

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

Lamplighter

LAMB & LION MINISTRIES
a Non-Denominational Christian Media Ministry

MAY/JUN 2024

Diabolical

FALSE PROPHETS, CULTS AND DEMONIC DECEPTIONS

Lamplighter

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Observations from the Editor

Just prior to Jesus' final Passover, His disciples were shocked when He told them the mighty buildings of Jerusalem would be torn down altogether. Later that evening, in a private moment on the Mount of Olives, they pointedly asked Him, "Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" (Matthew 24:3).

Jesus did not rebuke or contradict the validity of their questions. Instead, He proceeded to expound on the signs of the times that we are witnessing multiplying before our eyes today.

But, before He addressed the signs, Jesus strongly cautioned them, "See to it that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many" (Matthew 24:4-5). False messiahs clamored for attention in Jesus' day, but today an exponential rise in cults, false prophets, and demonic deception is leading millions astray.

And yet, the oft-repeated warning of Scripture still rings true: do NOT be deceived.

My own admonition to each of my teenage children was "guard your heart." Rest assured, I helped them establish guardrails and stayed very engaged to ensure that they did not go astray. Sadly, millions of Christians—young and old people alike—are going astray, abandoning the faith "once for all handed down to the saints" and flirting with the doctrines of demons.

Scripture tells us this will happen as the End draws near, but it should break our hearts nevertheless. And,

like Ezekiel of old, we must contend earnestly for the faith—and for the souls of people flirting with damnation.

So many people are consumed with the social and political forces tearing our society apart. They are oblivious to the spiritual dimensions of the larger, underlying war. In this edition of the *Lamplighter*, we will shine the light of God's Truth on these dark forces.

Steel your heart and gird up your loins as we expose the nefarious efforts of our eternal foe. He knows better than anyone that his fate is sealed—and nearing final disposition.



Tim Moore
Executive Editor
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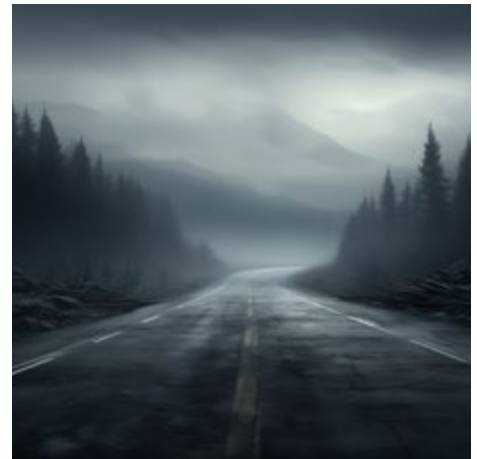
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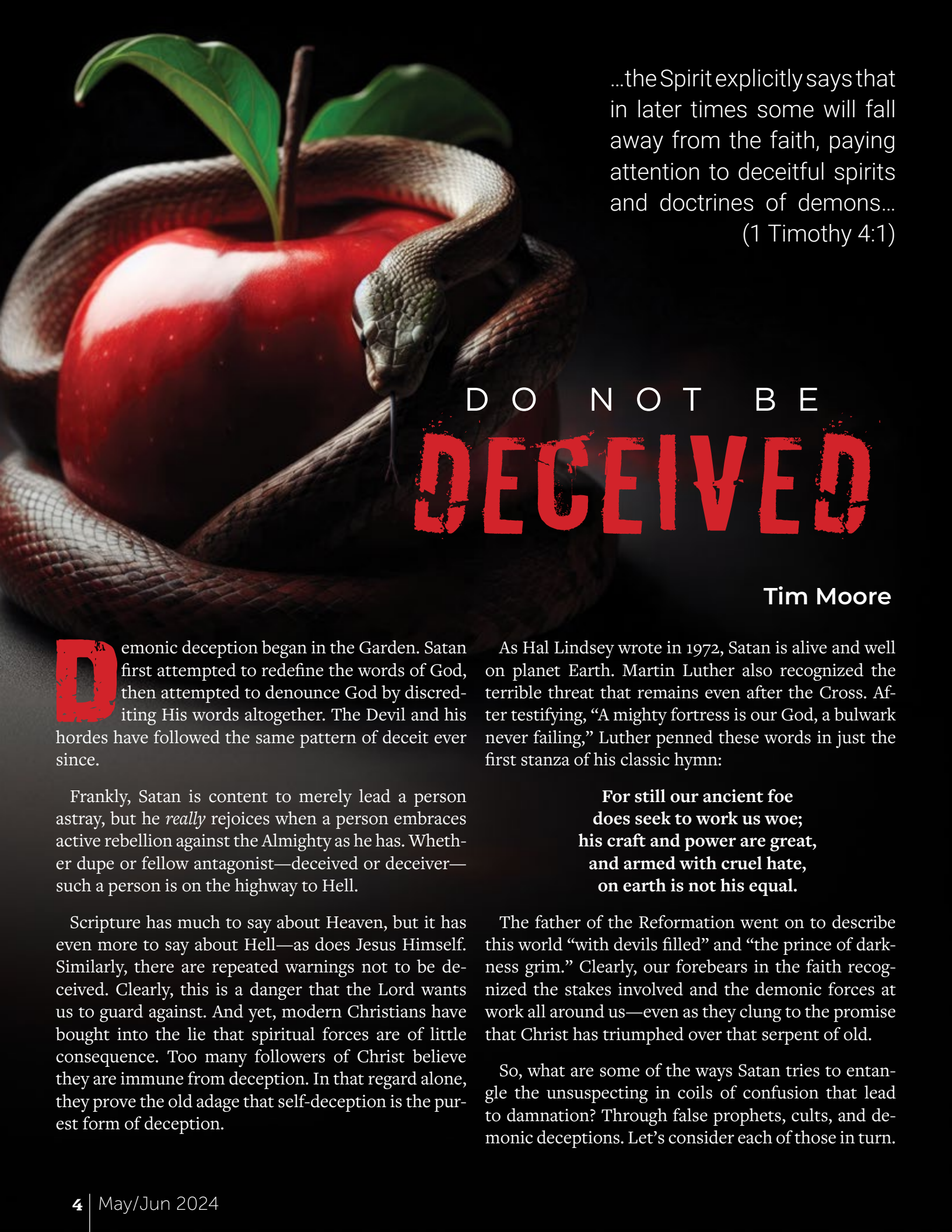
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...the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons...
(1 Timothy 4:1)

D O N O T B E
DECEIVED

Tim Moore

Demonic deception began in the Garden. Satan first attempted to redefine the words of God, then attempted to denounce God by discrediting His words altogether. The Devil and his hordes have followed the same pattern of deceit ever since.

Frankly, Satan is content to merely lead a person astray, but he *really* rejoices when a person embraces active rebellion against the Almighty as he has. Whether dupe or fellow antagonist—deceived or deceiver—such a person is on the highway to Hell.

Scripture has much to say about Heaven, but it has even more to say about Hell—as does Jesus Himself. Similarly, there are repeated warnings not to be deceived. Clearly, this is a danger that the Lord wants us to guard against. And yet, modern Christians have bought into the lie that spiritual forces are of little consequence. Too many followers of Christ believe they are immune from deception. In that regard alone, they prove the old adage that self-deception is the purest form of deception.

As Hal Lindsey wrote in 1972, Satan is alive and well on planet Earth. Martin Luther also recognized the terrible threat that remains even after the Cross. After testifying, “A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing,” Luther penned these words in just the first stanza of his classic hymn:

**For still our ancient foe
does seek to work us woe;
his craft and power are great,
and armed with cruel hate,
on earth is not his equal.**

The father of the Reformation went on to describe this world “with devils filled” and “the prince of darkness grim.” Clearly, our forebears in the faith recognized the stakes involved and the demonic forces at work all around us—even as they clung to the promise that Christ has triumphed over that serpent of old.

So, what are some of the ways Satan tries to entangle the unsuspecting in coils of confusion that lead to damnation? Through false prophets, cults, and demonic deceptions. Let’s consider each of those in turn.

False Prophets

The Bible is full of false prophets prophesying falsely. Pharoah had his own sorcerers and magicians who were able to turn what appeared to be staffs into serpents (Exodus 7:11-12). Ahab surrounded himself with “about four hundred men” who were glad to prophesy what the king wanted to hear, even though he recognized that they were not prophets of the Lord like Micaiah son of Imlah (2 Chronicles 18:7). But even when Ahab charged Micaiah to prophesy truthfully, he did not really want to hear the message of God’s anointed messenger.

Previously, Ahab had the same attitude toward the prophet Elijah—calling him a “troubler of Israel” for calling out the king’s wickedness (1 Kings 18:17-18). The quintessential false prophet in the Old Testament was Balaam, who was recruited by Balak to deliver a curse on the children of Israel. God intervened to prevent Balaam from speaking a curse, but he did advise Balak on how to lead the sons of Is-



rael astray. As Moses recorded, Balaam provided counsel that caused Israel to trespass against the LORD (Numbers 31:16). Jesus was even more direct in his letter to the church at Pergamum: “the teaching of Balaam...put a stumbling

block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit acts of immorality” (Revelation 2:14).

The Bible defines a false prophet as one whose prophecies are not from the Lord and whose counsel leads people away from the Truth of God. Through Ezekiel, God said, “Woe to the foolish prophets who are following their own spirit and have seen nothing... Because [they] have spoken falsehood and seen a lie, therefore behold, I am against [them]” (Ezekiel 13:2-8, NASB).

Moses established the ironclad test to validate a prophet: if their predictions do not come true, they are a false prophet. And, if they cause people to stumble or stray from the Lord God, they are a false prophet.

Just as there were false christs in Jesus’ day and age, false prophets and false christs have been present throughout the Church Age—and are still among us today. The New Testament calls out Bar-Jesus of Paphos (Acts 13:6-12), Demetrius of Ephesus (Acts 19:24-28), the Judaizers (2 Corinthians 3:14-16 and 11:13-15) and the Gnostics (Colossians 2:8, 3:5-7).

In recent years, men such as Sun Myung Moon, David Koresh, and Jim Jones have promoted themselves as messengers from God—if not reincarnated messiahs. Sadly, they misled scores of people by claiming their delusions came from a Christian foundation. Others, like Kim Jung Un, dispense with Christian underpinnings and simply proclaim themselves divine. Whether or not they inspire mass suicide—as Jim Jones did in Guyana on November 18, 1978—false prophets



Sun Myung Moon



David Koresh



Jim Jones



Kim Jung Un

offer a siren song to the spiritually gullible that leads inevitably to destruction.

In most instances, false prophets are often surrounded by people who want to have their ears tickled (2 Timothy 4:3) or who are ensnared—either willingly or gradually. False prophets offer a form of religiosity that mimics true faith. We call that false religion a cult.

Cults

Just as false prophets have been on the earth throughout recorded history, false religions have also proliferated. Sociologists say this is because man has an innate instinct to worship someone or something. Blaise Pascal, a French mathematician, physicist, and philosopher, said there is a “God-shaped vacuum” in the heart of man that can only be satisfied by Jesus Christ but will inexorably be filled with something.



In ancient times, false religion took the form of pagan practices and idol worship. In modern times, few people may swear loyalty to false gods like Molech, Ashtoreth, and Baal, but the world is filled with followers of Buddha, Muhammad, and the array of Hindu gods. With

hundreds of millions of adherents each, these are recognized as major world religions. In addition, countless millions adhere to forms of religion that can only be described as cults.

A cult is defined as a system of religious devotion that focuses on a specific person or object. But even secular definitions recognize that devotion is misplaced. Christians would certainly agree, and would assert that all religions that do not recognize and worship the true and living God is false—leading to inevitably misplaced admiration.

Wikipedia asserts, “A cult is a group typically led by a charismatic and self-appointed leader, who tightly controls its members, requiring unwavering devotion to a set of beliefs and practices which are considered outside the norms of society.” This is precisely the kind of manipulation false prophets aspire to attain.

While not an exhaustive list, in addition to the false religions mentioned already, the following are considered prominent cults on the world scene today:

- Mormonism
- Jehovah’s Witnesses
- Christian Scientists
- Raëlianism
- NXIVM
- Dianetics or Scientology
- Heaven’s Gate
- Aum Shinrikyo
- People’s Temple
- Branch Davidians
- Wiccans
- Satanists

These, and many more like them, have several things in common:

- They deny the sufficiency of the Gospel of Jesus Christ as revealed in the Word of God, offering another (false) gospel.
- They elevate a central figure or leader to god-like status entrusted to contradict the Word of God (whether he is called a prophet, pope, or something else).
- They lead people away from the real Messiah, Jesus Christ—the only Way, Truth, and Life.

Every false religion and cult does all three. Sadly, polls indicate that more and more people are being misled by these and others like them. But America’s fastest growing religious affiliation today is called “None”—as in no religion. Does that constitute a cultish attitude? By the definition offered above, it does. “Nones” who deny the Gospel of Jesus Christ do so because they do not recognize its sufficiency. They elevate their own perception or intellect to reject the Word of God. And, because they scorn Christ, the wrath of God abides on them (John 3:36).

Thankfully, many have come out of a false religion or cult to find forgiveness of sin and assurance of eternal life in Jesus Christ. Through the revelation of the Holy Spirit, some of you reading this article have been delivered from deception into Truth. You’ve come to realize that God has revealed Himself in the Person of His Son.

Regardless of the motivations of cultic leaders (and some of them

often appear to begin with altruistic intentions), every cult founder or leader has been deceived by the greatest of all deceivers, Satan, and then become complicit in his demonic deception.

Demonic Deceptions

Behind all the liars and the lies is the father of lies—Satan.



While describing his apostleship, Paul described those who oppose the Gospel:

...such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.

-2 Corinthians 11:13-15

False; deceitful; disguising. Five times in three short verses Paul describes the tactics that Satan, his demonic hordes, and his mortal allies and agents utilize. By appearing as agents of light—meaning reasonable, respectable, and righteous—they gain the trust of unsuspecting targets.

Demonic deceptions are like that.

Remember the definition of a cult: misplaced devotion to a set of beliefs and practices which are considered outside the norms of society. According to current polls and voting patterns, a growing majority of Americans now profess misplaced devotion to beliefs and practices that were outside the norms of society—

and antithetical to a Christian nation—just a generation or two ago.

In 1995, Pastor Bob Russell wrote a prayer of national repentance for the Kentucky Governor's Prayer Breakfast. The following year, Pastor Joe Wright set off a firestorm when he delivered that truth-telling prayer of confession before the Kansas legislature.

That prayer was written and delivered almost 30 years ago. Since then, "the last state has become worse for [us] than the first" (2 Peter 2:20). America has embraced same-sex marriage, gender confusion, transgenderism, and rampant perversion. In the upcoming Presidential election, the Democratic Party has loudly proclaimed that it plans to force a referendum on "reproductive health"—its Orwellian description of unfettered abortion. (Tellingly, Democrats now embrace the very word "abortion," since they see that as a winning strategy—all the way down to local races).

On January 30th of this year, Pastor Jack Hibbs delivered another prayer before Congress. He was immediately and vehemently denounced by a score of left-wing legislators because he dared pray in the Name of Jesus Christ and express the need for confession and repentance. Those who have embraced deception shriek in outrage along with the demonic hordes when the Lord's Name is lifted high.

Satan has been shockingly successful in transforming our formerly Christian nation into a secular, pagan society. In just recent weeks, the Pew Research Center documented that 8 in 10 Americans realize that religion is losing influence in the public sphere—but only 49% think that is a bad thing. Certainly, not every American was a Christian in years gone by. But there was a consensus on the definition of right and wrong. Truth was considered "self-evident" and rights were endowed by our Creator. If it were not an historical document, the Declaration of Independence would be rejected out of hand today.





Asked to provide a definition for the word ‘woman’ during her Supreme Court confirmation hearing, Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson appeared confused and responded,

“I’m not a biologist.”

Some of the greatest deceivers in our society do not present themselves as overtly “religious.” Instead, they indoctrinate people to elevate tolerance over truth, luring them into group-think instead of resolute faith and “Progressivism” over tested and proven policies. Slowly but consistently, they have succeeded in excluding God from the public square and turning truth on its head.

There is another insidious, subtle form of deception that is actually demonic in nature: self-deception. Until we receive our glorified bodies and minds, all of us are prone to some form of deception—thus the Bible’s repeated warnings. Making matters worse, it is often very hard to realize when our own hearts have embraced deception. This reality brings us full circle back to the Garden of Eden. Satan’s most tempting deception was not the fruit of the Tree of Life itself—it was the false promise that by rejecting God man could become like God.

The Greatest Deception

The Reformers recognized that the most dangerous type of deception is self-deception. Our mortal hearts are desperately sick in that regard (Jeremiah 17:9).

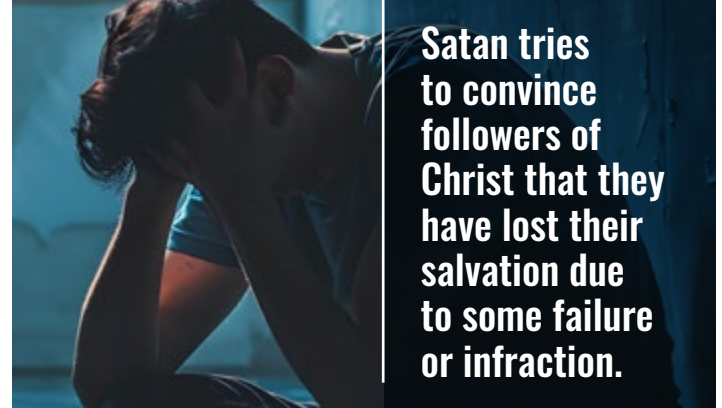
We must guard our hearts at all times because Scripture warns about deceiving ourselves spiritually (1 Corinthians 3:18, Matthew 7:20-22).

Satan is always lying in wait to ensnare us in two other debilitating deceptions.

Just when we are poised to embrace the forgiveness of God, the Devil will whisper, “You’re not worthy.” Sadly, some will let that truth keep them from coming to

Christ instead of responding, “Of course I’m not! That is the Good News of the Gospel!! I don’t get what I deserve—Christ bore that penalty of sin for me!”

Once we are saved, Satan tries to convince followers of Christ that they have lost their salvation due to some failure or infraction. I speak as someone who has utilized the same tactic as a training interrogator in the military. Tricking a hapless, sleep-deprived trainee into an error in judgment, I would belittle them until they made another mistake, and then another. Engulfed by the shame of their failure, their resistance was eventually compromised altogether. My goal was to teach them to avoid such deceitful schemes entirely.



Satan applies this same tactic on a grand scale. He needles unwary Christians tirelessly, telling us that surely Christ can no longer love us if we fall short of His perfection. Jesus’ rebuke to Peter—the very man who would deny Him three times following His arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane—should be our go-to response: “Get thee behind me, Satan!” (Matthew 16:23). We know that by the will of the Father, Jesus will lose *none* of those given to Him (John 6:39).

Antidote to Deception

I would have liked to label this section “Immunity from Deception,” but I cannot promise a one-time, sure-fire



immunization from deception. That is why Scripture repeatedly cautions us not to be deceived. Whether we refer to the prevention as immunization or antidote, the key to avoiding deception is to stay grounded in Truth. A regular intake of the Word of God, coupled with the illuminating presence of the Holy Spirit and the accountability of a local body of Christian brothers and sisters is the best way to avoid falling into a pit of deception.

How do we contend with the rising deception darkening minds all around us? We follow the admonition of Methodist minister William L. Watkinson from over 100 years ago: “It is far better to light a candle than to curse the darkness.”

Followers of Christ are not equipped with mere flickering candles. We have the Word of God and can proclaim Him who said, “I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will never walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life” (John 8:12).

Do not be deceived!

To know Jesus is to know the Truth that will make you free (John 8:32). ☩

When Jesus spoke again to the people, He said, “I am the Light of the world. Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

John 8:12



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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

D A Z E O F

DECEPTION

Jack Hibbs



The following is an excerpt from Pastor Jack Hibb's powerful new book *Living in the Daze of Deception*. He has emerged as a prophetic voice to America, warning of the wrath to come if we continue to shake our fist at God. Jack will be the keynote speaker on Friday night at our annual Bible Conference June 14-15.

This book is available for \$20 at LambLion.com or by phone at 972.736.3567. USA S&H is included, Int'l S&H, add \$25. Hurry, supplies are limited!

Anyone that has driven in areas of thick fog knows how disorienting and disastrous—sometimes deadly—fog can be. In November 2007, thick fog settled onto a twisting section of Interstate 5 in California's Teahachapi Mountains. The resulting 108-car pileup extended for nearly a mile and caused two deaths and 40 injuries.

In today's world, fog characterizes the disorienting daze in which we have entered and now live. Hence my title; I intentionally substituted *daze* in place of *days*.

Usually, when the word *days* is mentioned, most people understand it to concern a specific time or period. Certainly, the Bible speaks of a specific time that will visit humanity—a time of unparalleled difficulty such as the world has never seen. But my primary focus is to help you identify the daze of deception enveloping us today.

Deception, like fog, acts as camouflage—blurring and concealing what is right in front of us. Safely navigating it requires us to use the same precautions drivers use—take heed of flashing lights or warning signals ahead and keep an eye out for patches of clear sky, or in this case, biblical truth, to act as a guide.

Various dictionaries define *daze* as the inability to think or react properly, to be bewildered or numbed. Synonyms include *stupefy*, *shock*, *confound*, and *distract*. I believe each of these words can be applied to people's reaction to the all-encompassing sinister changes taking place today. More than any time in recent memory, people are demonstrating an extraordinary lack of judgment and the inability to think or act appropriately when it comes to what they believe and how they live. How is this happening? Why like never before in history?

Caught Off Guard

Deception has become so widespread that it affects all of us today. Here is just one example of what I am talking about: Have you noticed the incredible amount of deceptive information, false reporting, and, as has been popularly called, fake news that has spread through the media these last several years? The answer is yes, of course. All of us who utilize television news, the internet, and social media will readily agree because so much of what is said runs contrary to what we know to be factual.



Yet there are other times when we can't be sure of what's true. Even when a person raises their right hand and swears an oath in a court of law, we're still not sure whether they are telling the absolute truth. Discovering the truth has become an almost impossible task, leaving us wondering what to believe.

You have probably heard the classic tale of what transpired in the ancient city of Troy when the Greeks constructed an enormous wooden horse, gifted it to their enemy, and pretended to sail away. Their Trojan enemies pulled the horse into the city without realizing that hidden inside were Greek soldiers who would sneak out and unlock the city gates from inside so that the supposedly departed Greek army

could return and attack. The outcome was that Troy was overtaken and destroyed.

The Trojan horse eventually came to symbolize a deceptive trick or strategy employed when there seemed to be no way to defeat a powerful enemy. Today, you would shake your head if you saw a 25-foot-tall wooden horse roll into your city. But have you thought about what is being concealed by powerful elites, organizations, and governing authorities, or the unexplainable level of secrecy tied to their deceptive views?

When you realize that these people and groups often consider you their enemy, the reality of modern-day Trojan horses doesn't seem beyond the realm of possibility. It is also important to understand that wicked schemes come in small packages too—subtly hidden in an element of truth—making them more dangerous and difficult to spot.

What does all this mean? First, deception is continually at work through conversations, thoughts, and actions of those who reject the very concept of God from their belief systems. I know that sounds brutal, but that's backed by what the Bible says. And second, we must be careful not to dismiss deception as taking place only in the media or social and political realms. Jesus warned that there would be tremendous spiritual deception in the last days before His physical return to Earth.

The Daze of the Last Days

What are the last days? Throughout the Bible, the concept of *last days*



appears in a variety of ways: the end of times, the end of days, the last day, the latter times, the end of the age, or, as 1 John 2:18 puts it, the last hour. Not all these terms speak about the exact same thing, but all of them refer to the conclusion of things, which includes the return of Jesus Christ and the establishment of His kingdom here on Earth.

The events we collectively call the last days are all part of what is called Bible prophecy or biblical eschatology. Bible prophecy is God writing the future in advance so that we can know what lies ahead. And, although many churches shy away from teaching about prophecy out of biblical ignorance, the Bible reveals details about the last days to alleviate the stress of wondering what is coming and to prepare us so that we will be ready.

Detailed volumes have been written about the signs of the end of the age, and we should understand these signs. Here are just a few indicators of what will happen during the last days. Scripture says that

People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God...

2 Timothy 3:2-4

men will be haters of God, lovers of pleasure, lovers of lust and evil, and lovers of the things of this world. While, at the same time, becoming loveless and uncaring toward the general population and the welfare of their fellow man (2 Timothy 3:2-4).

No one can deny that each of these behaviors is now commonplace.

How then can we inoculate ourselves against deception? How can we know truth? In some instances, we may never know the truth when it comes to politics, some military scheme or venture, or a business deal gone wrong. But when it comes to spiritual realities, there's only one way to know the truth. That, of course, is the Bible—the inerrant, perfect, never-changing Word of God.



God is Still Orchestrating

The global crises of our day—the saber-rattlings of war, the lack of trustworthy leaders, the potential collapse of national economies, the controversies over cryptocurrencies, and the government overreach during health pandemics—may not make sense to you and me. But rest assured, they do to God.

What do I mean by that? Isaiah 46:9-10 says:

Remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there

is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will do My pleasure.’

Only God knows the future. And the fact that the God of the Bible tells us what is going to happen before it comes to pass validates that He exists, He alone is God, and He will accomplish all that He desires.

In this dirty, messed-up world, you and I need a good brainwashing—we need to let the Bible get inside and scrub away all the gunk accumulated throughout the day, let alone a lifetime. God’s Word cleanses and straightens out our thinking.

Whether you’re uncertain if God is real or if He is trustworthy, I promise those assurances will come through His Word.

If you take a careful look at the historical proofs regarding what the Bible says, you will realize that you can trust God to...

- **Validate the Bible**
- **Validate Jesus Christ**
- **Validate the Messiah’s identity**
- **Get our attention**

Why Should You Care

When you hear messages taught on the last days, it might be tempting to adopt an attitude that says, “They don’t apply to me because I’m saved. I won’t be here after the Rapture to see what happens during the Tribulation.” Please don’t let that kind of thinking take hold.

In Matthew 24:4-8, Jesus responded to His disciples' questions about the sign of His coming and of the end of the age. He said,

Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these things are the beginning of sorrows.

Notice that in the midst of all that calamity and sorrow, Jesus said, "See that you are not troubled." You might assume I'm suggesting you put on a happy face and think positive thoughts, and everything will be fine. Not so.

I appreciate how the late Dr. Ed Hindson put the difficulty of prophetic events into perspective when he said, "Bible prophecy is not given to us to scare us but to prepare us. It is not given to us to frighten us but to invite us."



Dr. Ed Hindson

These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.

John 16:33

What great words of encouragement! And, I believe Bible prophecy prepares us with the perfect invitation.

Jesus said, "These things [prophecy given in advance] I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). Jesus overcame sin, death, and hell itself to spare you from the wrath of God Almighty. The promise of heaven and eternal life awaits. You need to hang on, and so do the people around you.

Live Your Testimony

Like you, your neighbors, friends, and co-workers are watching the world come unhinged as prophecy unfurls, and they are probably scared. You have to wonder, *Where do they go when things get rough, and they don't have anywhere or anyone else to turn to?* Prozac? Smirnoff and Jack Daniels? Entertainment? If that were all I had to hold me up, I'd be worried too.

You can use the last day's events as a catalyst to introduce yourself to neighbors you haven't yet met. Knock on their door and say, "Listen, you may think I'm a lunatic, but I want you to know that I'm a Christ-follower. And with all that is going on right now, I am praying for the neighbors on our street. Do you have any prayer requests?"

It is doubtful they will throw you off the porch and slam the door

in your face. They'll probably say, "Yeah, you know what? Layoffs are coming at my company. We don't have any savings. Can you pray that I'll keep my job so that I can take care of my family?" Seize that moment! Pray a short prayer, say amen, and promise to keep praying.

In these days of deception, we must seek God-given opportunities to share the truth and love of Jesus Christ. Let's not allow any open door, literally or figuratively, to go to waste. ☩



JACK HIBBS

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Is the Pope

Catholic?

Tim Moore

“Is the Pope Catholic?”

That used to be the go-to rhetorical question to drive home a point that was self-evident and obvious beyond doubt.

But the current Pope has upended that age-old axiom by disregarding centuries of Catholic teachings and doctrine in a head-long rush toward progressivism and inclusivity. Many Catholics who cling to the traditional creeds of Catholicism have wondered out loud if this Pope is, in fact, Catholic.

Pope Francis’s disregard of Church doctrine has not always been overt. Sometimes he merely chooses to muddle the position of the Church in an effort to nudge the laity toward the Left. For instance, until recently the Pope did not outwardly sanction same-sex marriage, but he has been eager to incorporate those

who believe in and practice unbiblical forms of sexual union. In December 2023, he openly endorsed that which Catholic doctrine declares is “objectively disordered”—meaning blatantly sinful. Similarly, he has not openly endorsed transgenderism, but he has emphasized tolerance and inclusivity instead of sounding a clear voice to denounce the degradation of men and women as God’s image bearers.

All of those confusions endorse sin, but Francis has also undermined the message of the Gospel: that without Christ all of us are doomed. He recently said that he hopes Hell is empty—giving credence to the false narrative that God will wink at sin, declining to condemn anyone. There is a reason Jesus spoke more about Hell than Heaven. It is a real place, and the road to that infernal, eternal destination is wider than the narrow Way to Heaven.

But I'm Not Catholic

Many Evangelical Christians are quick to dismiss the shift in Catholic hierarchal teaching, reasoning that since they do not recognize the Pope's authority, he has no impact on them or their faith. Such an attitude ignores the moral pressure that the Catholic Church has wielded on matters that Evangelical Christians wholeheartedly agree on—and the perception of the unchurched world.

For example, before most Evangelicals became champions of life and human dignity for both the unborn and the aged, Catholic scholars and activists were on the front lines calling on our society to return to a morally sane position. It is not insignificant that the Supreme Court justices who overturned *Roe v. Wade* were all Catholic jurists—trained to respect life as well as the original intent and text of the Constitution. Catholic institutions have traditionally been, well, much more traditional, and can pull from centuries of Catholic reasoning in advocating moral law.

In addition, many Evangelical Christians simply do not realize that the world at large has no understanding of the doctrinal differences between various denominations—let alone Catholic and Protestant (or Orthodox or Coptic or Armenian) Christianity. This was driven home to me when I began leading Pilgrimage groups to Israel. It was obvious that the average Israeli Jew made no distinction between various Christian persuasions and denominations. (Having said that, I have also noted a marked shift in Jewish attitudes toward Evangelical Christians because they have come to realize

No one who remains in Him sins continually; no one who sins continually has seen Him or knows Him. Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. No one who has been born of God practices sin, because His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin continually, because he has been born of God.

1 John 3:6-9

that Evangelical Christians really do love the Jewish people).

Certainly there are huge and insurmountable disagreements between Evangelicals and Catholicism. I am in no way advocating for a mushy ecumenicalism. But if the Catholic Church leaves the battlefield on many of the hot-button issues roiling our own society, the momentum will inevitably shift to the Liberals and secularists. On many issues, we have gladly fought alongside our Catholic friends for many years. But if the Pope withdraws Catholic support on those issues, we will be further isolated.

Can the Lord embolden us even as our numbers dwindle? Certainly! Gideon's experience alone demonstrates that God does not need a great army to attain victory. But as He continues to lower the hedge of protection around America—and much of the rest of the world as well—due to unchecked rebellion and flaunted wickedness (see Romans 1), the pace of degradation only accelerates.

Many prophetic scholars have wondered about the role of the Roman Catholic Pope in the End Times. Some have speculated that he will be a figure in the Anti-christ-False Prophet alliance that

promotes the final, false one-world religion. Given Pope Francis's muddled acquiescence to moral relativism and blithe tolerance of that which Scripture decries as sin, the slide into an anything-goes religiosity is accelerating before our eyes.

This combination of unbiblical heresy and apostasy (and, I know, there has been a lot of that in official Catholic doctrines for centuries) is yet another sign that we are in the season of the Lord's return. When Christ breaks from the heavens, your salvation will not depend on whether you've followed the confusing and extra-Biblical (which is to say, Pope-defined) progression of Catholic doctrine—but whether you've put your trust in Jesus Christ.

The question we will all answer when we stand before the throne is not whether the Pope is Catholic, but whether we are Christians. I pray your answer to that question is a resounding, "Yes!"

And, I pray that Jesus does not say of any of us who claim to follow Him but dabbled with deception, "I never knew you, depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness" (Matthew 7:23). ☩



LUCIFERIAN CONSPIRACY

J. B. Hixson



The following is an excerpt from J.B Hixson's book series on "*The Gathering Cloud of Deception*." Contained in two volumes of *Spirit of the Antichrist* and one volume, *Spirit of the False Prophet*, J.B.'s insights offer ample warning of the unseen demonic forces that are raging in our world today. Hixson's books are available at notbyworks.org.

Mark Twain once observed, "How easy it is to make people believe a lie, and how hard it is to undo that work again!" In *Mein Kampf*, Adolf Hitler wrote, "The principle...which is quite true in itself...[is] that in the big lie there is always a certain force of credibility." This quote is often paraphrased as, "The bigger the lie, the easier it is to be believed."

As I described in *The Great Last Days Deception: Exposing Satan's New World Order Agenda*, the Luciferian Conspiracy is a long-standing plan which goes back to

Lucifer's fall from Heaven and his attempt to take over this world and make it his own. It represents the evil side in the cosmic struggle between good and evil, between God and Satan.

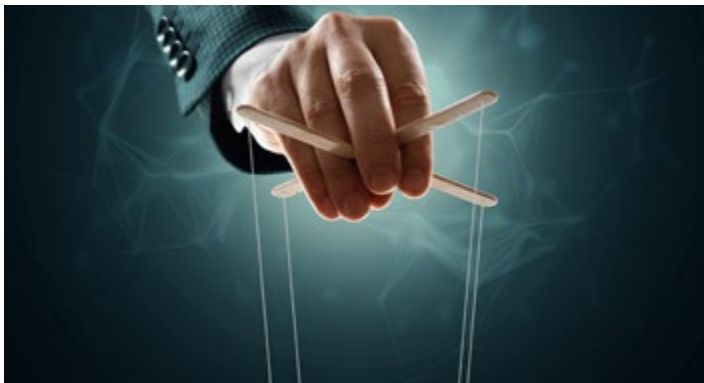
A "conspiracy" refers to any villainous plan set forth by two or more entities to perpetrate a crime or commit evil. Satan's co-conspirators in the Luciferian Conspiracy include demons and the global elite, who for centuries have represented Satan's "boots on the ground," his human partners in crime, as he attempts to deceive the whole world (Revelation 12:9).

“Wake Up!”

Jesus’ admonition to the church in Sardis applies today. Thankfully, people are finally waking up to the rising threat as God raises up watchmen and women to pull back the curtain on the demonic origins of the growing deception. But the Luciferians simply cannot allow the truth to get out to the masses. Why not? What are they worried about? What is it they do not want us to know? George R. R. Martin said it well in his book, *A Clash of Kings*: “When you tear out a man’s tongue you are not proving him a liar, you’re only telling the world that you fear what he might say.”

Yet, given the choice between truth and ignorance, we must always choose truth. As Jesus reminds us, the truth makes us free (John 8:32). By choosing to break free from the global deception that plagues humanity, we fulfill the admonition, “a prudent man foresees the difficulties ahead and prepares for them; the simpleton goes blindly on and suffers the consequences” (Proverbs 22:3).

Satan counts on deception dulling the senses and discernment of those he seeks to reign over. But he has enlisted an army of co-conspirators to fulfill his scheme.



Hand Puppets

Satan has conspired with two other entities to help him in his agenda to take over the world. He is working hand-in-glove with his legion of demons. But he is also working hand-in-puppet with human agents.

Some are quick to dismiss so-called conspiracies (sunomosa in Greek). But the Bible offers multiple examples of Satan-inspired conspiracies. Luke, the historian, records that more than forty “Jews banded together and bound themselves under an oath, saying that they would neither eat nor drink until they had

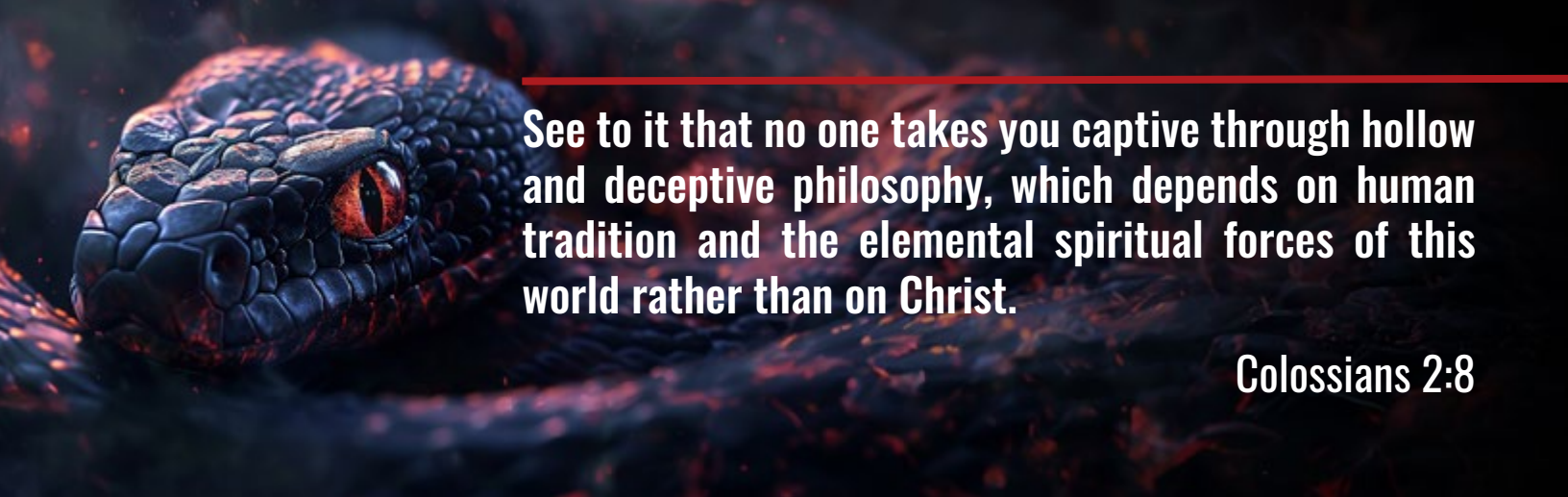
killed Paul” (Acts 23:12-13). The most notable conspiracy was the plot to kill the Messiah. Matthew tells us that Caiaphas, the high priest, plotted with the chief priests, scribes, and elders to take Jesus by trickery and kill him (Matthew 26:3-4). John says, “from that day on, they plotted [that is, conspired] to put [Jesus] to death” (John 11:53).

King David described the architect behind the global conspiracy that has been raging throughout human history:

Why do the nations rage and the people plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against His Anointed saying, ‘Let us break their bonds into pieces and cast away their cords from us.’ He who sits in the Heavens shall laugh; the LORD shall hold them in derision. (Psalm 2:1-4)

Since Satan inspired men to build a great tower at Babel, he has been aggressively working toward establishing a one-world government and ruling the world in great deception. Although Jesus Christ is the only rightful heir to reign on earth, Scripture tells us that we are headed toward a one-world government that will culminate in the Antichrist empire during the Tribulation.



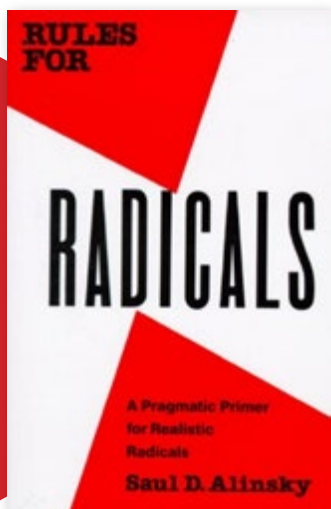


See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.

Colossians 2:8

Even today, those who are advocating for a one-world government seek to push their agenda at every turn. During the great recession of 2008, Rahm Emanuel said, “Never let a crisis go to waste.” Emanuel was parroting a long-standing strategy from the globalist playbook. Nicolo Machiavelli first came up with the phrase during the Renaissance when he said, “Never waste the opportunity offered by a good crisis.”

Saul Alinsky reiterated the same idea in his book *Rules for Radicals* (1972). As we look around, we certainly see the stage being set for the New World Order, a cashless society, and a one-world leader as the Luciferians use manufactured crises to further their evil agenda.



Biblical Discernment

An old Japanese proverb says, “If you want to know about water, do not ask a fish.” In the same way, if



you want to recognize deception, do not seek answers from within the world’s system. Paul cautioned, “Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the word, and not according to Christ” (Colossians 2:8). We must think biblically above all else and use critical thinking skills rather than embracing the narratives we hear from mainstream media, academia, and government.

One of the strategies of the Luciferian elite as they march toward an evil world empire is to keep the unsaved, unsaved. That is, they

want to make sure that unbelievers are prevented from hearing the Gospel, which is “the power of God to salvation” for everyone who believes (Romans 1:16). Another one of Satan’s strategies is to keep those who are already saved defeated and deceived. The more deceived believers are the less danger they are to the Luciferians in this spiritual battle.

To understand the Luciferian’s method of deception, we must go all the way back to the Garden and study Satan’s method of operation when he approached Adam and Eve. Then, as now, Satan wields his craftiness to take advantage of human ignorance.

Here is a short overview of the steps of satanic deception:

Step One: Question Truth (Genesis 3:1)

Satan began by questioning God’s Word. “Has God indeed said?” he asked (Genesis 3:1). This tactic was at the heart of Pilate’s question to Jesus when he asked Him, “What is truth?” (John 18:38). It is also behind the muddled atti-

tude toward truth in our society today, when one person's "truth" is deemed valid only for them. Devoid of an absolute outside ourselves, we are left to drift into moral oblivion.

Step Two: Misrepresent Truth (Genesis 3:1-4)

Satan twisted God's Word when he suggested God said, "You shall not eat of every tree of the garden" (Genesis 3:1). What God actually said was, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat..." (Genesis 2:16-17). The world insists truth is a matter of opinion. Like soft clay, it is pliable and easily twisted to suit one's needs.

Step Three: Directly Contradict Truth (Genesis 3:4)

Satan blatantly contradicted God's Word when he said, "You will not surely die" (Genesis 3:4). Death and judgment are an illusion. You can sin and get away with it, Satan insists. The same lie echoes in our culture today from the mouths of those who call evil good and good evil.

Step Four: Shift the Focus (Genesis 3:5)

Satan began to shift the focus away from the plain, normal meaning of God's Words when he suggested God had an ulterior motive. "For God knows...you will be like God..." Satan proclaimed (Genesis 3:5). Perception is more important than reality. Today, the makeup artist is more important than the speech writer; style is valued more highly than the substance; façade trumps facts.

Step Five: Invent New Meaning (Genesis 3:5)

Finally, Satan ascribes meaning that is utterly foreign to the Words God spoke. God did not say anything remotely resembling "you will be like Me" (Genesis 3:5). Yet, Satan put such lies in God's mouth. In today's convoluted world of political correctness and cancel culture, we see the same tactic being used when someone insists the phrase, "Homosexuality is wrong" means "I hate you!"

Rising Persecution and Perversion

One of the surest signs of Truth decay in our society is the simultaneous rise in anti-Christian sentiment and sexual perversion.



Persecution of Christians is as old as the Church itself. It has been evident on the earth throughout the past 2,000 years, and will reach a climax during the Antichrist's reign of terror in the seven years immediately preceding Christ's Second Coming. But in just the past few years, the number of countries where Christian persecution is classified as extreme has increased more than tenfold. Every month, 105 Christian churches are attacked or burned in the top 50 World Watch List countries. And every day, eleven Christians are murdered for their faith in those countries.

But its not just Christians in Third World countries who are facing persecution. Christians in the United States face persecution in arenas such as politics, college campuses, and public schools. The mainstream media are quick to deny Christians are being persecuted in this country. What else would we expect from those who peddle deception? William Wolfe



Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.

Romans 1:24-25

addressed the persecution-deniers in an op-ed printed in *The Christian Post*: “Despite what some may claim, Christians are being persecuted in America. That might be hard to hear, but it’s true... Christians face already-and-increasing persecution here between our shining seas.”

We can agree that there is no comparison between the murderous horrors against Christians in other countries and the “polite persecution of believers in the west” (citing Pope Francis’ description). But persecution is the eventual and inevitable outgrowth of an ideological hatred toward God, Christians, and absolute truth. In time, this “polite persecution” may yet turn into imprisonment, torture, and murder. As the prophet Hosea put it, “Sow the wind, reap the whirlwind” (Hosea 8:7).



Speaking of rejecting God and absolute truth, Luciferianism is characterized by shameless debauchery. This spirit of perversion will be a trademark of the Antichrist. The Bible warns, “scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts” (2 Peter 3:3). The word translated “lust” here is *epithumia*, meaning “evil desire or craving.” The same word is used in Romans 1:24-25 to describe those who “exchange the truth of God for a lie” and follow the “lusts of their hearts” and “dishonor their bodies.”

One of the most disturbing aspects of the spirit of perversion is what I call the “gender surrender” movement. It represents a direct assault on the *Imago Dei*—the image of God in man. By convincing people today to give up their gender, or that they have no gender to begin with, the Luciferians are mocking God. Their transhumanist ideology seeks to purge mankind of the affliction of biological sex. In the United States, this attack is in full swing.

From academia (including public schools down to the pre-K level) to the military to government and its willing accomplices in the mainstream media, the Luciferi-

ans attempt to capture the minds of our young people and fill them with this utterly despicable spirit of perversion. Even twenty years ago such blatant lewdness would not have been tolerated.



Rising persecution and the gender surrender movement go beyond mere “winds of idiocy” as writer Gary Barnett bluntly says. There is a much more sinister agenda behind it all, and it will culminate in a one-world, satanically-driven, political, economic, and religious system.

What to Do?

Everything about the Luciferian Conspiracy represents a distortion of truth. Satan is a liar, and all he knows how to do is lie (John 8:44).

As followers of the One who said, “I am the Way and the Truth and the Life” (John 14:6), we must stay grounded in Truth—in Christ Himself.

Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter.

Isaiah 5:20



The words of the prophet Isaiah come to mind. “Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter” (Isaiah 5:20). Woe indeed. As the spirit of the Antichrist intensifies, so too do its manifestations of evil.

This is yet another indication that we are getting closer and closer to the Tribulation. That means that the Rapture is imminent, and the stakes have never been higher.

I’ve come up with twenty reasons this battle matters today. Here are the top five reasons: because...

1. God’s Word teaches it
2. Understanding the Luciferian agenda reminds us of the spiritual battle
3. The world’s system is contrary to God’s system
4. God’s Word tells us to be prepared
5. Ignorance can be dangerous



J.B. HIXSON

J.B. Hixson is the pastor of Plum Creek Chapel in Sedalia, Colorado, and the founder of Not By Works Ministries. He is also a prolific author and friend of Lamb & Lion Ministries.

Once we understand the five steps of satanic deception and the reason this battle must be joined today, we are more readily able to spot deception when we come across it. The Bible tells us, “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1).

Satan is raging today. His Luciferian Conspiracy is making unprecedented strides throughout our world. As his time grows short, he will become even more desperate, despicable, and deceitful.

Christians must stand firm and testify to the Truth, knowing that in the end, our God wins! ☩

The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person. For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil.

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

THE SCARIEST BOOK

Tim Challies

There was a time in my teens—a brief time, thankfully—when I dabbled in horror books and movies. In what is probably not an atypical experience for teenagers, I developed a strange interest in the macabre and found pleasure in getting frightened. This led me to explore a few terrifying novels and films before I decided I ought to heed my conscience and turn to more worthwhile endeavors. I don't remember a whole lot about the stories anymore, but do remember a number of sleepless nights as I lay awake listening to the sounds of a quiet house, fretting about every creak and groan. I had fed my imagination with unhelpful material and was reaping the consequences.

I found myself thinking the other day about why people like to be frightened by their entertainment. I really don't get it. I don't understand why people pay good money to sit in theaters to watch charac-

ters be stalked and killed and remembered. I don't understand the appeal in yet another killer clown. But as I thought about this, my mind was drawn to the scary things I've read in the past and I quickly concluded the most terrifying thing I've ever read is not from Stephen King or Dean Koontz, but John Owen. While their novels may have left me awake for a night or two, Owen's writings have caused me to pause and reflect on a near-daily basis.

John Piper once said that it isn't books that change people, but sentences. That has certainly been my experience with John Owen. In all I've read from him, there is one sentence that comes to mind most often, a simple one: *Sin aims always at the utmost*. Owen employs anthropomorphism to make sin something living and active, a being with an evil mind and insidious design. Sin always has an aim, a purpose, and it is always to lead you to

the farthest possible degree of that transgression.

- When sin offers an opportunity to enjoy a fleeting, lustful glance, it is not actually an invitation to harmlessly linger on a desirable body, but to utterly destroy a marriage through adultery.
- When sin offers an opportunity to doubt the existence of God, it is not actually an invitation to consider the matter with an open mind, but to defiantly deny Him altogether.
- When sin offers an opportunity to desire the property of another person, it is not actually an invitation to long for what someone else has, but to commit the greatest theft, the boldest scandal.

Here is how he says it: "Sin aims always at the utmost; every time it rises up to tempt or entice, might

BOOK I'VE EVER READ

Tim Challies is a gifted and prolific Christian author and theological blogger. He captures poignant insights that demand careful thought and reflection. His most recent book, *Seasons of Sorrow: The Pain of Loss and the Comfort of God*, chronicles his spiritual journey after losing his 20-year-old son unexpectedly. Fending off Satan's fiery darts, he is a living testimony to God's prevailing grace.



it have its own course, it would go out to the utmost sin in that kind. Every unclean thought or glance would be adultery if it could; every covetous desire would be oppression, every thought of unbelief would be atheism, might it grow to its head. Men may come to that, that sin may not be heard speaking a scandalous word in their hearts – that is, provoking to any great sin with scandal in its mouth; but yet every rise of lust, might it have its course, would come to the height of villainy: it is like the grave that is never satisfied.”

This is real terror, true horror. I do not encounter killer clowns every day and have never been involved in a demonic exorcism, but I do face a fresh wave of temptation each and every day. Every morning a small sin presents itself in my mind and asks whether I'd like to dabble in it. Every afternoon a mere peccadillo offers itself as a harmless comfort or distraction. Every

evening, I hear a little whisper: take just a wee nibble of that forbidden fruit. These little temptations look so small and so harmless. They appear to offer something desirable at a negligible cost. But through Owen, I know better. They want to wreck me. They want my utter destruction.

Another memory from my younger years: I am at a winter youth retreat and some girls have decided they will go halfway down a snow-covered hill on an inner tube. They want the pleasure of the ride but know there is a barbed-wire

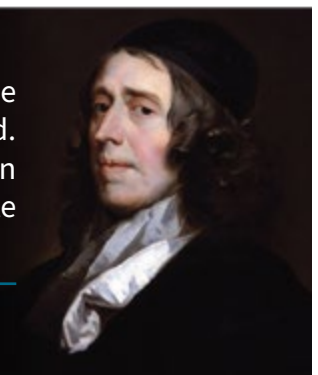
fence at the very bottom. So they'll just go halfway. But they soon learn that once that tube starts sliding, it's nearly impossible to stop. And sure enough, I and everyone else watch as they careen into the vicious fence.

Get on the tube and you are on your way to being entangled in the fence, no matter how much you enjoy the ride; embrace the temptation and you are on your way to utter destruction, no matter how much fun you have along the way. Because sin aims always at the utmost. ☩



Sin brought infinite punishment because it was committed against an infinite God. [Only] Christ, being the infinite God in human nature, could suffer the infinite punishment that the sinner deserved.

John Owens





IRREFUTABLE PROOF THAT JOSEPH SMITH

WAS A

FRAUD

WHY MORMONISM IS NOT CHRISTIAN

Nathan Jones

One of the most prolific spiritual signs of the end times that point to the soon return of Jesus Christ involves the increasing appearance of false christs and their cults (Matthew 24:5, 11, 24). A cult is a counterfeit religion that practices deception to present a likeness to the original. Adherents claim to be genuine Christians while redefining biblical doctrines involving God, Jesus, and salvation to reduce their chances of detection and increase being accepted as authentic Christianity.

One of the most notorious and successful of these religious counterfeiters was Joseph Smith, Jr. (1805-1844), founder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Lat-

ter-Day Saints (LDS), better known as the Mormons. With nearly eight million followers today, the LDS Church continues to grow at an exponential rate, even some 180 years after Smith's death.

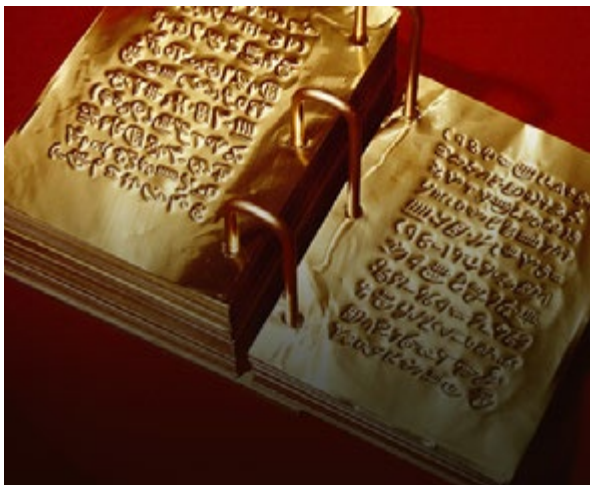
However, the cult of Mormonism stands precariously like a house of cards, easily toppled by two simple and unarguable facts – Smith's immoral character and his many false prophecies. To know what these are is to gain spiritual discernment and avoid being duped by a false christ "masquerading as an angel of light" who was in truth a "false apostle and deceitful worker" (2 Corinthians 11:3-4,13-14).

Smith's Immoral Character

Many historically documented accounts of Joseph Smith's character demonstrate a lifestyle of immorality and debauchery that lie in stark contrast to the biblical man who lives in holiness and obedience to sound biblical doctrine.

Smith's own testimony reveals him to be a serial liar. He claimed at the tender age of 15 to have been visited by "two glorious personages surrounded with a brilliant light which eclipsed the sun at noonday," whom he identified as "the Father and the Son." God Himself supposedly taught young Smith to despise Christian creeds, consider denominations as abominations, and believe that the Bible had been corrupted and therefore in need of restoration.

Three years later, Smith next claimed that an angel named Moroni directed him to a hill called Cumorah near the village of Manchester, New York to find hidden golden plates. There he would also find the Jewish high priest's Urim and Thummin stones, and by looking through these stones, he could translate the plates from ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics into English. Coincidentally, Smith just happened to find these artifacts right near his home.



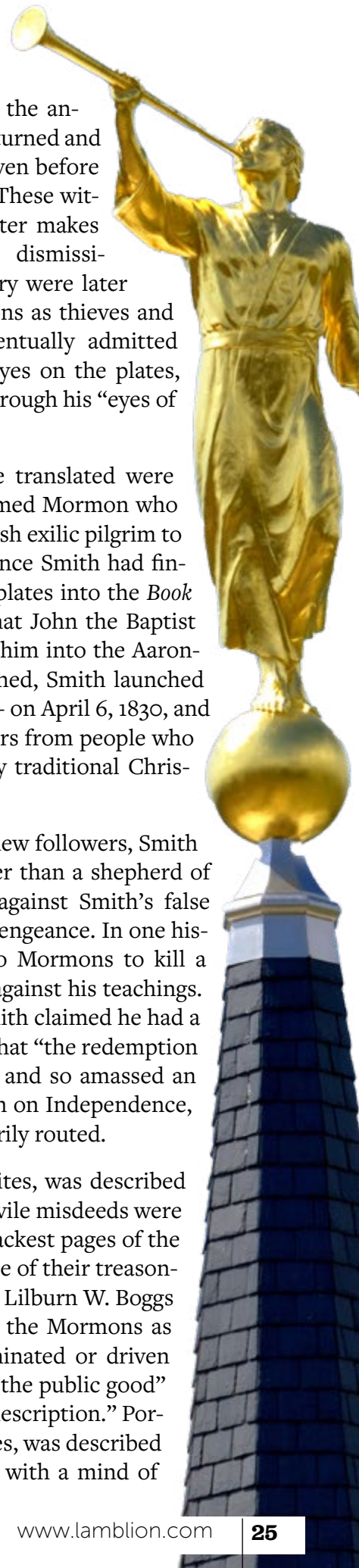
To substantiate his discovery, Smith deviously qualified three witnesses—Oliver Cowdery, Martin Harris, and David Whitmer—as those who could testify to the existence of the plates while Smith kept them out of sight from the world during his time

translating. Nobody but these four could have viewed the plates, for Smith revealed that the angel Moroni had conveniently returned and delivered them back up to Heaven before anyone else could have a look. These witnesses' wretched moral character makes their testimonies completely dismissible. Both Whitmer and Cowdery were later charged by their fellow Mormons as thieves and counterfeiters, and Harris eventually admitted that he never had really laid eyes on the plates, but instead gazed upon them through his "eyes of faith."

What Smith claimed to have translated were the written words of a man named Mormon who had been a descendant of a Jewish exilic pilgrim to the New World named Lehi. Once Smith had finished "translating" the golden plates into the *Book of Mormon*, he then revealed that John the Baptist had appeared to him to ordain him into the Aaronic priesthood. Now commissioned, Smith launched his new religion – Mormonism – on April 6, 1830, and quickly began amassing followers from people who had become disenfranchised by traditional Christianity.

When it came to leading his new followers, Smith behaved more like a gang leader than a shepherd of God. Anyone who spoke out against Smith's false teachings was attacked with a vengeance. In one historic account, Smith hired two Mormons to kill a man who had been outspoken against his teachings. In another historic account, Smith claimed he had a vision from God that told him that "the redemption of Zion must come by power," and so amassed an army of 200 Mormons to march on Independence, Missouri, where he was summarily routed.

Smith's army, called the Danites, was described as "a band of murderers whose vile misdeeds were later written in blood on the blackest pages of the history of Mormonism." Because of their treasonous actions, Missouri Governor Lilburn W. Boggs ordered General Clark to treat the Mormons as enemies who "must be exterminated or driven from the state, if necessary, for the public good" for "their outrages are beyond description." Porter Rockwell, chief of the Danites, was described as "a powerful man physically, with a mind of



But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should proclaim to you a gospel contrary to the gospel we have proclaimed to you, let him be accursed! As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is proclaiming to you a gospel contrary to what you received, let him be accursed!

Galatians 1:8-9

narrow perceptions, intense convictions, and utterly depraved motives,” who had been charged with close to 100 cold-blooded murders.

Polygamy and pedophilia also demonstrated Smith’s contempt for God’s moral law, especially Genesis 2:24 which defines marriage as being between one man and one woman for life. Smith claimed divine revelation to justify his acts of polygamy, having amassed a collection of some 33 known wives, some as young as 14 years old. This lurid behavior led the townsfolk of Kirtland, Ohio to tar and feather Joseph Smith and his friend, Sidney Rigdon. Polygamy so defined early Mormonism that Smith’s successor, Brigham Young, even went as far as blasphemously claiming Jesus Christ was a polygamist who had been married to Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus, as well as to Mary Magdalene.



Brigham Young

Wherever Smith and his followers went they sowed discord and violence, even among themselves, eventually causing the Mormons to be forced out of Ohio, then Missouri, settling in Illinois, before later finally being pushed west into Utah. While in Illinois, Smith ordered his followers to burn down the *Nauvoo Expositor* newspaper for publishing the horrors of Mormon rule and practice. This act of arson led to Joseph Smith’s arrest. An angry mob stormed the jail where he was being held and shot Smith and his brother, Hyrum. For supposedly being a divinely appointed prophet of God, Smith died like the criminal he was on June 27, 1844. For all of his supposedly divine proclamations, Smith proved to be a lying, thieving, violent, sexually immoral miscreant who clearly did not live a life as the Apostle Paul preached, “worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God” (Colossians 1:10).

Smith’s Many False Prophecies

The LDS Church made the following admission concerning their founder’s personal claim of being a divinely appointed prophet of God:

By nearly three million persons in many lands, Joseph Smith is today held in remembrance as a Prophet of God. The virtues and achievements of his followers stand as a monument to his divine calling. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has its foundation in the revelations he received, the sacred truths he taught, and the authority of the priesthood restored through him.



Joseph Smith

Within this foundational LDS statement lies Mormonism’s “Achilles’ heel” in that the authority of the Mormon priesthood and the validity of their doctrines rest entirely on Joseph Smith’s claim to be an inspired prophet of God. This

means that should Smith have ever pronounced any prophecy that turned out to be false, he would end up violating Moses' litmus test of 100% accuracy in determining whether a message had been truly spoken by the Lord or not (Deuteronomy 18:21-22). Mormonism's own Articles of Faith admits to as much stating, "If his [Smith's] claims to divine appointment be false, forming as they do the foundation of the Church... the superstructure cannot be stable." Cold Case Christianity author J. Warner Wallace proves the superstructure to indeed be very unstable by providing just a few of the many false prophecies made by Joseph Smith which prove that he had indeed failed Moses' test:

1 Joseph Smith made open-dated prophecies, such as when he predicted in 1835 that, "The coming of the Lord, which was nigh—even fifty-six years should wind up the scene" (History of the Church, Vol. 2, 182).

2 He made several self-fulfilling prophecies, such as when he claimed the Lord instructed him not to translate any more until he had arrived in Ohio. (D&C 37:1).

3 Smith made conditional prophecies, such as when he stated that if the people of Ohio repented they would not be severely judged by the Lord (D&C 40:16-18).

4 Smith even went as far as to make close-dated, unconditional prophecies, such as when in 1832 he prophesied that an LDS temple would be built in Independence, Missouri within his generation. Almost 200 years later, no temple has ever been built, especially during Smith's generation, forcing the LDS leadership to admit this prophecy never came true. (D&C Section 84).

5 Smith also made several fanciful prophecies, such as when in 1837 he proclaimed that the Lord had told him that the moon was inhabited by men and women who looked like the people of the earth, that they lived up to a thousand years old, stood nearly six feet tall, and dressed uniformly like Quakers (The Oliver B. Huntington Journal, 1881).

Conclusion

It takes little effort to prove that Joseph Smith's claim to being a divinely called prophet of God was fraudulent. First, Smith's own ungodly and immoral character would cause even the most ardent hedonist to blush. Second, his failed prophecies fall well short of Moses' test in determining a false prophet.

Many more pieces of evidence could be presented that discredit Mormonism. Smith obviously plagiarized the Book of Mormon from other sources such as the Bible as well as a novel written earlier by a minister named Solomon Spaulding. Some 3,000 "revisions" were made to Joseph Smith's writings by the LDS church over the subsequent decades. The many historic and linguistic claims Smith made were in time proven to be utterly fictitious, if not ludicrous. The evidences go on and on. Such plentiful arguments should cause Mormons to express serious doubts as to the legitimacy of their false religion and so stop them from walking blindly down the steps leading away from God.

As Evangelical Christians, we must reach out to Mormons in love while armed with the sword of the Word and these facts which prove Joseph Smith was a fraud. In doing so, we confirm that Mormonism cannot be a valid expression of Christianity but rather remains as another wide road that lures lost souls to eternal separation from God in a place of torment. ☩

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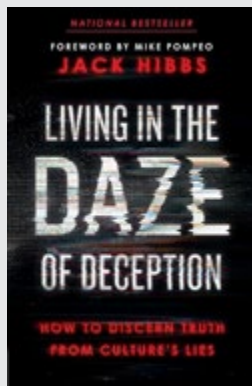


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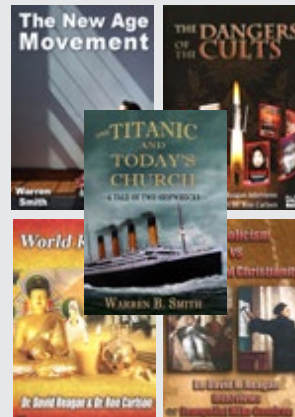


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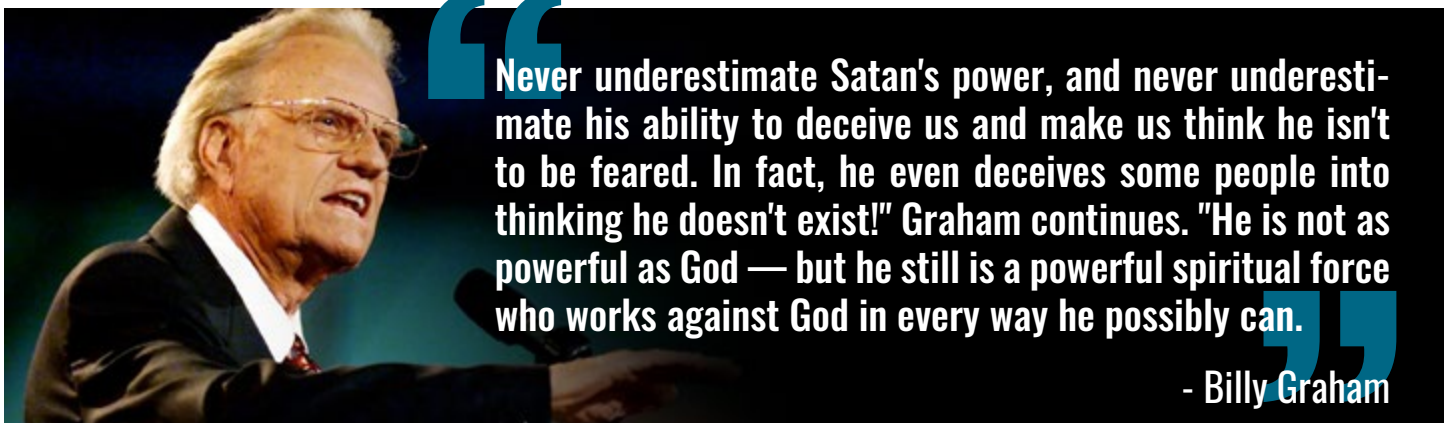


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Toons OF THE TIMES



GARY VARVEL
garyvarvel.com

Gary Varvel is a Christian, Conservative, cartoonist, and speaker. He worked at the Indianapolis Star for 24 years and is now syndicated through Creators Syndicate. His work is shared here by permission.

It is said that a picture is worth 1,000 words. Each month, we endeavor to find evocative pictures to accompany the Signs of the Times we highlight. This month we are grateful to be able to begin including wonderful editorial cartoons that convey tremendous truth in a simple but poignant drawing. We are grateful to Gary Varvel—a gifted Christian cartoonist whose Conservative views make him a rarity in the American media. Like our friend Todd Hampson, his determination to educate and edify is an encouragement to any who aspires to serve our soon-returning King.



SIGNS OF THE TIMES

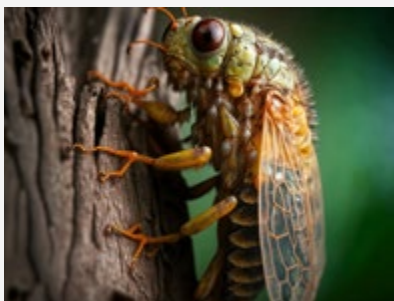
Tim Moore

NATURE

Some Americans became convinced that the April solar eclipse was a prophetic sign, although total eclipses are visible somewhere on Earth every 18 months. The “great and awesome day of the Lord” will be preceded by events of supernatural proportion.



A “double brood” of cicadas (whose larvae lie dormant for 13 or 17 years before emerging as adults) will soon inundate the Midwest and Southeast—the worst infestation since 1803. Averaging 1 million per acre, this modern plague will involve trillions or quadrillions of noisy insects.



SOCIETY

As if unchecked mayhem, home squatting, and public defecation was not bad enough, American cities are recording a growing trend of disaffected young men who are acting out their malevolence by punching random women in the face.



The Presidential election is essentially locked up as a contest between Joe Biden and Donald Trump—the oldest two candidates in American history. The political vitriol and division is expected to reach a fever pitch by November—breeding even more distrust and anger.



SPIRITUAL

On Resurrection Sunday this year, Joe Biden announced a national “Transgender Day of Visibility.” Several Liberal churches embraced themes like “Drag Me to Church” to celebrate Easter. Meanwhile, gender dysphoria rates are increasing dramatically in 49 states.



Lifeway Research has documented a continuing epidemic of church closures. Even with 3,000 new church plants in 2019 (pre-Covid), America witnessed a net loss of 1,500 churches. Since 2019, the trend has only accelerated—especially in “seeker-sensitive” denominations.



Satan hopes that you will ignore the Signs of the Times pointing to Jesus' soon return. In fact, other than guiding the oblivious and the obstinately rebellious to their everlasting doom, his greatest aspiration is to deceive the followers of Christ into complacency, confusion, or discouragement. Either attitude deadens your sense of expectation and dulls the impact God wants you to have in this world. Do not be deceived. The Signs of the Times are shouting, "The King is coming!!"

WORLD POLITICS

The Prime Minister of Poland recently warned that Europe is inching toward war, and warned the European Union to be ready for increased hostility from Russia. The lack of respect for American resolve is having tragic ramifications.



French President Emmanuel Macron has suggested that NATO troops will be required to confront Russia in order to end the war in Ukraine, setting off alarm bells on both sides of the conflict. Meanwhile, the devastation in Ukraine continues.



TECHNOLOGY

Florida recently banned youth from unsupervised social media engagement, citing the growing threat of unfettered technology to mental health and socialization. Social media use has been linked to the dramatic increase in teenage depression and despair.



In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) is coming under scrutiny for freezing or destroying scores of human embryos and "selectively reducing" the number implanted into the mother's womb. Parents desperate for children have been presented with an unprecedented moral dilemma.



ISRAEL

Despite pledging to "stand with Israel," the Biden Administration took the coward's position of abstaining on an anti-Israel UN Security Council resolution, then allowed Iran to launch over 300 missiles toward Israel.



Turkish legislator Hasan Bitmez viciously denounced Israel in late December. Bitmez ended his speech by saying, "You will not escape the wrath of Allah," then promptly collapsed from a heart attack. He died three days later.



RETURN OF THE RIGHTEOUS ONE

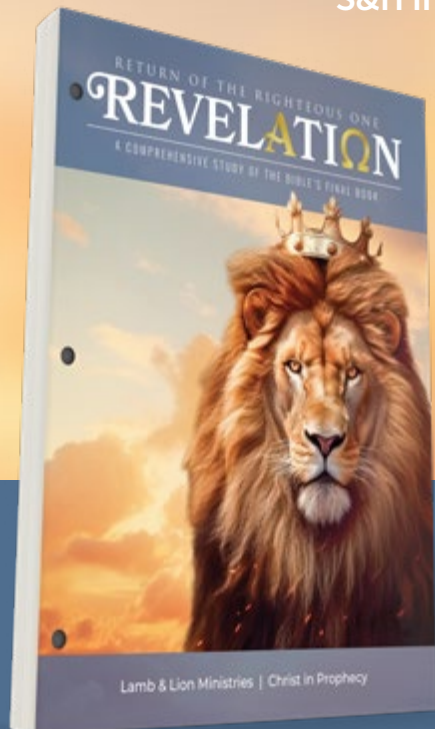
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