept going through my mind. “I can’t believe I’m alive.” Instinctively, I knew something bigger than me had spared my life. Today, I tell people, “Even though I was a violent, drug smuggling, drug addict, God heard that prayer.” He heard that prayer and would continue chasing me down with His relentless love.

“I’ve Had Enough”

Though still a young man, my body and mind were wasted. I had done such heavy drugs for so long that I could hardly talk. Despite having earned a college degree, and only lacking a couple of credits for my second, I could barely put two coherent sentences together. I was 26 years old when I finally stopped running and said, “OK God, I’ve had enough. Take me. I’m exhausted.”

The church that introduced me to Jesus didn’t know what to do with me, so they put me in the kids 15-and-under Sunday School class. I would just sit there like a zombie from doing so many drugs. Most in that church didn’t believe I would make it, that I was too far gone. Yet even though I looked half dead on the outside, there was a fire smoldering deep inside me kept alive by the Holy Spirit. No doubt, I was the epitome of a junkie, but now I was a saved junkie.

Fortunately, the Holy Spirit doesn’t need much to work with, just a willing vessel. He specializes in restoring the broken and redeeming the time stolen by the

**“There
was a fire
smoldering
deep inside
me kept
alive by
the Holy
Spirit.”**

enemy. God took that zombie junkie right where I was, gave me true life, set me on my feet and put me on a new path. His path.

He brought my beautiful wife, Tiz, who is *way* above my pay grade. Together we would raise a wonderful family, pioneer several thriving churches across the globe, breaking racial and cultural barriers along the way, while seeing thousands of broken souls come to Jesus. In addition, God gave us an international teaching ministry through television and books, leading to an enlightenment of the Jewish roots eventually giving us a significant influence on Israel and the Jewish nation. We became advisors to President Trump on the Middle East and have met with top Israeli rabbis and military leaders including the minister of defense, and even Prime Minister Netanyahu himself.

Recently, as I was flying to Jerusalem to meet with top leaders, I realized God has given us favor and the Israeli leadership listen to us. It makes no sense in the natural. From a junkie to serving God’s kingdom in Jerusalem is a journey that shows what God can do in the least of us. It’s a journey of miracles but also of being faithful with a little and watching God multiply the loaves and fishes we give Him.

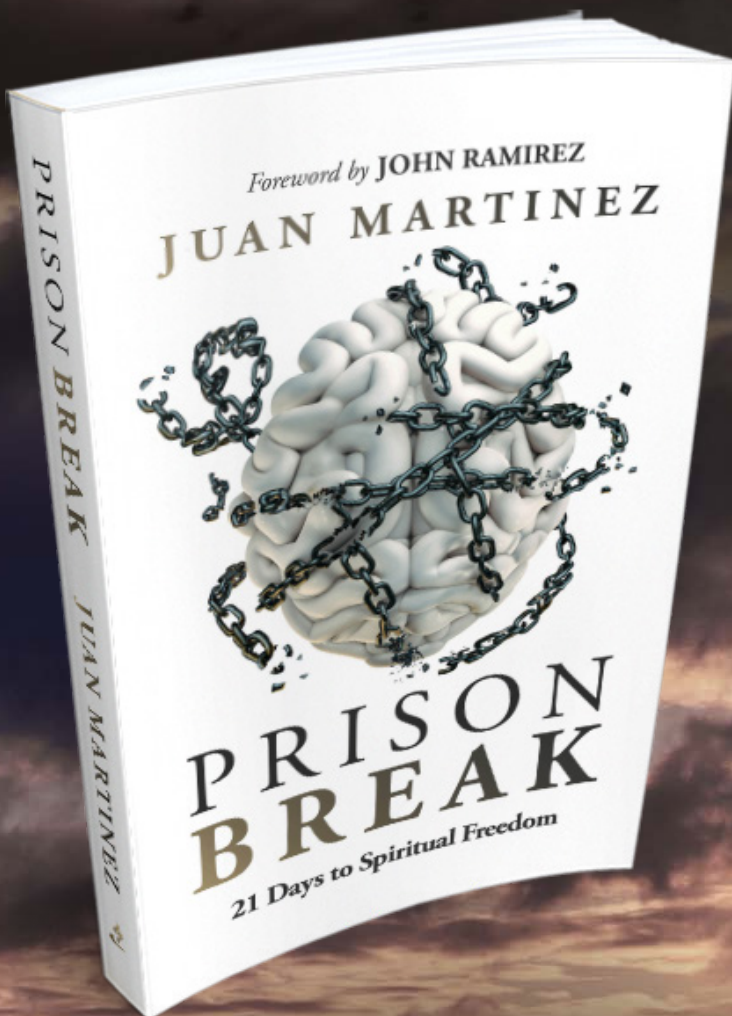
Miracles Far Beyond Understanding

Of course, there have been many struggles and battles the Lord would bring us through. I came to understand that my anger and violent nature had been handed down generationally to me and that the curse had to be broken. That truth became one of our foundational teachings.

Romans 2:11 says, “God is no respecter of persons.” That means what He does for one person, He will do for another, and He’ll do it for you. A lot of the study we do is out of the Hebrew, and in Judaism it says that whenever you see or hear of a miracle in someone else’s

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life, it's because you're next. Revelation 12:11 (MEV) tells us, "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death." My story is a testimony of hope and overcoming. It's a testimony that has been told from the White House to the most violent prisons, from Portland to the Philippines, from the down-and-out in the streets, to the world's elite.

Regardless of your current condition, this God story gives hope for you or for maybe somebody you love. That's the main reason I wrote my upcoming new book, *From Junkie to Jerusalem*, to let you know that no matter where you're from, no matter what you're going through and no matter what your children are going through, God has a miracle in the works. If you are breathing, you are not too far gone. He has an amazing future for you.

It's also an inspiring testimony about Tiz, after doctors gave her three

months to live because of cancer. There's so much encouraging hope to share, but against all odds it's now been almost six years.

Our grandson, Lyon, was given a terminal diagnosis of Leukemia. It's now gone. The cancer is gone—not in remission, gone. His nurse, who spent her career with Leukemia patients told us, "Thank you. Now I've seen one."

"Seen one what?" we asked.

"One patient with this grim diagnosis to live."

His amazing story, like his grandmother's, show the way God used both of their miracles to impact others in amazing, profound ways.

Years ago, when I walked into that church, nobody would even talk to me because I was a complete junkie and too far gone in their eyes. Despite them, Jesus still showed up in my heart, and thank God even though man looks on the outside, He looks on the inside. Through Jesus, there's no end to where

this can go and where you can go. He can take you too, from wherever you are to beyond what you could imagine. He will show you what happiness is and give it to you.

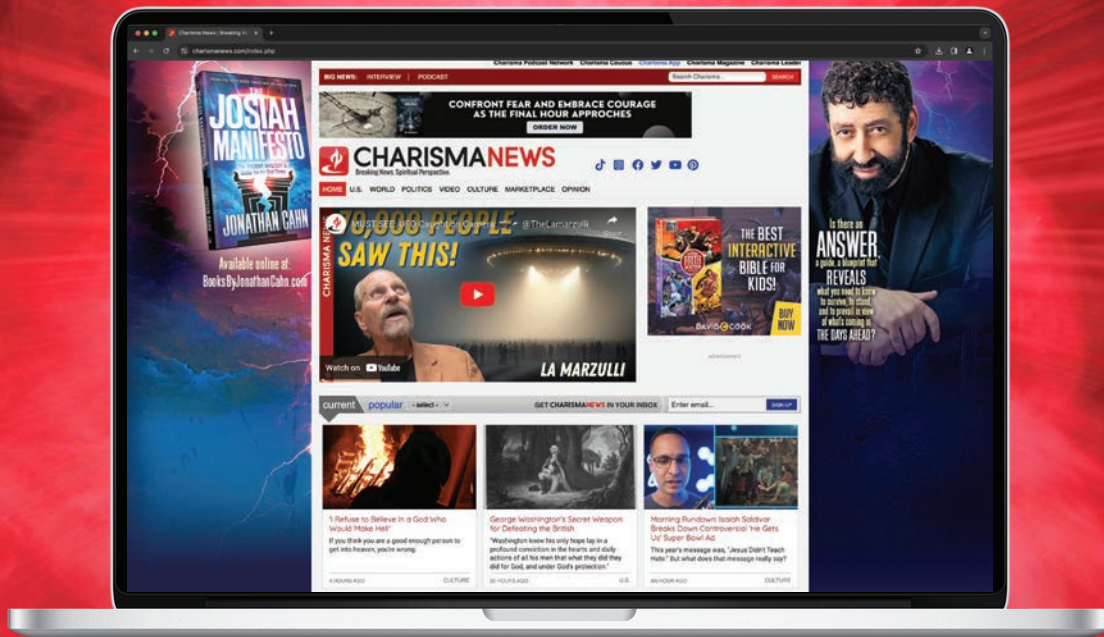
Although it looks different than the happiness the world offers, it's a happiness with peace and fulfillment that goes beyond our circumstances and soars past all our understanding. ◀

LARRY AND TIZ HUCH are the pastors of *New Beginnings Church in Bedford, Texas, and hosts of the weekly television broadcast New Beginnings With Larry & Tiz Huch, which is changing lives worldwide. Over more than 45 years of ministry, the Huchs have planted seven churches in the U.S. and Australia and have written several books individually and together. They are dedicated to building bridges of peace, friendship and unity between Christians and Jews. Larry's new book, From Junkie to Jerusalem, is releasing in early 2025 and will be available for pre-sale on amazon.com soon.*

“Holy Spirit doesn't need much to work with, just a willing vessel.”



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A Clarion Call to the Church

There's no separation between loving God
and loving your neighbors as yourself

BY BARRY MEGUIAR

God's love for us is at the nth degree of perfection—pure, faultless, without blemish and never-ending! It's "impeccable." It's all but impossible for our minds to comprehend without divine inspiration! Listen to what God tells us in 1 John 4:16-21 when personalized: God is love, and when you abide in love, you abide in God and God abides in you...and when this love is perfected in you, you will have confidence for the Day of Judgment...there is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear...whoever fears has not been perfected in love...you love because He first loved you...when you love God you must also love your brother.

God's Love Is "Impeccable"

God loves you with "impeccable love" and He wants you to live your life loving Him, and everyone around you, with this same impeccable love. God has no higher aspirations for your life! It's your natural inclination to talk about what you're most excited about. If you're not talking about God, you're not excited about God, and that's more than a small problem.

The degree to which you're telling others about Jesus reveals the degree to which God is your God.

You see, sharing your faith is not optional for Christians. When Jesus said, "Go ye," there were no qualifiers. He didn't limit His call to those who were gifted, or trained, or paid. He also didn't say, "Go ye into the world and pray, or read your Bible, or be a good person."

Most Evangelicals now believe being a good person is being a good faith sharer. But being good doesn't get you or anyone else into heaven. There's only one prerequisite for heaven and it's not knowing who Jesus is. It's accepting Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord, living for Him and no longer yourself.

Being Good Doesn't Get You Into Heaven

Over the last 50 years, most Christians have sat under "feel good" messages requiring nothing more than setting their lives on cruise control. That's the polar opposite of how God made us, to be in-sync with Him, and why the American church is now silent at this epic moment in human history.

The current trend is for Christians to define their spiritual health by the depth of their devotion to a critical issue of our day like elections, abortion, human trafficking or caring for the poor. Clearly, these are battles to be fought for right-thinking Christians.

continued »

But the line is crossed when the issue grows into a consuming fire for their attention, and focus, and joy, leading Christians to ask God to help them with their god. And when things go wrong with their god, blaming God.

In His letter to the church at Ephesus, God admonishes faithful Christians who have left Him as their “First Love” and are no longer doing the “First Work” (telling people about Him). Instead, we have “faithful” Christians making their issues

“We could ignite America with revival in 30 days if we wanted to.”

their god and attracting others to worship their “god.” With the best of intentions, Christians have become more focused on winning issues than winning the lost. God help us!

God’s letter to the church at Ephesus concludes by calling the church (us) to repentance and return to honoring Him as our first love, and doing the first work (telling people about Him). And if we don’t, God will remove the candlestick, being our testimony. If you want to know why the American church has lost its testimony, its influence in America, this is it!

Most Unbelievers Are Unbelievers Because of Believers

Unbelievers don’t want to be like us! A contributing factor is that most believers who are fighting the great issues of our day believe their war is against those who oppose them. But Satan wins when we forget that he’s our enemy.

Those who oppose us have an excuse. They’re blinded by Satan and see evil as good and good as evil. They’re not evil. They’re lost! And they’re going to stay lost until we tell them God loves them. When you hate those who oppose you, you’re hating people Jesus died for and loves just as much as He loves you. This is true no matter what they’re saying or doing. And

because of your hate, they may be lost for eternity.

Not Sharing Your Faith Offends God

While it’s Old Testament Scripture under the law, God never changes. And in Ezekiel 33:1-6, God tells us if you fail to warn those under your influence the enemy is coming, and they die in their sins, their blood will be on your hands.

This brings us back to God’s impeccable love that He gives to you in abundance. This makes it supernaturally possible for you to love Him back, and everyone around you, with impeccable love, blameless, faultless, pure and unaffected by how others treat you. It’s extremely hard for people to hate you long term when your love for them is “impeccable” and never-ending.

As He hung on the cross, Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they don’t know what they are doing,” (Luke 23:34). In our own strength and emotions, we want to react to the world with equal negativity. But Jesus gave us the ultimate example for responding to those who hate Him.

John 14:15 explains how we tell God we love Him by keeping His commandments, with the most important being loving God and loving your neighbors as yourself. Here’s how that works: When you love your neighbor (everyone) as yourself, including those who oppose you, you’re as concerned for their salvation as you are your own.

There’s no separation between loving God and loving your neighbors as yourself.

When you see and respond to the lost through God’s eyes, you’ll satisfy all the commandments by doing everything you can to move everyone, every day, closer to Jesus.

This is *your* “Great Commission,” when you understand the depth of God’s love for you and for everyone around you. There’s no separation between loving God and loving your neighbors as yourself. This includes those who oppose you and God and America! We hate sin and love sinners!

This Message Is For You

It doesn’t matter if you’re into politics,

an activist in the battle, or an arm-chair quarterback shaking your fist at the TV screen! This message is for you! The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results (James 5:16). We need to get over our anger and start praying for the lost!

Over 80% of the unchurched know the world is out of control, are looking for someone to tell them about God and already have at least one Christian in their life that they trust. We could ignite America with revival in 30 days if we wanted to. Do you want to?

Perhaps the second most luxurious promise in the Bible is in Romans 8:28, where God promises to make everything in your life work for good from now until you get to heaven. It sounds too good to be true and most Christians believe it is. But this is God’s promise to you when you do the very same things described in the two most important commandments.

“All things work together for good to those who love Me, to those who are called according to My purpose.” Here again, God explains that your love for Him is expressed by living for His purpose to seek and save the lost. God’s ultimate rewards are reserved for those who dedicate their lives to getting as many people as possible into heaven before they’re left behind. And time is running out!

God’s telling you when you live to seek and save the lost, He’ll make everything in your life work for good. God’s telling you when you live to seek and save the lost to move everyone, every day, closer to Jesus, He’ll make everything in your life work for good. That’s the end of fear and worry, and the launching of wholehearted faith! Who doesn’t want that for their life?

As wonderful as this message may sound and how powerfully it will impact the rest of your life, it’s only half of God’s promise to you. What you may not know is that God’s mandate that you share your faith is secondarily about winning the lost and primarily about winning you!

God Wants to Love Everyone Through You

It’s true! God loves you and people know you’re His disciple when His impeccable love flows through you, to them. It’s way beyond the normal human experience and psyche when the Holy Spirit leads you

into conversations you don't expect and gives you the words to say.

The instructions in Mark 13:11 tell you not to prepare in advance what you should say. Doing that puts your words instead of God's words in your mouth. Then Luke 12:12 adds that the Holy Spirit will give you the words to say when you need them. This transforms every faith sharing experience from high drama to an adventure that changes your life forever!

Unless, and until, you experience the intimacy of having God ignite a conversation, giving you the words to say, and watching a life being transformed in front of you, you have no idea what being a Christian is all about. This is when your desire to be in the Word and on your knees become insatiable. It ignites your life!

Sharing your faith and having faith are inseparable. They are, in fact, two sides of the same coin that defeats fear with effortless faith! This is the end of struggles in your life. God obligates Himself to answer your prayers (James 1:6) and direct your steps (Prov. 3:5) when you achieve wholehearted faith by sharing your faith! Hallelujah!

Sharing your faith is how you achieve wholehearted faith.

In Jeremiah 1:5, God explains that before He placed you in your mother's womb, He set you apart to be His spokesman. Isaiah 43:10 tells you why: "I appointed you as My witness so that you will believe!" Notice He didn't say that you will believe more. In essence, God is telling you that sharing your faith is how you achieve wholehearted faith in God's impeccable love.

This is what being a Christian is all about! ◀

BARRY MEGUIAR is the third-generation president of Meguiar's Inc. He is also the founder and president of Ignite America, a ministry focused on mobilizing Christians to ignite America with revival. His television show *Car Crazy* aired for many years on the Discovery Channel, and his *Ignite Your Life* television show airs on Christian television in the U.S. and online. *Ignite With Barry Meguiar* radio features air daily on over 900 Christian radio stations, with a podcast by the same name. His recent new book, *Ignite Your Life: Defeat Fear With Effortless Faith* is available on [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).

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FREEDOM'S *WAKE UP CALL*

Revival through faith & trust



BY JUAN MARTINEZ

I'm not sure about you, but in every season of my Christian walk, I have had to be reminded of my priorities. It usually happens gradually with just a slight shift here or there, but over time it's easy to get busy and start spending less time in prayer and Bible study. We can all but stop doing what we should be doing. I for one have been guilty of losing focus and running around thinking about myself.

Just as an alarm clock's purpose is to wake us up, sometimes God sends spiritual alarms to awaken us to His presence and purpose. These alarms, often in the form of challenges or divine messages, are calls to reevaluate our priorities and realign them with God's will.

We make a bunch of excuses as to why we don't have time to do things for God, but we can always do things for ourselves. We don't have a time problem; we have a priority problem.

We are more than willing to make time for the things we care about the most.

Are You on Your Road? Or God's Road?

The prophet said, "Consider your ways," (Hag. 1:5, NKJV). This phrase is a Hebrew figure of speech that literally means, "Put your heart on your roads." Haggai asked God's people to consider what direction their lives were heading and whether they really wanted to continue that way. I encourage you to take a moment to reflect on the same question. The Israelites needed to shift their focus from their own comfort to obeying God's Word and rebuilding His house.

In your life, what priorities do you need to reposition? Are there areas of your life where God is asking for more attention or more dedication? Remember, it's not about moving God to our priority list—it's about moving ourselves to align with His



*“God expects you to believe
He will get you
through it.”*

faith calls us to action, even in uncertainty. By trusting in God’s promises and obeying His commands, we open ourselves to His transformative power and the fulfillment of His plans for us.

Fear Not, Trust God

I don’t know about you, but the more I study the Bible and read about Jesus’ interactions with the disciples, the more patience I have as a leader. I mean, these dudes walked and talked with Jesus, breathed the same air and still struggled with fear and lack of faith. I have seen memes on social media where people say Jesus showed us what to do in a storm—sleep. Well, I know firsthand that is easier said than done. Storms will try your faith.

In August 2017 the Weather Channel warned Houston over several days, “A storm is coming! A storm is coming!” The funny thing is, everyone in the Gulf area had sighed with relief when Hurricane Harvey was downgraded from a hurricane to a tropical storm. We figured, “How bad could it be?”

When Harvey actually arrived, that wishful thinking vanished. Having restrengthened to hurricane status, a slow-moving Harvey squatted over our city, dumping up to 60 inches of rain across four days and leaving Houston drowned in muddy, brown floodwaters that showed no sign of receding.

Earlier that day, I had watched through our living room window as neighbor after neighbor left with the few belongings they could gather quickly. The water in the street was thigh high. By 2 p.m. the next day, the bayou behind our apartment building was swollen with floodwater. Brackish water sloshed a foot deep onto our patio, and I knew it was time to go.

Somebody pounded on our front door, confirming my thoughts: “It’s time to leave!” a voice shouted. “Grab a few things and go!” I made several calls, and a friend from the church we pastor, Get Wrapped Church, came in a rescue boat to pick us up. Our journey across Houston took a meandering route that day. First a boat, then a van, then another boat and finally a truck took us to our church building, which would become a major relief distribution center over the next month.

eternal plan.

Is your relationship with God, your spouse or your family out of alignment? For your life to function properly, you must prioritize the important things, which are the eternal.

Our spiritual freedom journey will be marked by moments of awakening when God calls us to reassess and reposition our lives according to His will. Let’s respond to these divine alarms not with reluctance but with hearts open to transformation and renewal. In doing so, we welcome a revival to our spirit that draws us ever closer to God’s heart. In the quiet moments of reflection, God whispers a wake-up call to our souls, urging us to break free from the shackles of our routines and embrace the freedom found in His purposes.

Discipline & Action

In the symphony of our lives, the call of God often arrives as a resounding alarm, urging us to awaken from complacency and step into the freedom of His divine purpose. This awakening isn’t just about altering our routines or habits; it’s a profound shift toward spiritual renewal and freedom. As we heed this call, we liberate ourselves from the constraints of worldly priorities and find true satisfaction and purpose in aligning with God’s will. Let’s embrace this journey not as a burden but as a path to spiritual freedom, where every step brings us closer to the heart of our heavenly Father.

Faith, Obedience & Trust

To have a new life, you have to do something different. This is something we must understand if we are to live by faith. Listening to God and following His plan requires us to walk things out exactly as He says. But we often struggle with

this because we have a problem. Let me explain, using the story of Noah.

God told Noah to get some gopher wood, and then He said, “This is how you are to make it: The ark will be 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high.” This is what we would do if we were Noah: We’d go out and see that the gopher trees have to get cut, sanded down—you get the point. It looks like a long road ahead. So, we’d go talk to someone who has no spiritual fruit, and they’d tell us where we can find some plywood. It’s 449 feet long and 89 inches wide—not quite 450 feet long. And it isn’t gopher wood, but it’s cut and ready, so we decide to go the easy route; we take the shortcut.

Then when we finish building, the boat sinks.

We blame everyone and everything but ourselves, yet the truth is we did things our way, not God’s way, because we were in a rush and thought maybe God was in a hurry, too. First Peter 3:20 tells us that “God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built.” We must keep in mind that God always takes us through a process to grow us into maturity, and we can’t rush through it. Don’t move out prematurely if you want freedom. Stop modifying His plan. God will not protect what is not built according to His blueprint.

There is a powerful connection between faith and obedience. Hebrews 11 reminds us that faith is not just belief in the unseen but also a commitment to act upon that belief. I want to encourage you to think about situations in your life as we reflect on the example of Noah, whose faith and obedience led to the salvation of his family and a profound intimacy with God.

Faith and obedience are deeply intertwined in our Christian journey. True

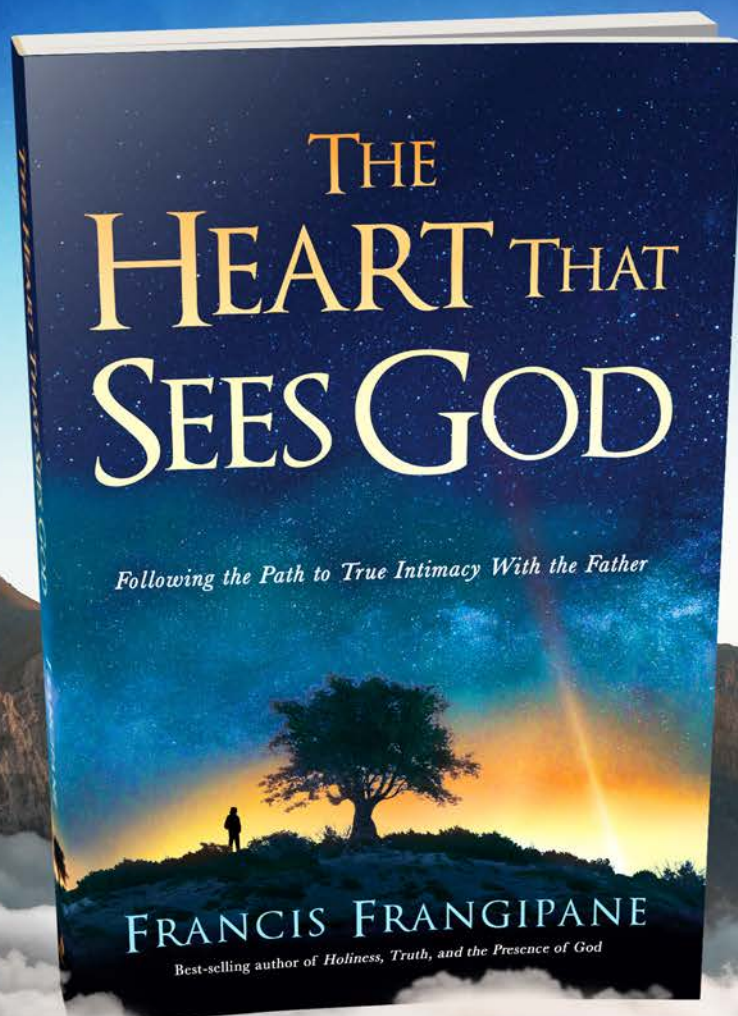
As I sat in the rescue boat, my arms around my wife, Ruthy, the irony hit me: the raincoat on my back read “Noah’s Ark.” It was a gift from a radio station for a show I guest-hosted. Now the full weight of that irony and what we would face in the days ahead settled over me.

“God, I’m going to lose everything,” I murmured into the damp air. His response was a sobering one. The Lord was like, “You are?” We had one carry-on suitcase and one backpack—from what I could tell, that was everything we now owned in the world. But when we returned home three days later, we discovered that while all the apartment buildings around us were flooded, our building was untouched.

During that time, I learned a lot about storms that applies to our lives today. First, storms are unpredictable. You don’t know when they are coming. They are like a surprise party for someone who hates surprises. Next, many storms are unavoidable. Unless you have plenty of advance warning, you cannot always avoid the storm or its effects. You must tap into your faith and trust God to carry you through it, as He protected us in Houston. Third, never forget that Jesus is in the boat with you. You can scream, cry and pray, but God expects you to believe He will get you through it. There is a point where the Lord expects us to release fear and fully embrace faith in Christ. Jesus expects you to spend enough time with Him and know enough Scriptures to understand that He will never leave or forsake you. Finally, God wants you to know that He can completely calm every storm you face. Therefore, you can confidently sleep through the storm because God is with you. ◀

JUAN MARTINEZ is the lead pastor of *Get Wrapped Church* and founder of *Love Live Lead Ministries*. He has appeared on TBN Salsa, TBN and CTN Vegas, and he is a popular conference speaker. The author of *Beyond the Yellow Brick Road: Unlocking the Promises of God*, he lives in Houston with his wife, Ruthy. They have six children: Johnathan, Jay, Jonathan, Valery, Janina and Josh. His new book, *Prison Break: 21 Days to Spiritual Freedom*, releases this month, Tuesday, Aug. 6th, and is available for purchase at amazon.com now.

What if everything you think
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SERMON ON THE MOUNT
has only scratched the surface?



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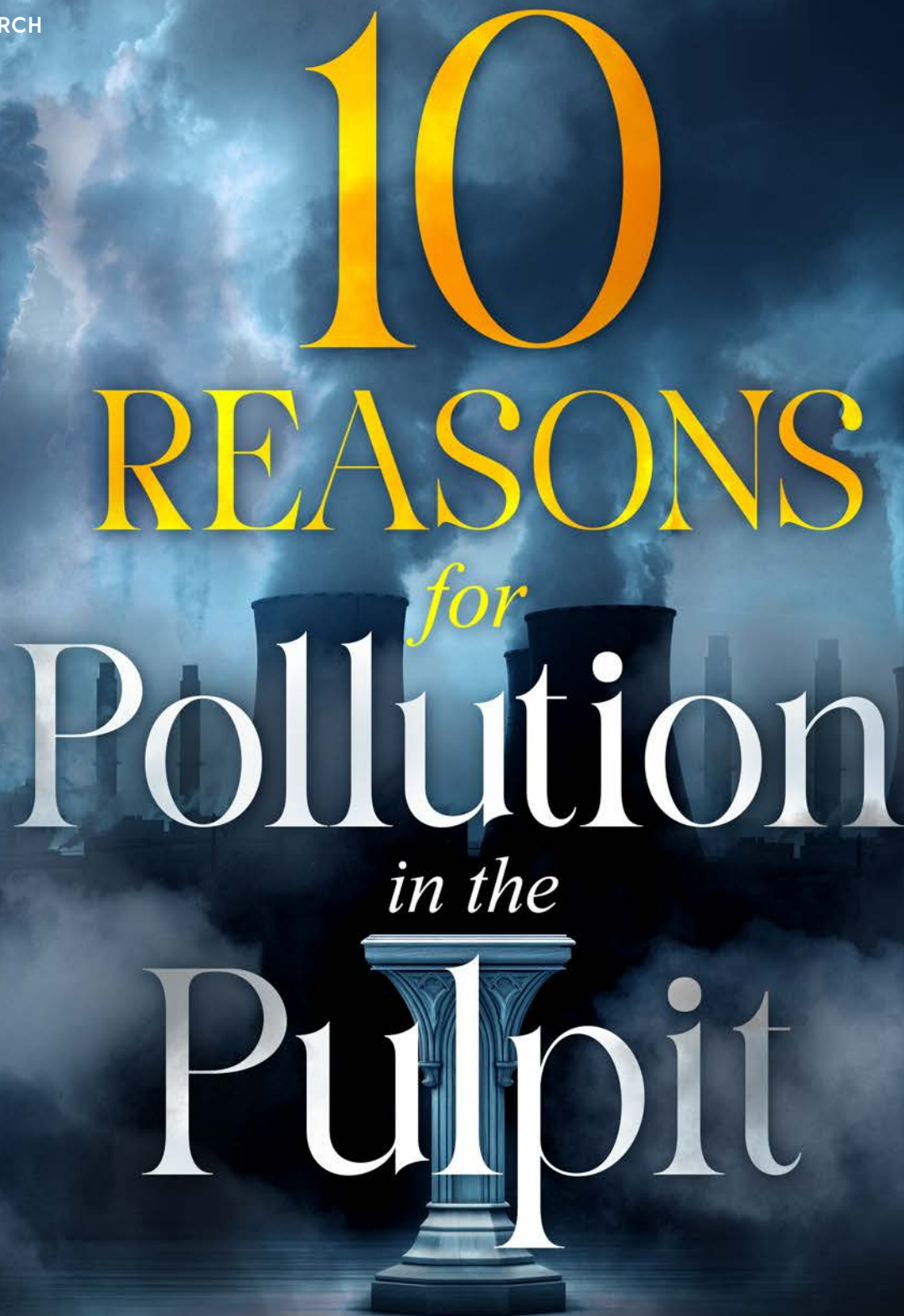
In this captivating book by Francis Frangipane, revisit Jesus’s most famous teaching and discover the amazing life-transforming truths hidden behind the words He shared.

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HOUSE



10 REASONS *for* Pollution *in the* Pulpit

And how to clean God's house today

I was recently with a friend (whom I will leave nameless) who said that his city is in such a mess because “the pulpits are polluted!” When he said this, I immediately began to think and pray about the implications and reasons for this strong statement. Upon reflection, I found his statement to be true based on conversations I have had with numerous leaders across the globe.

The following are 10 reasons there is pollution in some pulpits today:

1) The pastor has an unholy union with politicians.

In Scripture, we have numerous examples of how religious leaders compromised their faith and obedience to God for the sake of political favor and access. For example, in Amos 7:12-13, Amaziah, the priest, commanded the prophet Amos to stop prophesying at Bethel because it was the king's sanctuary and a temple of the kingdom. In 1 Kings 22, we see how all the prophets only prophesied what King Ahab wanted to hear, except Micaiah, the prophet. Also, all the chief priests conspired to put Jesus to death when they said that they had no king but Caesar, thus aligning themselves with the Roman emperor over the Lord of the universe (John 19:15). I have observed many religious leaders compromise their faith by supporting political candidates and platforms so they can have access to power and money. This, almost more than any other point, is the reason for schisms, posturing and a lack of true spiritual power in the pulpit today.

2) The pastor puts the branding of their name before the health of their local church.

Some spiritual leaders merely use their church as a platform to enhance their own name. They put all their effort into elevating their name without care or concern for the congregation's health. When a spiritual leader is more concerned with their own brand than the spiritual condition of their church, it pollutes the pulpit.

3) The pastor is not relationally accountable to anyone.

Whenever a spiritual leader has no real accountability, they are more vulnerable to temptation. A leader with no oversight is a lone ranger and can easily go off track. This is another reason for pollution in the pulpit today.

4) The lead pastor is surrounded by "yes men."

All lead pastors need strong leaders around them with the capacity to help them think through complex issues. When they lack this, they create a vacuum of creativity and problem-solving and open the door to huge mistakes.

Furthermore, when a leader only has "yes men" around him, there is nobody to push back against unethical practices that open a door to various calamities. I have learned that the stronger and more secure a leader is—the more he will surround himself with other strong leaders in their inner circle so that iron can sharpen iron. A lack of strong leaders around a lead pastor causes much pollution in the pulpit today.

5) The lead pastor isolates himself.

One of the biggest reasons for pulpit pollution today is when a spiritual leader lacks intimate relationships with leadership peers. This isolation causes them to deal with external pressures by themselves, which can result in depression, discouragement and hopelessness.

6) There are no sexual boundaries.

One of the most common reasons spiritual leaders fall into sexual sin is because they counsel members of the opposite sex. In my opinion, as a general rule, men should counsel men and ladies with ladies. When this is not possible, a male leader should have his spouse or another mature spiritual female leader with him when he meets with a woman. Lacking these boundaries can result in pollution in the pulpit today.

7) There are no financial boundaries.

There are churches I know in which not even the trustees know what is going on financially! Sometimes, the pastor pays all the bills because he may not trust another with that responsibility. These are dangerous practices because they can tempt the lead pastor to "cook the books" and misappropriate tithes and offerings! It can also open up the door to scandalous accusations regarding financial malfeasance.

If at all possible, if the pastor insists on signing checks, two signers should be required. The trustees should also receive weekly reports, and the CPA should audit the books regularly and give an annual report. Without the proper financial boundaries, the pulpit can easily be polluted.

8) Ministry is driven by ego.

When the primary motivation of the lead pastor is to produce results that satisfy their ego, trouble is not far

away. When spiritual leaders are driven by ambition instead of being led by the Holy Spirit, they tend to embark on huge projects presumptively. The result is that they eventually experience unnecessary financial hardship because God only provides for the vision He gives. Ministry ego is one of the most common reasons for pollution in the pulpit today.

9) The Bible is not the primary source for preaching.

When a spiritual leader rarely cracks open the Bible and only fills themselves with newspapers and current events, their preaching will lack the power and purity of the Word.

Some lead pastors act more like social activists than shepherds because their preaching is politically and economically informed more than being biblically informed. This is another reason for pollution in the pulpit today.

10) The lead pastor is not walking with God.

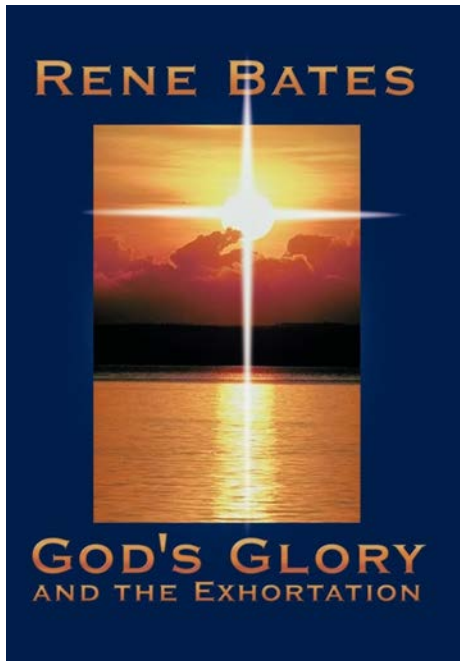
Last but not least, perhaps the most important reason why there is pollution in the pulpit today is because the lead pastor lacks a robust devotional life. Unless a spiritual leader regularly seeks God and devours His Word, they will begin to act and think like the world instead of reflecting the lifestyle of the Word.

Since all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, we are all susceptible to falling into sin and polluting our pulpits, families and environment. May the Lord surround us with godly friends and overseers with integrity; and may He grant us an intense hunger to seek Him now more than ever! May we have great power in the pulpits to release the glory of God over congregations, cities and nations. ✦

DR. JOSEPH MATTERA is an internationally known author, consultant and theologian whose mission is to influence leaders who influence culture. He is the founding pastor of Resurrection Church and leads several organizations, including the U.S. Coalition of Apostolic Leaders and Christ Covenant Coalition.

Refresh Your Spirit

Summer Reading Guide



THE FINAL TESTAMENT

A Warning from God to the Saved and Lost.

To the Lost: Receive Jesus Now.

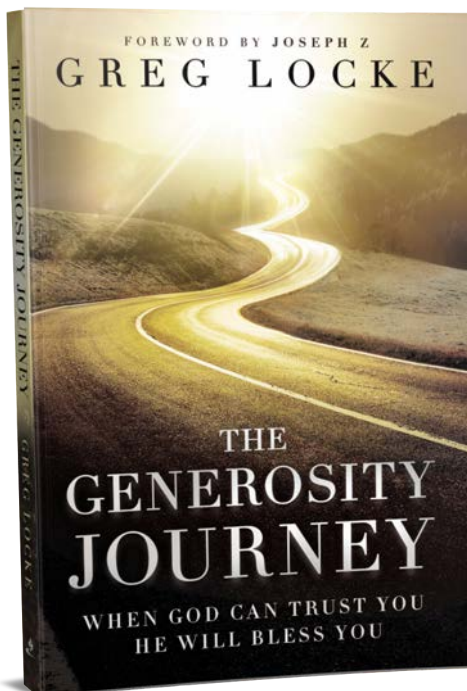
To the Saved: Get Rid of Your "Traditions of Men"
Before the Soon Coming of Christ.

God's Glory and the Exhortation is an astute and provocative point of view on the ways and follies of the modern church.

Brother Rene speaks God's truth, refusing to bow to the weight of misguided tradition. His work is in line with the great but opposed prophets of the Old Testament as well as the hard-pressed apostles of the New. His writings bear the same weight of divine wisdom to both bless and course-correct the faithful few.

**84% of book owners are giving a 5-STAR RATING
on the content of the book.**

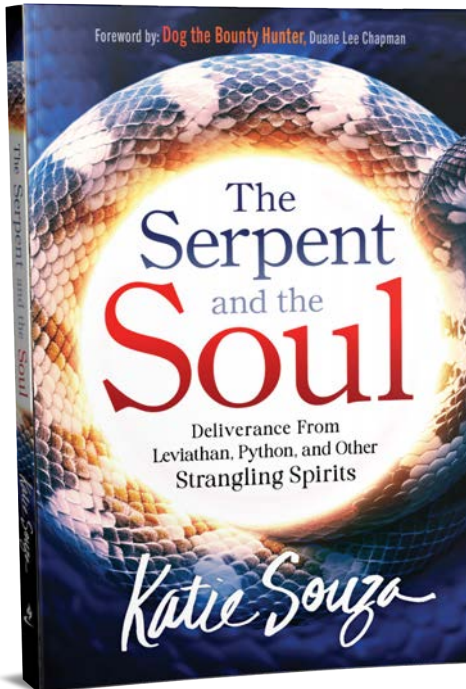
Available for purchase on Amazon and Barnes & Noble



THE GENEROSITY JOURNEY BY GREG LOCKE

Nothing will change a believer's life more than biblical giving. Greg Locke's *The Generosity Journey* shows that generosity is the remedy for materialism and the ultimate game-changer for walking in the abundance and favor of God. Generosity is not just a gift to others but also a weapon in spiritual warfare against the negative influences of the enemy. Through generosity, you *can* and *will* experience spiritual breakthrough! After reading this book, you will not only discover the joy of giving, but you will also receive the extraordinary rewards that comes when you align yourself with God's generous plan for your life. Additionally, you will walk away with the confidence that God will take what you give and do exceedingly and abundantly more with it than you could ever have imagined.

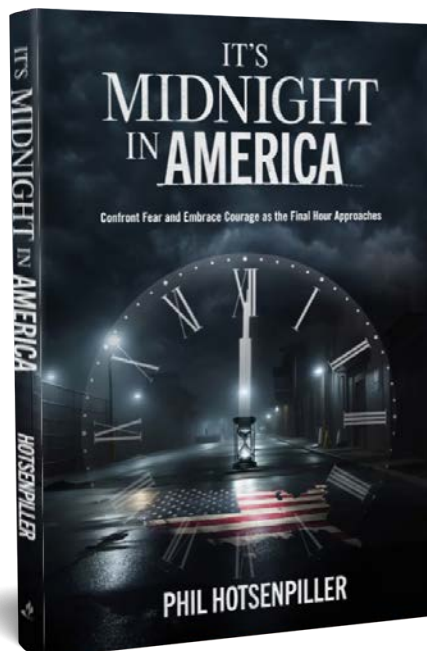
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THE SERPENT AND THE SOUL BY KATIE SOUZA

Deadly serpent spirits are seeking to destroy your soul! Katie Souza's *The Serpent and the Soul* reveals the sly strategies of Python, Leviathan, and other demonic spirits, as they attempt to attack you at all levels: *financially*, *physically*, and *spiritually*. Working against our relationships, our faith, and our future, these serpent spirits want to constrict you so that you suffer like they will in eternity. But have no fear! In Luke 10:19, Jesus gave us the power to trample serpents and have authority over the enemy. Although the serpent spirits may seem intimidating at first, they will run away as soon as you take back what they have stolen from you. Using the powerful prayers and spiritual tools inside this practical guide, you will be able to break free from the serpents' deadly grip and restore peace in your life! Likewise, you will be able to see that your life was created for *wholeness*, not *brokenness*.

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THE WORLD IS NOT FALLING APART. IT IS FALLING INTO PLACE.

The church has been in a slumber, and now, God is calling us to wake up.

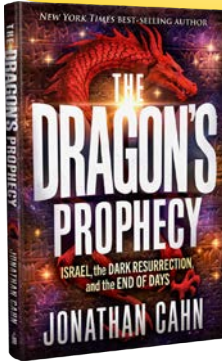
With Phil Hotsenpiller's *It's Midnight in America*, you'll see how it's time for the church to let go of fear and embrace biblical and practical wisdom and solutions to help us overcome the challenges of the present and the future.

Now is the moment to embrace our calling and PREPARE FOR THE IMMINENT RETURN OF CHRIST.

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Refresh Your Spirit

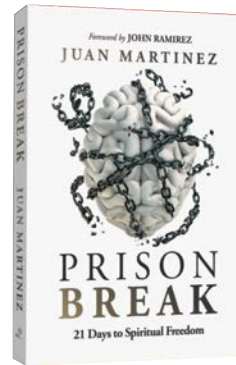
Summer Reading Guide



THE DRAGON'S PROPHECY BY JONATHAN CAHN

Is there more to the world than we see with our eyes, unseen forces and ancient prophecies playing out to the *End of Days*? *New York Times* best-selling author Jonathan Cahn is back with another spiritual bomb to drop in **THE DRAGON'S PROPHECY: Israel, the Dark Resurrection, and the End of Days**. In this mind-blowing book, your readers will reveal the ancient forces at work transforming our world, the mysteries of the future, and the ancient secrets given to overcome and prevail in view of what lies ahead! Your readers will never be the same after reading this mind-bending revelation!

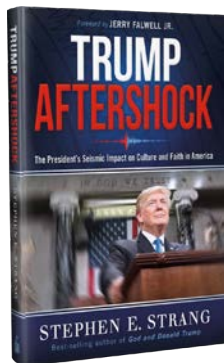
BooksByJonathanCahn.com



PRISON BREAK BY JUAN MARTINEZ

A life with Christ is about unshackling your chains of bondage to embrace a life of freedom. Juan Martinez's twenty-one-day devotional, *Prison Break*, encourages life change through practical steps such as challenging negative thinking patterns with positive affirmations and setting realistic goals. It also serves as a poignant reminder that freedom is possible and shows you that with the right mindset, you can overcome past mistakes, forgive others, be renewed by the transformation of your minds, and lead a fulfilling life. By reading this book, your readers will recognize the root causes of the psychological chains breaking them so they can reach greater personal growth.

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TRUMP AFTERSHOCK BY STEVE STRANG

If Donald Trump's election was an earthquake, his accomplishments since then are the aftershocks the world never saw coming. In *Trump Aftershock*, Strang explores Trump's effect on American culture from a Christian perspective, cutting through the media noise and revealing what the media refuses to cover! Over the course of your reading, you will also objectively see what our nation's most unlikely and unconventional former president has accomplished. While reading this book, your readers will realize the lasting, beneficial effects of Trump's policy during office such as protecting religious liberty, restoring the federal courts with trustworthy justices, and strengthening ties with Israel—our spiritual and national ally.

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THROUGH THE STORM BY JONI LAMB

What if the most beautiful kind of faith is the type that has been tested and tried? As the visionary and cofounder of Daystar Television Network, Joni Lamb's journey has been incredibly remarkable. In her book, *Through the Storm*, you'll learn what it means to overcome trials and experience triumphs even after immense loss. Join Joni as she candidly opens up about the relentless challenges establishing Daystar and the dire personal struggles she's faced. *Through the Storm* doesn't just recount the moments of struggle—it shows your readers how to navigate and overcome these moments to experience true victory.

JoniLambBook.com

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/.

“And let us not grow weary in doing good, for in due season we shall reap, if we do not give up.”—Galatians 6:9

AUGUST

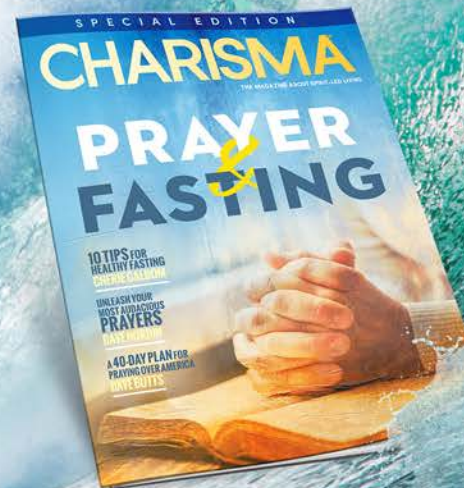
Aug. 1	Is. 65-66; Ps. 62; John 3
Aug. 2	2 Kin. 21; 2 Chr. 33; John 4
Aug. 3	Nah. 1-3; John 5
Aug. 4	2 Kin. 22; 2 Chr. 34; John 6
Aug. 5	2 Kin. 23; 2 Chr. 35; John 7
Aug. 6	Hab. 1-3; John 8
Aug. 7	Zeph. 1-3; John 9
Aug. 8	Jer. 1-2; John 10
Aug. 9	Jer. 3-4; John 11
Aug. 10	Jer. 5-6; John 12
Aug. 11	Jer. 7-9; John 13
Aug. 12	Jer. 10-12; John 14
Aug. 13	Jer. 13-15; John 15
Aug. 14	Jer. 16-17; Ps. 96; John 16
Aug. 15	Jer. 18-20; Ps. 93; John 17
Aug. 16	2 Kin. 24; Jer. 22; Ps. 112; John 18
Aug. 17	Jer. 23,25; John 19
Aug. 18	Jer. 26,35-36; John 20
Aug. 19	Jer. 45-47; Ps. 105; John 21
Aug. 20	Jer. 48-49; Ps. 67; 1 John 1
Aug. 21	Jer. 21,24,27; Ps. 118; 1 John 2
Aug. 22	Jer. 28-30; 1 John 3
Aug. 23	Jer. 31-32; 1 John 4
Aug. 24	Jer. 33-34; Ps. 74; 1 John 5
Aug. 25	Jer. 37-39; Ps. 79; 2 John
Aug. 26	Jer. 50-51; 3 John
Aug. 27	Jer. 52; Rev. 1; Ps. 143-144
Aug. 28	Ezek. 1-3; Rev. 2
Aug. 29	Ezek. 4-7; Rev. 3
Aug. 30	Ezek. 8-11; Rev. 4
Aug. 31	Ezek. 12-14; Rev. 5

Surf through
Summer with

The Holy Scriptures

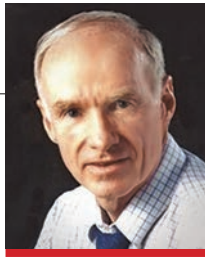
Ready for a
Spirit-filled summer?

CHARISMA MAGAZINE ONLINE is surging forth with exclusive content that will dive deep into the vast sea of Scriptures. Get ready to explore everything from the depths of God’s Divine Love to the heights of God’s mountain-moving promises.



Don't just go with
the flow. Be part
of the change!

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TODAY



Free From the Press (April 1988)

The morning after a recent ministry scandal broke, I woke to the inner words “Beware of the tumblebugs.” It’s been a long time since I thought of tumblebugs. Lying in bed, I remembered kneeling as a child in our barnyard watching those little beetles at work. A tumblebug finds a pile of manure. With its front claws it pulls out a small amount, mixes it liberally with beetle spit, works it into a ball, then rolls it across the barnyard, pushing it with its nose.

As I look out over the kingdom, I realize God has given His church a huge dose of laxative. The secular media—the tumblebugs of society—smelling the results of God’s purgative, have rushed out from under their rocks. They’re not looking for the hand of God, much less the face of God. They’re not even interested in the type of purgative administered by the Holy Spirit to cleanse and purify His church. All they are nosing for is expelled waste. Once found—and God’s people never have been good at digging latrines—they roll it into a neat little TV spot and serve it up on the six o’clock news.

No one is a stronger proponent of freedom of the press than I. But it is truth which makes us free, not twisted, slanted, one-sided, incomplete facts. Such stories put us in more bondage than any journalistic censorship imposed by government regulations. A free press in the hands of irresponsible journalists is as dangerous as a vindictive man who shouts “Fire!” in a public theater. The journalists whose primary intent is to catch people in wrongdoing (or who edit film to create the impression of wrongdoing) are instruments of the devil.

Why does the press continually ask questions of prominent pastors that try to set them up to look like buffoons? Remember what the news reporting media did to former Secretary of Interior James Watt? Once the newspapers discovered he believed in the return of Christ, they warped his words to sound like Watt felt it was OK to destroy our natural resources since the world would be burned up when Jesus returned anyway—the exact opposite of what the secretary believed.

Following my brief foray into the world of the secular media during the PTL scandal, I quickly realized that no good can

come from Christians being interviewed on programs such as *Larry King Live*, *Nightline* or *60 Minutes*. Yet, following the most recent scandal, I saw publicity-hunting preachers by the score drooling to have their pious faces making nonsensical statements on the tube.

Please, please, I said to my friends, don’t go on TV, your words will be twisted. Let God do His work without your opinions or interference. But it’s hard to say no when ABC is on the phone saying the world is waiting for your wisdom.

When will we realize the world does not understand our terminology, our values, our commitment to walk to the sound of a different drummer? Yet we go on TV and toss out terms even we don’t fully understand—terms such as repentance, forgiveness and discipline.

“It’s time for Christians to turn off their TV sets and open their Bibles.”

Please, my sisters and brothers, shut up and stay home. Talk theology among yourselves. If you go on TV, talk about God’s love. Only the truth makes us free. Until the press begins reporting on what God is doing, rather than what man is doing (or man’s angry or confused reactions to what God is doing), it is

never qualified to claim to be free.

Why didn’t the free press headline the evangelist’s outstanding overseas crusades—the largest in history—as well as his sin? And would you expect to read in the papers any account of spiritual changes the evangelists might have undergone since their fall?

Like tumblebugs, the media are only interested in something that stinks.

A survey of the Anti-Defamation League found that 51% of American Jews thought Israel was responding “too harshly” to the Palestinian rioters. Where did the ADL, Israel’s greatest American friend, get its information? From the slanted news served up by the TV tumblebugs.

Jesus did not tell Peter, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-jona, for Dan Rather has revealed this unto you.” He said His church was to be built on knowledge from God. Since media revelation is earthly, I’ll have to look elsewhere to find what God is saying.

It’s time for Christians to turn off their TV sets and open their Bibles. Where else can you find a true word on Israel or politics, or how to treat a fallen preacher?

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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