

Prophecy is like a lamp shining in a dark place. 2 Peter 1:19

Lamplighter

LAMB & LION MINISTRIES
a Non-Denominational Christian Media Ministry

JUL/AUG 2024

How Long
Will You
Waver?

Lamplighter

July/August 2024

A bi-monthly publication produced
by Lamb & Lion Ministries

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Observations from the Editor

When I travel to Israel, my favorite place outside Jerusalem is Mount Carmel. Technically a range of mountains, the traditional location for Elijah's contest with the prophets of Baal is located at the end of a winding road through gnarled oak trees.



Statue of Elijah, Mount Carmel Israel

The Carmelite Monastery of Muhra (meaning "scorching") stands to proclaim the time when God sent fire from heaven to consume the water-drenched sacrifice Elijah had prepared. When my brother and I visited as pilgrims in 2006, Chris found an outcropping of stones that had a striking appearance of being completely charred. The imposing statue within the now-peaceful courtyard also bears testimony to the horrible toll exacted on those who had led the Children of Israel into the darkness of idol worship.

The site is also famous for its breathtaking overview of the Valley of Jezreel—the biblically famous Valley of Armageddon. From the roof of the monastery, visitors can cast their gaze across the broad plain that will someday contain the collective armies of the Antichrist and nations of the world.

Right below the overlook is a northern Israel Air Force base where F-16 aircraft are based. Pil-

grims to Mount Carmel often hear the sound of freedom (jet noise) echoing across the valley.

Past. Present. Future. Mount Carmel has, does, or will see so much prophetic history fulfilled.

When Elijah stood before the gathered sons of Israel, he asked them a timeless question: "How long will you waver between two opinions?" (1 Kings 1:18, CSB).

Their answer was as shocking as it was indicting. Yet it foreshadowed the sad trajectory our own nation has been on for too many years. We, too, have drifted catastrophically into idol worship and immorality. We, too, are faced with a dramatic contest—not between a single prophet of God and the false prophets of a named imposter, but between the true and living God and the empty cisterns that now compete for America's loyalty.

We will consider America's looming decision in our next edition. For now, Elijah's question echoes down through the centuries to every one of us still today: "How long will you waver between two opinions?"



Tim Moore

Executive Editor
Director | Sr. Evangelist
Lamb & Lion Ministries



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CHOOSE

This Day

Tim Moore

“Has a nation changed gods though they were not gods? But My people have changed their glory for that which does not profit. Be appalled, O heavens, at this; and be horribly afraid, be very devastated,” declares Yahweh. “For My people have done two evils: they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, to hew for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water.” (Jeremiah 2:11-13)

The Children of Israel were led into the Promised Land by Joshua, son of Nun. Along with Caleb, he had urged the people to follow the Lord in seizing the Promised Land (Numbers 14:6-9). When he succeeded Moses as leader of the Hebrews, he had the great responsibility to lead them into battle against a series of fortified cities and superior foes. Joshua’s vision was clear and his faithfulness was unwavering.

All the men of age who had rejected the faithful testimony of Joshua and Caleb and forsaken the LORD with their grumbling perished in the wilderness. Only Caleb and Joshua had the privilege of entering the Promised Land (Numbers 14:20-32).



A Generation of Mighty Men

Joshua ascended to leadership at a crucial moment in Israel's history. Moses had dishonored the Lord at the waters of Meribah (contention) and was not allowed to enter the Land. During their 40 years of wandering, the people had eaten manna and their clothes had not worn out, but they were not trained in military tactics. And yet, they were about to enter Canaan and come against foes the faithless spies had accurately described: men of great size that made the men of Israel seem like grasshoppers in comparison (Numbers 13:32-33).

That is why Moses and the Lord repeatedly urged Joshua to be "strong and courageous" (Deuteronomy 31:23, Joshua 1: 6, 7, 9, and 18). It seems so obvious in hindsight that Joshua's assignment would be successful. But from his perspective, the challenges would have been daunting. It should remind us that God regularly requires us to exercise tough faith—walking where He is leading and trusting Him when all seems hopeless. Consider the proof God offered Moses to validate his impossible task: "this shall be the sign for you that it is I who have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God at this mountain" (Exodus 3:12). Do what I have commanded and you will know that it is I who have commanded.

Thankfully, Joshua faithfully led the people into Canaan. With the Captain of the host of the LORD going before them, Joshua and his great generals eliminated superior foes and took possession of the

But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD"

Joshua 24:15, ESV

Promised Land. Tragically, Joshua records that tares were allowed to remain among the Hebrew wheat—Canaanites whose idolatry and wickedness would be a thorn in Israel's side throughout their long history (and down through the ages even to today). But Joshua also wrote, "So the LORD gave Israel all the land which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they possessed it and live in it... Not one of the good promises which the LORD had made to the house of Israel failed; all came to pass" (Joshua 21:43-45).

In his last recorded address to the people of Israel, Joshua posed a rhetorical question: "If it is evil in your eyes to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve: whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell." His own answer of determined resolve has inspired the faithful for over 3,000 years. "But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD" (Joshua 24:15, ESV).

Inspired by Joshua's determined resolve, the people affirmed three times, "We also will serve the Lord, for He is our God. We will serve the Lord. We will serve the LORD our God and we will obey His voice" (Joshua 24:18, 21, and 24, NASB).

Bold words.

There Arose Another Generation

According to tradition, Samuel recorded the book of Judges. Here is how he describes the descent into idolatry that marked the period of the judges: "there arose another generation after (the generation who entered the Promised Land) who did not know the LORD, nor yet the work which He had done for Israel. Then the sons of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD and served the Baals" (Judges 2:10-11).

How does a society drift away from a repeated declaration that it will serve the LORD and obey His voice?

- By failing to pass that heartfelt commitment on to another generation.
- By slowly morphing into the ideology of those whose very presence represent a subtle and beguiling temptation to wander away from God.
- By prioritizing unfettered license over ordered liberty.
- By failing to live out our professed testimony and neglecting to teach our children well.

In other words, one decision at a time, one day at a time, one generation at a time.

“In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes”

Judges 21:25

In remarkably short order, the Children of Israel had traded their birthright of blessing as God’s chosen people for a bowl of pagan porridge. They had devolved into a nation of pagan idol-worshippers given over to individual autonomy. The entire period of the judges is summed up in the closing verse of the book: “In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes” (Judges 21:25).

We Want to Be Like Everyone Else

Following the spiritual dissipation recorded in Joshua, Judges, and Ruth, Samuel records that the Israelites clamored for a king so that they could “be like everyone else.” God gave them a king, but just two generations after David, the kingdom was divided. Succeeding kings were more often bad than good. By Elijah’s day, evil King Ahab and his infamous Queen Jezebel were ruling over the northern kingdom.

We tend to dismiss the northern kingdom of Israel because it was eliminated by the Chaldeans and because Jesus’ lineage flowed through the kingdom of Judah. But the ten tribes that made up the

northern kingdom were also descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They are also promised an end-time role when evangelists from all twelve tribes proclaim the Gospel during the Tribulation.



By the time Ahab employed 450 prophets of Baal, the people of the northern kingdom had truly arrived: they were like everyone else. They worshipped the false gods of the pagans living around and among them. They sought prosperity and blessing in all the wrong places. They even sacrificed their children in a horrific ritual of fire to placate the bloodlust of their false gods. In short, they had exchanged the true God for false gods and their glory

for that which did not profit. They had hewn for themselves broken cisterns that held no water.

Choose—The LORD God or Baal

It is in this context that Elijah came to Mount Carmel. Seeing him approach, King Ahab cried out, “Is this you, you troubler of Israel?” (1 Kings 18:17). The drought Elijah had prophesied had indeed troubled Israel. In that agricultural society, drought quickly led to severe famine. Despite the fervent prayers lifted to Baal, no rain had fallen in the land for three years. No water for the broken cisterns.

With the people of Israel gathered on Mount Carmel, Elijah came near to them and said, “How long will you hesitate between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him” (1 Kings 18:20).

The contrast between the two choices offered could not be starker. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had delivered the forebears of the Israelites standing before Elijah from bondage in Egypt. He had pointedly passed over their firstborn sons while striking down



the firstborn of every Egyptian. And He had brought them into a land of milk and honey. Baal had not given them rain or bounty; instead he demanded that they sacrifice their own children. This was a choice that demands an obvious answer.

And yet, Scripture records that “the people did not answer him a word” (1 Kings 18:21). They stood silent.

Their silence foreshadowed the response of the false god, Baal. He never uttered a word, even as his prophets cried out all day long and cut themselves and carried on.

Then Elijah called the people back to himself, prepared a sacrifice to the true and living God, and lifted up a God-honoring prayer. Only when God had demonstrated His mighty power by raining down fire to consume the sacrifice did the people fall on their faces and say, “The LORD, He is God; the LORD, He is God” (1 Kings 18:39).

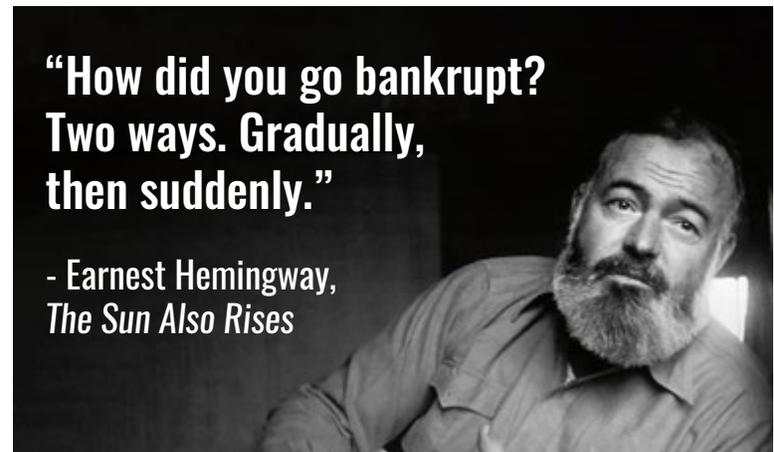
How Did We Get Here?

Scholars differ on the exact timing of Joshua’s conquest of the Promised Land. But within a few hundred years, the northern kingdom of Israel was spiritually calcified. How do you go from a generation that emphatically declares, “We will serve the LORD,” to a generation that is silent when asked who they will serve? One generation at a time.

The Children of Israel were commanded to teach the words of God to their children “when they sat in their house and when they walked by the way and when they lay down and raised up.” The core truth they were to teach is contained in Deuteronomy 6:4-5: “Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.” Heeding these words and obeying His commandments would

confer ongoing blessings. But Moses also warned that those blessings would turn into curses if the people abandoned God and turned their back on Him.

Christians in America look back and wonder, “How did we get here?!” How did we go from ordered liberty and unparalleled prosperity to the godless, sin-reveling culture we witness today? In hindsight, our downfall seems to have happened suddenly. But in fact it was subtle and slow; it happened one generation at a time.



A Sad Cycle

Anyone with eyes to see and ears to hear recognizes that America is being torn apart at the seams. The rise in godlessness and paganism is evident in the violence and lawlessness infecting every facet of society. It is plain to see in the hate-filled protests rocking American college campuses as supposedly educated elites celebrate terrorism while denouncing our own nation.



Certainly, there are testimonies of God’s grace impacting individual lives through the power of the Gospel, but America is on a trajectory toward destruction. God shed His grace on this land and blessed us with unprecedented prosperity. As we’ve strayed, He has raised up prophetic voices to call America to re-

pent and return to Him. But our culture has doubled down on its rebellion. Our own leaders now celebrate and give hearty approval to those who practice wickedness. (Romans 1:28-32).



Kamala Harris at Planned Parenthood

Some see this merely as a natural social cycle. According to the Strauss-Howe Generational Theory, human societies operate in a cyclical pattern. This is not to be confused with the circular perception of time espoused by Eastern religions. The repetition of vigor, followed by ease, followed by weakness, and followed by peril has been summarized as:

“Hard times create strong men. Strong men create good times. Good times create weak men. And weak men create hard times.”

- G. Michael Hopf

Christians who have a thorough understanding of the Word of God understand the tragic cycle of rebellion and sin that Israel and Judah fell into throughout the Old Testament. Resolved to honor God and obey His commandments, the Children of Israel soon wan-

dered back into idolatry and wickedness. When prophets warned them to repent, they only returned to God when their own waywardness caused sufficient pain. Having come to their senses, they began the pattern all over again, until the Lord’s patience was exhausted and He poured out judgment.

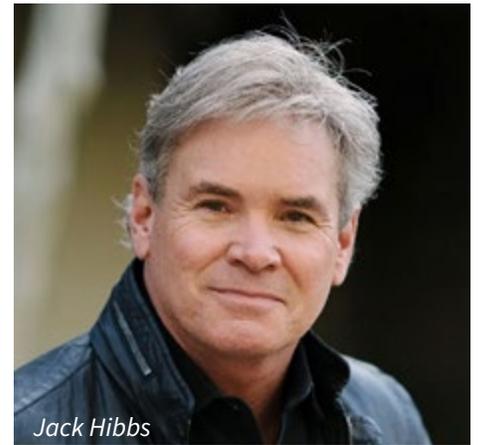
For many years, Lamb & Lion Ministries has warned that America is following the same pattern. But today, something seems very different. Whereas there was a deep reservoir of Christian character to our society in the past, our biblical foundations are being repudiated and rejected wholesale throughout the formerly Christian West. The speed and severity of that willful overthrow of our own heritage is shocking, even to those who have advocated for it. Clearly, other, malevolent ideologies are rushing in to fill the ensuing vacuum.



Richard Dawkins

Richard Dawkins was recently interviewed by the London Broadcasting Company. This famous and militant atheist is “slightly horrified” to see foreign religions supplanting the traditions even he was comfortable with as a “cultural Christian” (as he now describes himself). Dawkin’s belated horror aside, Europe’s rejection of Christianity is now essentially complete.

America is rushing to catch up. Pastor Jack Hibbs (of Calvary Chapel in Chino Hills, CA) caused



Jack Hibbs

a furor among some members of Congress when he dared to pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Christian symbols are being removed from the public square in an accelerating manner. In these last days, whole denominations are “holding to a form of godliness” while rejecting the power of God (2 Timothy 3:1-5). Paul’s warning to Timothy even speaks of those who are “always learning and never able to come to the full knowledge of the truth” (2 Timothy 3:7).



Is There Any Hope?

We are often asked: Is there any hope for America? Or, more pointedly, do we think America will experience another great revival?

Frankly, other than the provision for Israel, we do not believe Scripture indicates that a nation that has known the Lord and willfully abandoned Him will be revived. Like a plant, once the root is withered and dried up, the visible plant is fit only for the fire. But that does not mean



Cut-Flower Christianity separated from the roots of our faith, the blossom is quickly withering.

that we should cease praying for our nation, serving as salt and light wherever the Lord places us, and trusting that even in wrath God remembers mercy.

The tender mercies of God are evident all around us even now. His Holy Spirit is at work and the Light of Christ shines through the deepening gloom. There will continue to be outbreaks of revival in localized settings, just as we documented at Asbury University last year. Another example is Ninevah Christian Church where our friend Terry Cooper is the pastor. Following their second of two large pilgrimages to Israel, the Holy Spirit is working mightily there in Lawrenceburg, Kentucky. For the past year, they have averaged 10 baptisms each Sunday!

Ninevah is a great name for a church. It points back to the greatest revival ever recorded. Biblical Nineveh is a worthy example for our land as well. The king of Nineveh issued a proclamation for every living creature to express humility before the LORD. Although judgment had been declared, he reasoned, “Who knows, God may turn and relent and withdraw His burning anger so that we will not perish” (Jonah 3:9, NASB).

When it comes to nations, God’s Word tells us that all the Gentile nations will rebel against Him and align against a reestablished Israel. They will all be judged by Him for their rebellion and embrace of

wickedness. His Word also tells us that judgment awaits individuals as well. But the finality of that prophecy offers a brilliant ray of inherent hope.

What is Your Hope?

Yes, all of us will face the wrath of God—unless we have accepted the Good News of salvation. For those who embrace the Gospel, God’s wrath has already been poured out on Jesus Christ.

The message for those who have already trusted in Jesus and look forward to His return and reign is: be ready, keep the faith, do the work God has given you.

If you have allowed your faith in Christ to grow complacent and find yourself drifting away from the Rock of your salvation, “Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die” (Revelation 3:2). Return to your first love and allow Him to rekindle your passion to serve Him in such a time as this (Revelation 2:4 and 3:15-18).

The warning to any who do not yet know Jesus as Savior and Lord is: do not wait! The wrath of God abides on you (John 3:36). While there is still time—this day—flee from that wrath to come and into the loving arms of our Savior. Call upon Him now and be saved.

For all of us who are eagerly awaiting the upward call of

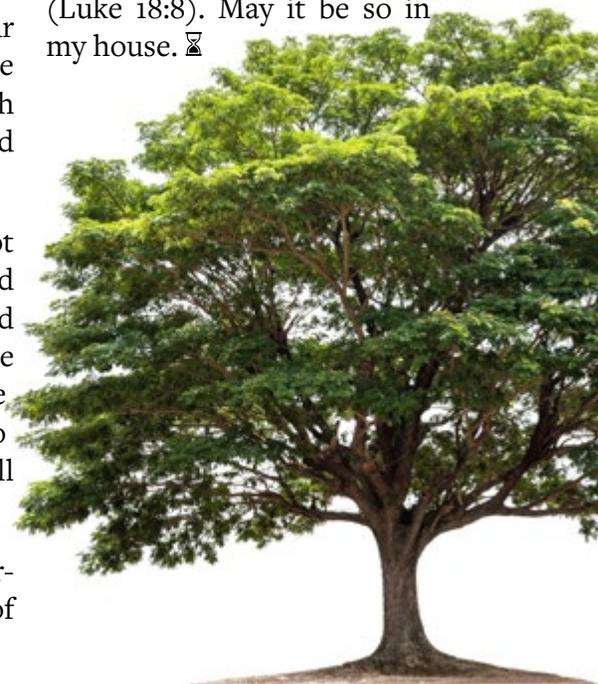
God in Christ Jesus, let’s keep pressing toward the goal—reaching forward to what lies ahead (Philippians 3:13-14).

Plant a Tree

How do you do that? The same way Joshua did: one day at a time. If you do that, choosing wisely from decision to decision and modeling Christ-centeredness in your life, you will give your children and grandchildren a solid foundation to build their faith on.

An old Jewish proverb says, “If you think the world is going to end tomorrow, plant a tree.” Wise words. And while literal trees are worth planting, the proverb takes on deeper meaning if you realize that it is not merely speaking of actual trees. While the Lord tarries, we have the privilege of pouring into tender young fruit-bearers—watering, pruning, fertilizing, and encouraging them.

If you choose to do that—today, tomorrow, the day after tomorrow, and each day the Lord gives you—when the Son of Man comes He will still find faith on the earth (Luke 18:8). May it be so in my house. ☞





TRIAL BY FIRE

Peter Marshall

The following excerpt—relevant then and urgently applicable now—is from a fiery sermon he preached on March 11, 1944, at the St. Charles Presbyterian Church in New Orleans, Louisiana.

“If the Lord be God, follow him, but if Baal, then follow him.” — 1 Kings 18:21

The setting of the text is one of the most dramatic in the Old Testament. The leaders of the nation, including the king, had come together to make a great decision. It was a national emergency, something had to be done. Elijah the prophet had called them to meet on Mount Carmel to settle no less a question than whom they should worship. It was a day of choice, a day of destiny.

William Penn said that “Men must be governed by God, or they will be ruled by tyrants.” Here then was an ancient Hebrew prophet facing the very same issue, and making his people face it with him.

A Blessed Heritage

They all knew the history of their nation, how their fathers had come out of the wilderness, out of bondage into a new land of pioneers. Behind them were great leaders — Moses and Aaron and Joshua — men who had been led by God. They had set up not a democracy, but a theocracy, a state governed by God.

The leaders of the young nation had taken God as their king and sovereign. They had ample reason to believe, having seen it worked out in their own history, that righteousness alone exalted a nation, and that the only nation blessed was the one whose God was the Lord. They had seen it work in the past; their national history was proof. They had been taught that

obedience to the laws of God was the only foundation for national greatness, liberty, and security. As long as the nation recognized God as supreme it could stand.

Moral Drift and Confusion

But something had been happening in the national life. The faith and vision of the founding fathers had faded. Moral decay had set in. There was confusion in the minds of the people. They were beginning to forget the principles that had made them a nation. They had begun to love things more than principle.



All around them paganism flourished... Materialism had a god, and his name was Baal. He offered to his devotees the things that human instincts crave. He was a god of the flesh. His priests encouraged the people to follow their natural inclinations. It was worship in indulgence, expressed in lust, and adored in selfishness. It had no inhibitions at all. It said, "Look after number one, be yourself, be natural." Self-expression and natural instincts were its program. A good time for everyone according to the flesh was its goal. No wonder it grew in popularity.

But still, Israel was confused. The inheritances of the past and the early teachings of their parents were not forgotten. Something of conscience was not yet drugged, so they were confused and uneasy. They took a little of Jehovah, and a little of Baal. They became by degrees more and more broad-minded. Was it not a free country? Who wanted to be old-fashioned? So, morality became a relative thing. The old absolutes were regarded as far too intolerant. The national moral standards were lowered. The worship of Baal and Jehovah got mixed somehow. It was hard to draw a line of distinction. Materialism and Idealism were often confused.

A Time for Decision

Now, Elijah saw the danger. He saw what would happen to the nation when its moral fiber was weakened. He knew the end of confusion and indecision. He believed with all his heart that national ruin and disaster were inevitable if the nation forsook Jehovah and departed from its charter and constitution. So, he summoned the leaders of the country together on this day of destiny

"If the Lord be God, follow him. But if Baal, then follow him."

It was a time now for men to take sides. There was no middle ground, it could not be neutral. They had to be on one side or the other. They had to decide whether they and their nation would be governed by God or ruled by tyrants. Elijah saw that Israel as a nation could not go with God and Baal, it had to be God or Baal.



The Test of Gods

You remember the dramatic test of trial by fire? On the slopes of Carmel with the copper sky above them and the parched, sunbaked plains of Jezreel at their feet, the people stood waiting. Elijah announced his proposed test. Let the matter be decided once and for all, let sacrifices be laid on the altar. Let him be God who would send down fire and consume the offerings.

Let Baal have the advantage of priority, let his priests have the first inning. Everything would be in their favor. The sun climbing to meridian would be at its height. There were 450 of them, and if they all prayed, that would be a lot of prayers. Let them call upon their god and let him answer if he could.

First Baal...

Then began the weird pagan performance with Elijah jiving at them with pointed sarcasm. While his words had blades in them, his taunts were razor-sharp. "Cry louder! Why don't you cry louder? He is a god you're crying to, isn't he? Well, he must be talking to somebody, he must be in the chase [hunting] or perhaps he's gone for a walk. Perhaps he's asleep. He may be taking a nap, cry louder, wake him up."

He taunted them all day long, until they were all at the point of exhaustion. Hoarse with their

shouting, wearied with their dancing, bleeding and wounded,.. they had cut themselves, hoping that the sight of their own blood spurting from tired arms and legs might cause Baal to relent and answer. They carried on until evening. But there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded.



...Then Jehovah

Then Elijah, confident and unhurried, called the people closer. Going over to an abandoned, broken-down Jehovah altar, Elijah had them set upon it a sacrifice and drenched it three times with water. He made the test more impressive by soaking the whole altar with water that ran into a trench dug all around it. And then his prayer to Jehovah, not ranting or foaming, or shouting — and its answer in fire that consumed the sacrifice, licked up the water in the trench until the people looking on cried as they fell on their faces, **“The Lord, He is God! The Lord, He is God!”**

The Need for Prophets

Now I suggest to you that America needs prophets today... who will set before the nation the essential choices...

A time like this demands strong minds, great hearts, true faith, and ready hands — men whom the lust of office does not kill, men whom

the spoils of office cannot buy, men who possess opinions and a will, men who have honor, men who will not lie, men who can stand before a demigod and damn his treacherous flatteries without winking, tall men, sun-crowned, who live above the fog in public duty and in private thinking, while the rabble with their thumb-worn creeds, their large professions, and their little deeds mingle in selfish strife.

The Danger Within

Lo, freedom weeps. Wrong rules the land. And waiting justice sleeps. We are engaged in total war and fighting for total victory. There are evil forces plotting...outside the United States and within the nation as well. For men have become lovers of themselves more than lovers of their country.

Not all traitors are enemy agents... Love of power and authority has enslaved the hearts of many Americans. Our moral standards have been lowered. And no nation makes progress in a downward direction...

The choices you make in moral and religious questions determine the way America will go. We badly need a prophet who will have the ear of America and who will say, “If the Lord be God, follow him, but if Baal, then follow him.”

The Choices Before Us

We must decide and decide quickly who is chief, whom we will serve. Millions of people in America live in moral fogs. The issues are not clear to them. They cannot face the light that makes them black or white. They want grays and neutral tints. They move in a sort of spiritual twilight.

Modified immorality based on cleverness guides millions of people. Modified dishonesty within the letter of the law is the practice of millions more. Surely the time has come, because the hour is late, when we must decide. And the choice before us is plain, Jehovah or Baal. Christ or chaos. Conviction or compromise. Discipline or disintegration...



I, for one, am tired of hearing about our rights and privileges as American citizens. The time has come, it now is, when we ought to hear about the duties and responsibilities of our citizenship. It's just as plain and clear as that.

Hypocrisy or Submission to God?

Now let us be honest about it. If we have thrown away our national heritage, if we no longer believe that this Nation was founded under God, if, contrary to what is stamped upon our coins, our trust is not in God but in something else, let us say so. Let us at least not be hypocrites.

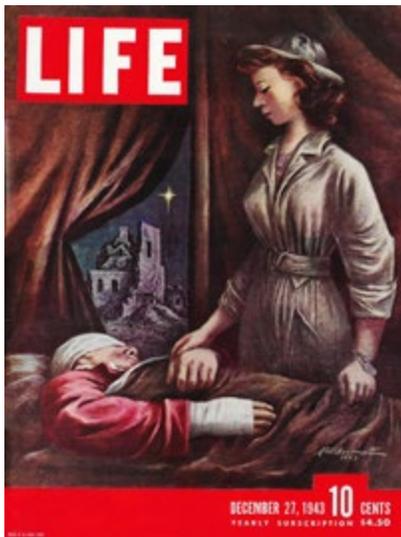
A nation led by God would lead the world. The world today has many open doors, open to the gospel of Jesus Christ, peoples ready and waiting for the spiritual leadership that could steer the storm-tossed ark of humanity away from the rocks of war and the shoals of selfishness and greed.

BLESSED CURSED

Our own country with all its sophistication is filled with people who are hungry for the Gospel. They are satiated with the materialistic philosophies that filled our stomachs and starved our souls, that supplied gadgets while they forgot God...

Choose Now

One challenge these critical days have flung down to the church people is that we must begin to be truly Christian in all our relationships or stop pretending.



Life magazine in its Christmas issue had a magnificent editorial from which I should like to quote this paragraph:

The lackadaisical days when it didn't matter much whether you were a Christian or not may be numbered. If the reassertion [of Christianity] grows strong, you may

have to declare yourself more definitely than you ever expected as to whether you believe in the Word of Christ or not. This choice, if it is really forced on the Christian world, may be the choice that leads finally to the long-awaited religious revival, a revival born in the hearts of its citizens of her time, who when forced to choose, will find no truth, no comfort and no inspiration elsewhere. (Life magazine, December 27, 1943, pg. 28)

We need a prophet who will have the ear of America and say to her now, "How long will you halt and stand between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him, but if Baal be God, follow him, and go to hell!"

Prayer: Oh God, bless America! May our prayer not be an empty whine of selfish pride and arrogant stupidity, but may it rather be a humble contrite plea to the God of all nations to make this land that we love so well worth defending, worth fighting for, worth dying for. Oh God, help us to make America God's country.

And now may the love of God the Father, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the abiding fellowship of God the Holy Spirit rest upon us all now and abide with us forevermore. Amen. 🕊



Dr. Peter Marshall was born in Scotland in 1902. After completing studies in electrical engineering and working in the coal-mining industry, he immigrated to the United States in 1927. Upon graduating from Columbia Theological Seminary in Georgia, he began serving as a Presbyterian pastor.

Peter Marshall served as senior pastor of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C., from 1937 to 1949. Beginning in 1947, he also served as the Chaplain of the United States Senate. Peter Marshall suffered a massive heart attack and died at age 47 in 1949.

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The full audio of Dr. Peter Marshall's sermon visit:

<https://www.sermonaudio.com/solo/sermonindex/sermons/92808610120/>



★ GOD'S ★

SPECIAL FORCES

An Interview with General Jerry Boykin



Lt. General Jerry Boykin (US Army, Ret.) is the Executive Vice President for the Family Research Council. For 36 years, he served in the US Army, eventually commanding the “Delta Force” and later serving as the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence.

General Boykin’s military experience is instructive to Christians today. The special forces make up a very small portion of the overall military. Exceedingly well-trained, they are often unseen warriors but impact the battle far more than their numbers would suggest. Likewise, Christians make up a small portion of the world’s population. But trained in the Word, equipped with the full armor of God, emboldened by the Holy Spirit, and led by the Commander of the host of heaven, they can have outsize influence. Even the gates of Hell cannot withstand the onslaught of committed Christian soldiers (Matthew 16:18).

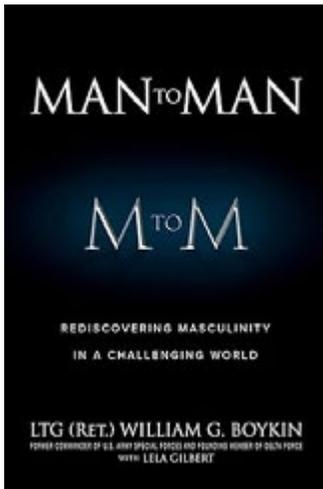
Q - General Boykin, you’ve served this country through periods of great upheaval and trial. What do you make of the new level of darkness and division right here at home?

A - America is in a downward spiral as a nation. Our society is suffering. Look around at the things that are going on in America today. Riots and protests around the nation against the Jews in Israel who are fighting for their lives. And lawlessness.

Our education system is failing terribly. Most of our schools do not teach American history anymore. There

is an old Russian proverb that says, “If you dwell in the past, you lose an eye; if you forget the past, you lose both eyes.” I’m afraid we have forgotten the past. We don’t know who we are as a nation, and we certainly don’t know what sacrifices it took to create this Nation and the sacrifices it takes to sustain it.

This is the greatest nation in world history. Just as Moses and Joshua recounted Israel’s history just before each of them died, America must do the same. In my book *Man to Man*, I emphasize the importance of fathers knowing US history and passing it on to the next generation just as Moses and Joshua did.



In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit.

Judges 17:6

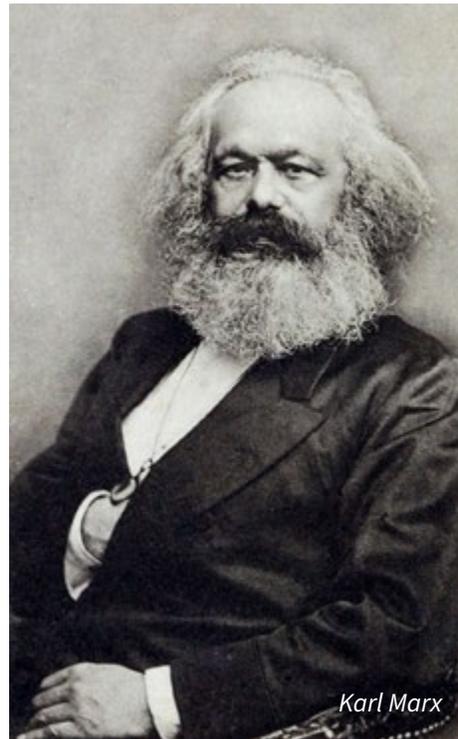
Q - Given all the places you have traveled, is there any other place on earth that has been as consistent in upholding ordered liberty?

A - No other nation in history has established and maintained a constitutional Republic for any length of time. America has had tremendous impact on the world because our nation was founded on two unique principles: consent of the governed and God-given individual freedoms.

America is a nation of laws. The alternative to ordered liberty is anarchy. Although we have experienced rioting and other forms of civil unrest, the nation has never been in a state of anarchy. Those who do support anarchy are a mi-



nority, yet still very influential. They are deeply committed Marxists who have little interest in individual freedoms or free and fair elections.



Judges 17:6 shows us what happens when there is no ordered liberty: “In those days Israel had no king, everyone did as he saw fit.” It results in total chaos and anarchy.

Our founders established a Constitutional Republic based on “ordered liberty.” There is no place in our society for unfettered liberty.

Q - You served the United States in uniform for 36 years and continue to advocate for ideals that were once widely understood and celebrated. With dangers on multiple fronts today, what do

you see as the greatest threat to America today?

A - We are our own worst enemy in certain ways. Americans tend to take our freedoms for granted. Several generations of young people have been indoctrinated to believe that America is evil, with selfish intentions for the rest of the world.

Public school systems as well as the universities and colleges across the nation are doing just that, indoctrinating our youth. They are turning America’s youth against the nation the older generations have taken pride in and sacrificed for. Without young people motivated to serve, a dangerous situation ensues. America’s adversaries no longer respect us. China, Russia, Iran and Iraq, and an array of other rogue nations perceive us as a tempting target for destruction.

We also need to recognize that there is an all-out attack on Christian faith across the nation. Many of the leaders of this Nation have lost their way and want to eliminate Christianity in America.

Christian parents need to stress the importance of being faithful to our Creator and ready to stand up for our faith.

Q - Christians like to think we were once in the majority. What is the prognosis for Christianity (and Christians) in America if we remain on our current trajectory?

Do not surrender but be STRONG AND COURAGEOUS.

A - In every society there are those who claim to be believers in a certain religion. However, just espousing faith does not necessarily mean that a person is faithful to the God that they claim to serve.

Christians are already being persecuted. There is also an eagerness among many young people to honor God. Look at the Asbury revival in Kentucky. It was started by students who stayed in the chapel after a regular chapel service to pray and to seek God. The result was that tens of thousands of people came from across the country to be part of this Christian revival in a small town in Kentucky.



There were similar events at Lee University, Western Kentucky University, and Ohio State University, just to mention a few. Some of these are still taking place as the Holy Spirit manifests. The question is whether sufficient numbers of American Christians will support these movements of the Holy Spirit and restore us as a nation that stands for righteousness and obedience to the Lord.

On the other hand, if we continue along the abysmal path that we are

on right now, we will be no different than China and other countries who don't allow Christianity to be practiced in the public square.



This is the time for Christians across the nation to stand up and be heard and to fight back against this all-out assault on our First Amendment religious liberties.

Q - Some people express optimism that the next election will "make America great again." Do you see any hope for our culture or society?

A - I do see some positive signs of the American people becoming frustrated with what is happening in the Nation today. Most Americans are fed up with the Marxist LGBTQ+ agenda and the agendas of radicals and extremist of all categories.

Young leaders are emerging with a conservative agenda and a message for all generations. Most Americans want security and liberty, and we want national leaders who recognize that they work for the citizens. So now is the time to stand against the people and agendas that are destroying our culture.

So, yes, this year's election could, without a doubt, be the most important in this Nation's history.

So where does this all begin?

First, it begins in the family. What kind of nation do parents want their children to inherit?

Second, American Christians need to focus on what's happening in the Church. The Church is under fire from the atheists, the agnostics, the Marxists, and those people who simply hate the Christian faith. This is the time to stand up and fight back. Do not surrender but be "strong and courageous."

Third, get involved with the education process. Elect people to the school boards who love America. Demand that our students are taught what America really is and the beacon of light it offers to the rest of the world.

Q - Jerry, what final word of wisdom would you share with Christians in America?

A - Every American Christian should be praying for revival, just as the Bible calls us to do in Second Chronicles 7:14. We need to humble ourselves and pray and seek His face and turn from our wicked ways. Only God can turn this Nation around and bring us to where we need to be. So now is the time for us to be on our faces every day seeking the Lord and praying that He will bring a mighty revival and an awakening to America. 🙏



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DON'T JUST STAND THERE, SAY SOMETHING

Dr. Al Mohler



At his first convocation as president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Dr. Al Mohler's message was titled, "Don't Just Do Something, Stand There." Ten years later, his convocation theme was, "Don't Just Stand There, Do Something."

Far from being double-minded, Dr. Mohler's messages were appropriate at those two moments he was speaking in the life of the seminary. On the 30th anniversary of his tenure in 2013, his poignant convocation message was, "Don't Just Stand There, Say Something."

The societal and cultural trends that were evident in 2013 have only gained momentum. Like a great tidal wave, they may have started as small swells easily overlooked or ignored, but now they are sweeping across our nation wreaking havoc and destruction.

With that in mind, here is an excerpt from Dr. Mohler's message. If anything, it is even more timely today than it was 11 years ago.

On my heart in 1993 was "Don't Just Do Something: Stand There." In 2003, I spoke from John 9: "Don't Just Stand There: Do Something." I want to address today "Don't Just Stand There: Say Something: The Sin of Silence in a Time of Trouble." We know what we believe, that's what we confess. We know what we must do, as the Lord Himself has commissioned us. But may we be ever faithful to speak what we are commanded to speak.

Ezekiel 3:16-17 records:

And at the end of seven days, the word of the LORD came to me: "Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a

word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from Me. If I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, in order to save his life, that wicked person shall die for his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. But if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, or from his wicked way, he shall die for his iniquity, but you will have delivered your soul. Again, if a righteous person turns from his righteousness and commits injustice, and I lay a stumbling block before him, he shall die. Because you have not warned

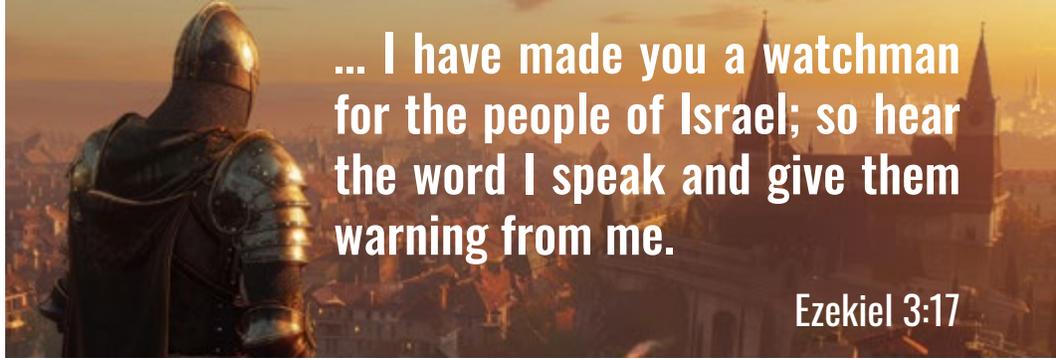
him, he shall die for his sin, and his righteous deeds that he has done shall not be remembered, but his blood I will require at your hand. But if you warn the righteous person not to sin, and he does not sin, he shall surely live, because he took warning, and you will have delivered your soul.

...the Spirit entered into me and set me on my feet, and He spoke with me and said to me, 'Go, shut yourself within your house. And you, O son of man, behold, cords will be placed upon you, and you shall be bound with them, so that you cannot go out among the people. And I will make your tongue cling to

the roof of your mouth, so that you shall be mute and unable to reprove them, for they are a rebellious house. But when I speak with you, I will open your mouth, and you shall say to them, "Thus says the LORD God." He who will hear, let him hear; and he who will refuse to hear, let him refuse, for they are a rebellious house.'"

Ezekiel's Clear Commission

Ezekiel is the most colorful of the great prophets of Israel—quite frankly, the nightmare of any Southern Baptist pastor search committee. We would not know what to do with him were he to arrive among us. And if he did arrive among us, he might just be, to our eyes, least likely to be invited to preach in our pulpits. But how the LORD used him—and the word pictures the Lord gave him—and the promise and need of a new covenant the Lord assured to him. And the fact that he himself became a living parable of all that God was speaking through him. The Lord shut this prophet up in his house and muted his voice until God sent him out to speak what the Lord would speak through his prophet.



... I have made you a watchman for the people of Israel; so hear the word I speak and give them warning from me.

Ezekiel 3:17

The Lord Himself made very clear as He called Ezekiel and gave him this commission, the stakes are high and the instruction is very clear. The portrait given to Ezekiel is a portrait we must hear and we must heed and we must own for our own time. It is the picture of a watchman on the wall. It's easily understood. As the Lord said to Ezekiel, "I am setting you for Israel as a watchman on the wall. If I warn the wicked and you warn them and they hear you, if they do not heed you and they continue to sin, they shall surely die, but you will be innocent of their blood. On the other hand, if I tell you to warn them, and I declare to you to speak a message and you fail to give that message, like the watchman on the wall that fails to sound when the enemy approaches, they shall die but their blood shall be on your head."

The Lord repeats the picture to him in a parallel structure. "If the righteous man who has done righteous deeds begins to sin and you warn him and he does not turn from his sin, he shall surely die. But if you do warn him, his blood will not be upon you, even as his righteous deeds are no longer remembered. But if he does not turn, he shall die. If he does turn, he shall live."

The Perils of Disobedience

We understand. Ezekiel's task was to be innocent of the blood of all men by never failing to speak when the LORD would have him to speak—by not remaining silent as that watchman on the wall, but, rather, crying out the danger. A significant shift of responsibility is very clear in this picture, the shift of responsibility from the preacher—from the prophet—to those who hear. And the responsibility is massive. As God speaks to Ezekiel, He says, "Ezekiel, if you say what I tell you to say, then you will not bear responsibility for the disobedience of those who refuse to heed the message. But if you fail to say



all that I say, exactly what I tell you to say, every time I tell you to speak, then blood will be on your head and your hands."



a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak, Ecclesiastes 3:7

When the Apostle Paul defended himself to the Ephesian elders, he reached all the way back to Ezekiel and he declared himself to be innocent of the blood of all men. Why? Because he had never failed at all times by all means to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all within his hearing. As Paul made very clear in Romans chapter 10, that requires words; the words require the delivery by a preacher; and the preacher requires having been called and having been sent. But it comes down to the responsibility to speak.

In Ecclesiastes 3:7, we read of a time to keep silent and a time to speak. What then are the conditions for silence? The Scripture makes very clear two conditions in which silence is required. The first is when in the presence of the one true and living God. As Habakkuk wrote, “The Lord is in His holy temple, let all the earth keep silence before Him” (Habakkuk 2:20). Or in Zephaniah 1:7, “Be silent before the LORD GOD! For the day of the LORD is near.” We are silent when God is present; and when God is speaking our mandate then is not to speak, but silently to listen.

But there is a second biblical condition in which silence is mandatory, and that is when we do not know what to say because the knowledge is too far from us. As God spoke to Job, “Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?” We must never speak words

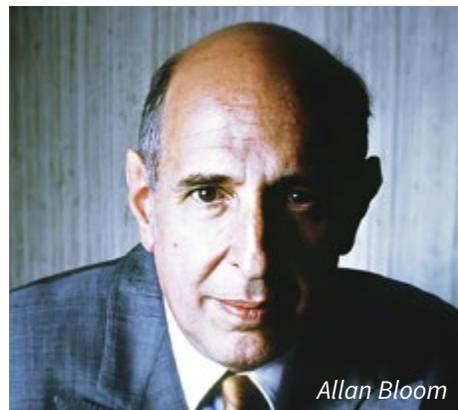
without knowledge. Our task is not theological speculation. We are not called to doctrinal creativity. We are not summoned to invent a message. We neither invent, nor market, nor test this message, nor modify it. We receive it; and as we receive it, so we preach.

Our Message is Clear

God has revealed what we are to say. His words are what we are to speak. The warning we are to deliver, the message we are to convey, we are called to be as Scripture describes us, “stewards of the mysteries of God.” We are called to speak that which has been revealed, to preach the Word in season and out of season, and, as was true of Ezekiel, and was foreseen by Paul, we are living in a time that may well be described as increasingly out of season. Thus, we speak of the sin of silence in a time of trouble.

In Such a Time As This

We are living in one of the great transitional moments in human history, in Christian experience.



We are witnessing a fundamental transformation of how the culture around us thinks, believes, feels, and even experiences reality. Three decades ago, [American philosopher] Allan Bloom described what he called “the closing of the American mind.” We are now experiencing the closing of ears and the hardening of hearts to the message we are called to preach and the truth we are commissioned to tell. As has always been the case, Gospel ministers get in trouble with the world for speaking when the world would prefer or even demand that we be silent. But this passage from Ezekiel reminds us that Gospel ministers get in trouble with God for remaining silent, when He has commanded us to speak.

As Ezekiel 3 makes very clear, we will be in trouble with someone. So let us choose this day those with whom we shall have trouble. The world says, “Remain silent,” and God says, “Speak.” We’ll be in trouble with the world for speaking, but we will be in eternal trouble, indeed, judgment of God, if we fail to speak. So choose ye this day which trouble you shall seek, for that trouble shall surely seek you.

Will we speak? The increasingly secular culture of the West, and specifically of the United States, is poised to present the serious Christian with serious challenges. And challenges bring temptations. One of the greatest of these temptations will be to remain silent.

This temptation can come in many forms: intimidation, outright demand, the requirement of payment of social capital, and the recognition that to speak can be very expensive and often divisive. And the temptation comes to us to avoid risk. Preachers and other Christian truth-tellers are tempted to avoid any risk by being caught with our mouths open; safer to keep our mouths shut, even when we know what we should speak.



Yet our message is eternal, and we recognize that the stakes—and the realities we face—are eternal. The decisions in terms of the response to God’s truth are always with eternal consequence. The hope we preach and the hope we pray and the hope we convey is not a temporary hope for this time only—for that the Apostle Paul said we should be most pitied—but for all Eternity.

Our Mission is Clear

To fail to say something or to be silent in the time of trouble is sin. And yet, the temptation to sin is ever so present amongst us, and increasingly so in this sense because it costs more to speak the truth. It will cost more every year to bear witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ—to the exclusivity of that Gospel—as a radical cause of outrage in this culture, to the moral teachings of God’s Word.

If the Gospel is really understood as the Gospel, it’s been trouble all along because it upsets kingdoms and undermines civilizations, calling us to that which is greater and more enduring. So we cannot but speak. We cannot but do. We cannot but stand.

Don’t just do something, stand there. Don’t just stand there, do something. But don’t just stand there and do something, say something.

There is, as Ecclesiastes reminds us, a time to keep silent and a time to speak. May we know the difference, and not sin. May others hear and live.

My prayer for all us is: “Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.” 🙏

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To quote that esteemed theologian, Clint Eastwood (in character as Josey Wales), “dyin’ ain’t much of a livin’.” And yet, for much of humanity, dying represents the dreaded conclusion to life.

The inevitability of death looms too large—and the stakes involved are too high—to leave our eternal destiny to chance.

The Bible is quite matter of fact about our natural end: “the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). But the same verse assures us that we can have eternal life in Jesus Christ.

Dr. David Reagan explores what awaits beyond this life—the mere score of years any of us can expect to linger in our natural bodies. Many die bereft of hope and facing eternity apart from God. Others can hardly wait to meet their Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ.

DR. DAVID R. REAGAN

A close-up photograph of a hand sowing seeds into dark, rich soil. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green, suggesting a garden or field. The title 'Sowers, Seeds, And Saints' is written in a white, elegant cursive font across the top of the image.

Sowers, Seeds, And Saints

Jeff Kinley

If the Lord were to describe you as soil, which kind of soil would you be? Even if you are “good soil which bears fruit,” are you yielding fruit to your full potential? Or, are you dry, depleted, or choked with thorns?

In a very real sense, the choice is yours. Speaking of His Father, Jesus said, “He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous” (Matthew 5:45). Without taking away from the life-giving Vine of Christ and the nourishment of His Holy Spirit, we must choose to abide in the true Vine and be yielded to our Vinedresser (John 15:1-10).

This preview excerpt from Jeff Kinley’s newest book, *The End of the World According to Jesus of Nazareth*, makes it clear that believing the prophetic promises of God—let alone bearing much fruit while we wait for His appearing—depends on us choosing wisely.

In Matthew 13:1-23, Jesus taught the parable of the sower and the soils. In Mark’s parallel account, the youngest disciple records that the “sower sows the word” (Mark 4:14). Some of the seed is quickly snatched away by Satan (Matthew 13:19). Other seed falls on rocky ground, and even though it is received with much enthusiasm and joy, this person “has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away” (verse 21).

The next group are those who dwell among “thorns” (verse 22). They, too, hear the word like the others, but the “worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful” (Mark 4:19).

The fourth and final category in Jesus’ parable are those who are described as “good soil.” This person “hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit and brings forth” (Matthew 13:23).

So according to Jesus, of those who hear the word of truth, only a fraction (25 percent) will prove to be genuinely saved. It is unknown whether this prophesies a specific percentage, or if Christ was communicating that only a small portion of those who hear the word of truth will respond positively and continue on in the faith.

Earlier in his ministry, Jesus declared, “Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it” (Matthew 7:13-14).

However, interestingly, the Lord follows up the parable of the sower and the soils with another, this one about wheat and tares. In it, He explains that among the wheat in the field are tares, or weeds (Matthew 13:24-30). These two will grow together and intermingle, all the way up until harvest time (verse 30). When Jesus unpacks this parable, He reveals that the “good seed” (wheat) are the “sons of the kingdom,” while the tares are “the sons of the evil one” (verse 38). We know from Matthew 25, at the judgment of the sheep and the goats, God’s angels will separate the tares from the wheat, casting the former into the “furnace of fire” (verses 39-42; 25:31-46). We will take a deep dive into this parable in chapter 18.

The bottom-line principle here is that, just like now, during those early days of the tribulation, it will sometimes be difficult to distinguish between real believers and

counterfeit Christians. In fact, even some of those false believers themselves apparently won't know that they are not authentic and that their faith isn't real (Matthew 7:21-23).

However, as prophesied in the parable of the sower and the soils, affliction and persecution will arise because of the word (Revelation 6:9), and these people will immediately fall away, denouncing any faith in Jesus Christ. Under intense global peer pressure, they will then eagerly betray and turn in believers whom they may have formerly called brother or sister.

The term "cancel culture" will take on a whole new meaning during the tribulation. Those who persecute believers won't be content to stop at banning or deleting their social media accounts or getting them fired from their jobs. Instead, they will seek to cancel believers' very existence on earth!

The word "deliver" in Matthew 24:9 is also used by Matthew to describe the betrayal of Jesus by Judas Iscariot (Matthew 26:15). We also see the word used in Matthew 4:12 to refer to John the Baptist being arrested and taken into custody.

So, in addition to scores of real conversions during the early days of the tribulation, there will also be false converts. And many of those who deny the faith will deliver believers over to the authorities for arrest, imprisonment, and execution.

Contempt For The Creator

From where will this intense persecution originate? Neither Matthew nor Revelation explicitly tells us,

but they do provide us with some fairly compelling clues.

First, Jesus prophesies that His future disciples will be "hated by all nations because of My name" (Matthew 24:9; cf. 10:21-22). However, this wouldn't be the last time Christ would warn them about this tribulation-type hatred. Just one day following His Olivet prophecy, Christ gathered His disciples into a large, furnished upper room in Jerusalem (Mark 14:12-15). There, He taught them about the rapture (John 14:1-3), the fact that He alone was the only way to God (verses 4-8), His deity (verses 9-11), the power of prayer (verses 12-14), obedience (verse 15), the coming of the Holy Spirit (verses 16-21), and love for Him (verses 22-24), among other topics.

Then they left the upper room and began the walk to the Garden of Gethsemane (verse 31). On the way, Jesus warned His men,

If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, "A slave is not greater than his master." If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know the One who sent me.

John 15:18-21

In short, they will want to kill Christians because they hate God.

Satan and the world have always hated Jesus and those who belong to Him (Genesis 3:15). So if we identify ourselves with Him and align our beliefs and values with those of His Word, we will find ourselves either quickly or eventually ridiculed, maligned, ostracized, marginalized, demonized, cancelled, mocked, persecuted, hated, and yes, potentially even murdered for our faith.

But do not worry if the world hates you and your beliefs. In a sense, it's not personal. Rather, the way unbelievers respond reveals the inner-heart hatred they have for the God whom you serve.

Be Wise with What You've Been Given

In J.R.R. Tolkien's fantasy classic *Lord of the Rings* series, there is a curious exchange between two principal characters—Gandalf, the protagonist and leader of the Fellowship of the Ring, and Frodo Baggins, a hobbit of the Shire.

"I wish it need not have happened in my time," said Frodo (speaking of the ring's discovery and the burden of him now possessing it).

"So do I," said Gandalf, "and so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us."

Wise words. ☞

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Published by Harvest House Publishers, Eugene, OR 97408

www.harvesthousepublishers.com



WARMING BY THE DEVIL'S FIRE

Bob Russell

Simon Peter was a brave man. To draw a lone sword and attack a host of soldiers arresting Jesus was a gutsy response. Even though it wasn't God's will, we admire Peter's courage and appreciate his love for Jesus.

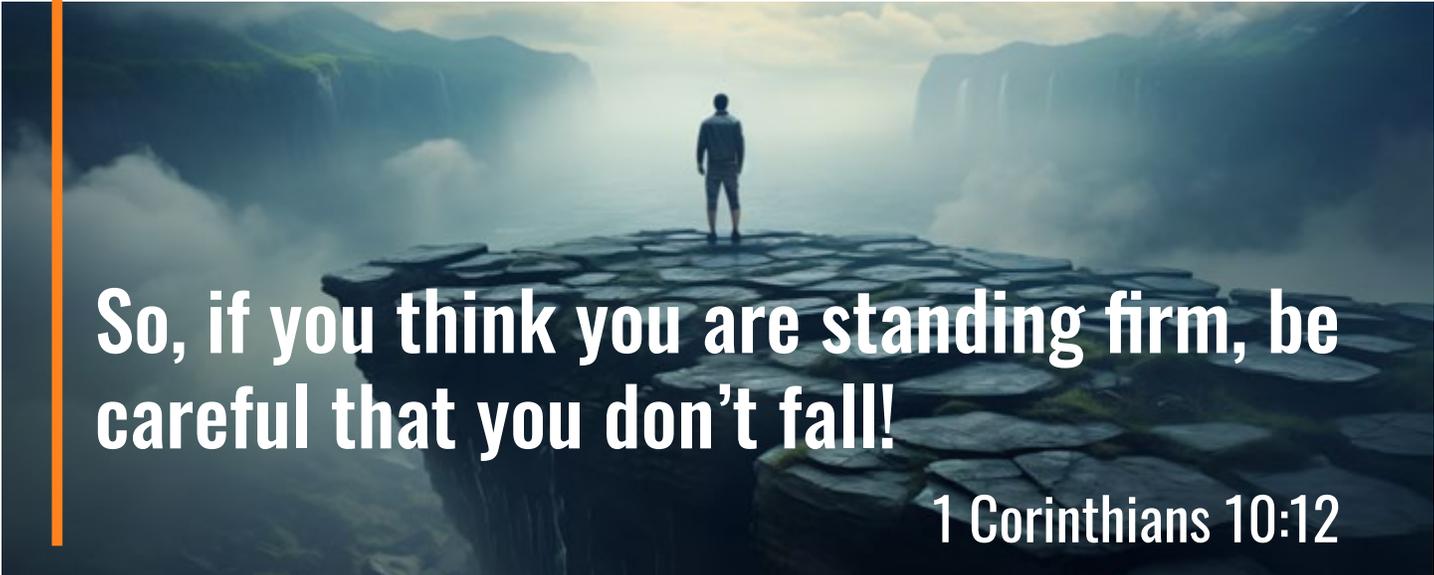
When all the disciples ran for fear, Peter quickly turned around and followed Jesus at a distance. Again, you have to respect Peter's boldness. He had boasted that he would stand with Jesus even if it meant dying for Him, and he seemed determined to follow through with that promise.

"But when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter sat down with them" (Luke 22:55). At this point, Peter made the major mistake of overestimating his ability to withstand peer pressure. He was surrounded by people hostile to Christ, and yet he mistakenly imagined he would not be influenced.

Spiritual Vulnerability

Christian people still do that a lot. We think we can warm at the devil's fire and not get burned:

- ▶ I can watch this movie without its foul language and nudity affecting me.
- ▶ I can go to that ultra-liberal college and stand firm; I know what I believe.
- ▶ I can attend that drinking and drug bash; I'm the designated driver.
- ▶ I can date that non-Christian guy and not backslide; I'll convert him.
- ▶ I can miss church once in a while; I'll pray on the golf course.
- ▶ I can visit the casino and bet a few quarters without getting addicted.
- ▶ I can be on the Internet without accountability and not get caught up in pornography again.
- ▶ I can attend that Bible study without getting sucked into the false teaching. I know the preacher warned against it, but I'm mature enough to discern false teaching when I hear it.



So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!

1 Corinthians 10:12

Most Christians seem to underestimate their ability to cope with suffering but overestimate their ability to cope with temptation. They see someone going through severe trials and say, "I could never endure that," but with the help of the Holy Spirit, they can. Yet, they overestimate their ability to cope with temptation, thinking, "I can withstand that," and they carelessly put themselves in a vulnerable position, to later be surprised at how weak they really are. The apostle Paul warned, "So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!" (1 Corinthians 10:12).



Peter deceived himself into thinking he was blending in with the devil's crowd, but he stuck out like a sore thumb. Three times within an hour, he was spotted and accused of being one of Jesus' followers, and each time he lied about it. He turned into a coward so quick-

ly because he overestimated his strength and disregarded the warning of Jesus: "Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat."



Avoiding, Resisting, Overcoming

I remember my fifth-grade Sunday School teacher telling about a king who was looking for a new chariot driver. There were three applicants who were taken up a winding mountain road to a dangerous precipice. As a test of their driving skills, they were each asked, "How close could you drive your chariot to the edge of this cliff?" The first replied, "I think I could bring the wheel of the chariot within six inches of the cliff."

The second insisted that he could bring his chariot within three inches of the cliff. The third wisely responded, "If the king were riding in

my chariot, I'd stay as far away from the edge of the cliff as I could." That's the guy who got the job.

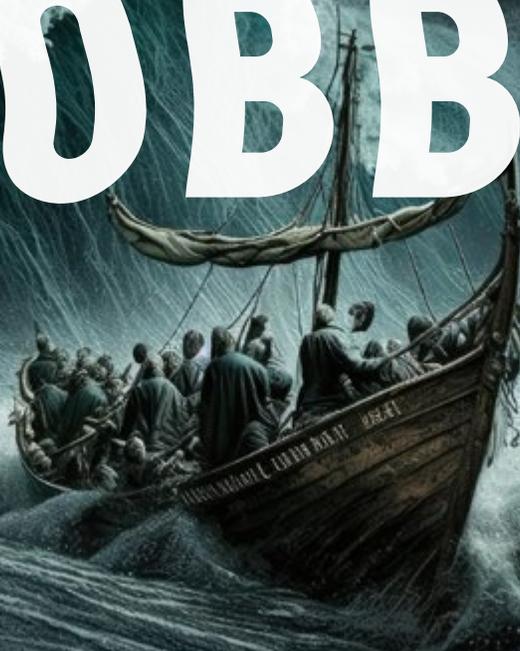


It's a wise Christian who, knowing the Holy Spirit resides within, flees the evil desires of youth and avoids warming at the devil's fire. ⚡



Bob Russell is the retired Senior Pastor of Southeast Christian Church in Louisville, KY. He is an acclaimed author, prolific speaker, and beloved mentor—and a dear friend to Lamb & Lion Ministries.

THIS IS NO TIME TO GO WOBBLY



Tim Moore Interview with Warren Cole Smith - *President, MinistryWatch*

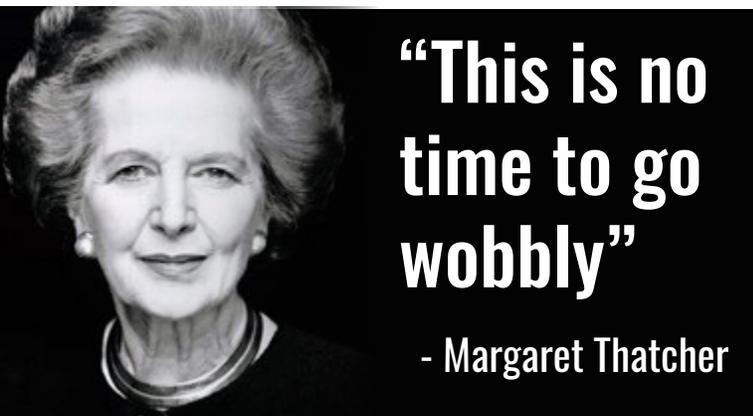
“This is no time to go wobbly.” - British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher

As our culture teeters over into a post-Christian secularism and abject paganism, individual Christians, churches, and whole denominations are wavering. Some are abandoning the faith once for all handed down to the saints. One tragic example is the United Methodist Church, which recently declared that it will no longer forbid homosexual behavior within its clergy. But neither will it require its clergy to limit heterosexual relations to marriage—eliminating any official opposition to fornication and adultery.

Other prominent ministers and ministries have failed grievously because they have not maintained careful guardrails of accountability and stewardship. Names such as Ravi Zacharias and Jim Bakker have brought discredit on their ministry, while institutions like Liberty University failed to hold their leadership accountable for behavior that, in hindsight, was clearly unbecoming.

I have insisted that the Lamb & Lion Ministries Board provide real and meaningful oversight—ensuring the credible testimony and faithful stewardship of our mission and the resources God provides. Thankfully, the average Christian has a resource to help gain discernment on the stewardship of many ministries. MinistryWatch exists to provide information on the commitment of Christian ministries to financial accountability and transparency. In an era when many are wavering, it shines a light of truth—providing both a disinfectant and a strong incentive to remain true.

Warren Cole Smith is the president of MinistryWatch. Formerly with PricewaterhouseCoopers and the Colson Center, he now serves as a watchman for Christians to gain discernment. I was able to sit down with him recently to explore the role he plays. This is an excerpt of our dialogue. Additional material is available on a recently released Prophetic Perspective at Christinprophecy.org



**“This is no
time to go
wobbly”**

- Margaret Thatcher

Q: What is the role of Ministry-Watch relative to the Church and parachurch organizations like Lamb & Lion Ministries?

A: What we do, we do from a Christian perspective, our goal in providing a watchdog to the church is not to tear down the church, but to build up the church, to help it become more effective and better than it is today.

Q: The Church in America exists in a society that is growing more secular and pagan by the day. How did that happen in our formerly Christian society?

A: Well, we didn't get here overnight, and it's not going to be a quick fix for us to get out of the situation that we're in.

One of the things that is clear to me is that when society is dark, when the culture is dark, it's darkness is not a thing. It is the lack of a thing. That thing is light. So, the way we get out of this mess is for the church to be a light in the darkness.



I think the way we got into this mess is that the church stopped being a light in the darkness in many parts of culture. As early as the 19th century, there was a separatist movement in this country, and [Christians] withdrew from many of the cultural and social institutions. Because the church withdrew, those institutions were taken over by secular people who don't believe what we believe.

... and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.

Mark 12:30

And now, with many of the most important civic institutions, we find ourselves on the outside looking in. But again, I think there is a way back. And I think that way back is for Christians to be salt and light. And, I'm not saying that we should avoid conflict, but Christians can assert in a way that doesn't necessarily have to bring conflict. If we do what Jesus told us to do, which is to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love our neighbors as ourselves—then the church comes back from the place of marginal credibility that it has today to a place of great credibility that it could have in the culture.

Q: Proverbs 29:18 says, “Where there is no vision, the people perish.” Other translations say that the people are unrestrained or running amok. There seems to be a whole lot of running amok out there.

A: Yes, that seems to describe America in 2024. The church has failed to clearly enunciate a godly vision for our broader society—a biblical vision, a godly vision. I think maybe a bigger part of the problem is that Christians don't act like they believe the vision they articulate.

What I mean by that is that they don't get involved locally. Many people can tell you who the President of the United States is, but they can't tell you who their state

legislator is. They can tell you who the Vice President is, but they can't tell you who the chairman of their local city council or county commission is.



Some of us have a national platform. But the vast majority of Christians have the most influence with the people who are closest to them. That is the way for Christians to take back the culture. Get involved locally, in your local community. That's part of what the church has neglected: just the everyday loving your neighbor as yourself component. That will bring credibility to the message we are articulating.

Q: Some Christians look to the next election and think, “If we can just get that top position, then the benefits will trickle down.” But really, Christ modeled that the church is to impact at the grassroots level, and that impact goes upward instead of the other way around. And yet, God called Ezekiel to stand as a watchman on a wall.

On that note, MinistryWatch serves as a watchman over other ministries, providing neces-

sary accountability and shining a light to encourage biblical transparency. To what end?

A: Our goal is to promote transparency and accountability so the Church and Christian ministries would be stronger and have more credibility. The Bible says we are children of the light. That means we should walk in the light. We are not to have fellowship with evil deeds of darkness, but instead expose them.

Our goal is not to tear ministries down, but to help them improve so they will even be more effective in the work God has given them to do. And let me just say that the watchman on the wall or the soldier or the warrior doesn't fight because he hates what's in front of him. Rather, because he loves what is next to him and behind him.

So, while we should have the backbone of a warrior, we should also understand that love should be our primary motivation, not fear. There seems to be a lot of fear percolating, but we are not people who should live in fear.

Q: Warren, your ministry provides a tremendous resource to Christians who want to know which ministries are worthy of their support. Inherent in your role, you help ministries and ministers remain true to the Lord. But what word of counsel and wisdom would you offer to individual Christians who do not want to leave the Lord they love or ever to discredit Him or the Gospel in the eyes of a very eager-to-mock world?

A: My answer to that question comes from Joel Belz, who was the founder of WORLD magazine and

a mentor to me. When asked how people could pray for his Christian organization, Joel would always say, "Pray that we will remain faithful."



Along that same line of thought, people used to ask Chuck Colson how to best impact the world for Christ. Chuck would always say, "Stay at your post and do your duty." That's it. Faithfulness is your responsibility. Results are God's responsibility. And remember, when God talks about fruitfulness, He talks about things like love, joy, peace, patience, and kindness. Those are the fruit of the spirit that God expects."



Q: I really appreciate the role MinistryWatch plays. I'm also grateful for the recognition you've given Lamb & Lion Ministries: a high rating for transpar-

ency, for accountability, and even multiple "Shining Light" awards. We do purpose to be transparent, responsible stewards of our finances and of the message that God has blessed us to proclaim.

A: Let me just also say that we don't award anything. It's a rating you've earned, so congratulations on that.

Q: How can our readers learn more about MinistryWatch and seek insight on ministries they are familiar with or would consider contributing to?

A: It's pretty easy. Go to ministrywatch.com and access our daily journalism and our ministry database with over 1,000 well-known ministries.

Q: Warren, thanks for your commitment to Christian fidelity and faithfulness. I appreciate your dedication to helping Christians and Christian ministries stay true to our Savior and Lord instead of wavering and allowing their light to flicker and die.

A: Thank you. And thanks for your hard work! 🙏

Warren Smith is the President of MinistryWatch. He formerly served as a Vice President at the Colson Center for Christian Worldview. He hosts a weekly "Listening In" podcast.



MinistryWatch maintains a vast database of financial information on many Christian ministries. It offers discerning donors insight into the accountability and stewardship of the organizations they support. For more information or to register for the daily "Ministry News" feed, visit MinistryWatch.com

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SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Tim Moore

NATURE

Repeated waves of tornadoes devastated swaths of the Midwest throughout the spring months, while a supercell thunderstorm ravaged Houston in May—surprising areas of the country used to periodic storm activity with their unusual ferocity.



A major solar storm in May threatened sensitive electronics in orbit and on earth but caused the Aurora Borealis to expand dramatically, allowing people throughout the “Lower 48” to see God’s display of beauty and wonder in the “Northern Lights.”



SOCIETY

Unruly mobs of elite university professors, students, and professional provocateurs have wreaked havoc on many college campuses, screaming anti-America and anti-police slogans as they express support for Hamas.



Many European artists were outraged that Israeli singer Eden Golan was allowed to compete in the 2024 “Eurovision” singing contest (the 2023 winner even vowed not to give her the trophy if she won), but celebrated when Swiss “non-binary” singer Nemo Mettler won instead.



SPIRITUAL

An increasing number of non-denominational evangelical ministries are relabeling themselves as “churches” in an effort to avoid reporting their income and expenditures to the IRS, eliminating transparency for their potential supporters as well.



The United Methodist Church, rid of over 7600 conservative congregations that did not accept the rising heresy, voted in May to remove any restriction against its clergy engaging in same-sex or adulterous relationships. What was once prohibited as sin will soon be celebrated and encouraged.



The Signs of the Times are multiplying all around us. Do you recognize the message they proclaim? In time, some will look back and wish they'd paid more attention to the signs God has provided to warn us that Jesus is coming and judgment awaits. Like the character in Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*, they'll realize that the end came "two ways: gradually, then suddenly." If you have eyes to see and ears to hear, look up and be watchful for our Redemption. If you are asleep instead of watching at the wall, Wake Up! (Revelation 3:2).

WORLD POLITICS

Several nations of the European Union have signaled their intention to support Palestinian statehood, in spite of Palestinian insistence that it will settle for nothing less than the eradication of Israel and possession of the entire Promised Land.

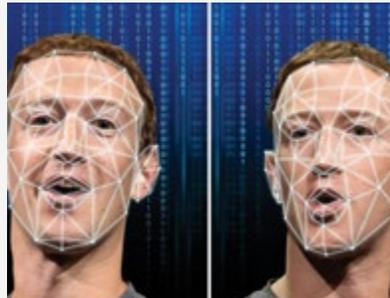


While continuing to stifle and penalize American energy production, the Biden Administration is actively supporting energy production by some of the world's worst autocratic regimes to supply America's needs—enriching various dictators in the process.



TECHNOLOGY

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is being used by con artists and despotic regimes to create "deep-fake" renditions of average people, all in an attempt to fool unsuspecting victims into parting with their personal information and savings.



US intelligence officials warn that China and other malicious states have the ability to cripple American infrastructure (utilities, transportation, communication, commerce) through targeted cyber strikes against still under-defended public and private systems.



ISRAEL

While trying to win its own war against terrorism, Israel is being denounced as a pariah state. It is considered likely that the International Court will issue a warrant for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for war crimes; no Hamas leader has been similarly accused.

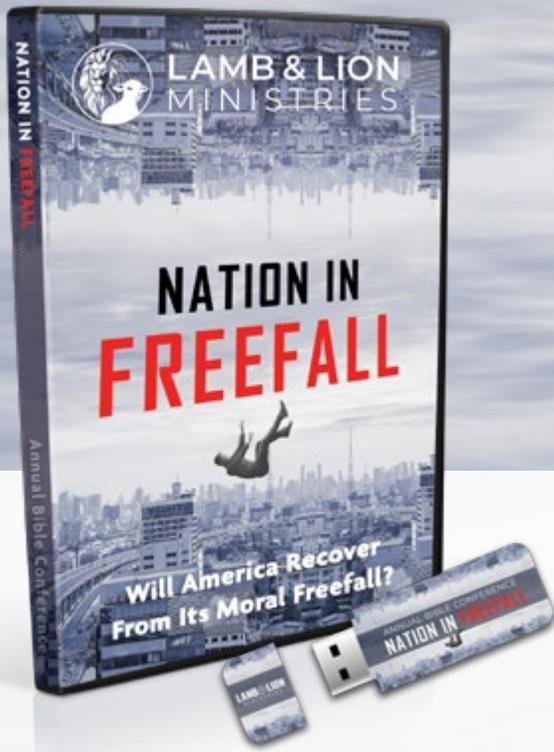


Frustrated by the ineptness of its military strike against Israel and Israel's unfettered ability to strike inside Iran, the Islamic Republic of Iran is expected to accelerate its effort to gain a nuclear strike capability—with little American opposition.



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