My Thoughts on LGBTQ, Abortion, Our Divided Nation and the Kingdom

By Larry Acheson

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In this study, I will prove the following as truths:

1) The LGBTQ movement and lifestyle are built on a false foundation steeped in sin.
2) Abortion is murder and is therefore sin.
3) The above issues *weren't* issues until recent history.
4) The above issues and more have sharply divided our nation.
5) The United States is the fifth (and final) world power as depicted in King Nebuchadnezzar's dream.
6) Yahweh's Kingdom is coming soon!
7) The Passover has not yet been fulfilled and will *not* be fulfilled until Yahweh's Kingdom comes.
8) Yeshua taught that "not a jot nor a tittle" will by any means pass from the Law till **ALL** be fulfilled.
9) Since Passover hasn't been fulfilled yet, not **ALL** has been fulfilled yet, which in turn means ***nothing*** has passed from Yahweh's Law (Torah).
10) Yeshua shed His blood to atone for our sins, but once we recognize what our sins are, we must repent.

I will also expose myself as a *biophiliac*.

A friend recently asked me why I haven't composed any studies pertaining to prophecy. I explained that I primarily focus on how I believe we should manage our lives, once we understand there is a Creator who loves us so much that He gave us His Word to live by and His Son to ransom us from the second death. Many have chosen to snub His Word, which means ignoring the commandments He gave to those who would be His children. In fact, that's the course I was on—until circumstances led me to the path on which I currently walk. Our response, not only to the life He has given us, but especially to the price His Son willingly paid to give His followers the hope of eternal life, is to behave like children who want a relationship with their father. Seeking that relationship requires searching the Scriptures to see how our Heavenly Father wants us to behave. That, then, is my primary focus. Many of the studies I have written address why the commandments found in the first five books of the Bible, i.e., those that do not pertain to the priesthood and its various functions, are *indeed* pertinent. That includes such items as the Scriptural calendar, the holy days, the weekly Sabbath, the food we eat, and even the names of our Heavenly Father and His Son. But I have never focused on *prophecy*—until now.

Does Scripture Condone Homosexuality?

In this study, I want to essentially combine my understanding of Torah with my understanding of prophecy. To begin with, it should come as no surprise that the times we live in here in the 21st century are vastly different from the times we lived in during the latter half of the 20th century. Many will agree that the 1950's and 1960's marked a turning point in our nation. Many of the controversial issues now dividing our nation weren't issues at all in the 1960's. Let's consider homosexuality, for example. Those

of us who understand the commands found in Torah are still in effect understand that homosexuality is a grave sin (Lev. 18:22)[1]. During the 1960's, homosexuals were in a "closet." In the '70's, they began hesitantly coming out of the closet. I remember some TV shows that depicted the gay lifestyle in a lighthearted manner, but nevertheless, not something to really be proud of. A show called *Three's Company* comes to mind. As time passed, it became more and more acceptable, and today anyone expressing the slightest disapproval of the gay lifestyle is labeled "homophobic," a word that I don't even think *existed* in the 1970's.[2] The image at right was lifted from the *Wikipedia* article "LGBT symbols," and demonstrates that this most prevalent gay symbol wasn't devised until 1978. Not only has the collective USA's acceptance of the Scripturally-forbidden gay lifestyle gained momentum since the 1960's, but those who either speak or write in opposition to it are now faced with being societal outcasts and unfavorably labeled such things as "transphobic," "biphobic" and "acephobic." The reason these words didn't exist in the 1970's is because the *issue* didn't really exist then, unless it was hidden in a "closet." At that time, our nation, at least in principle, held the Bible in high esteem. The Bible, in both Old *and* New Testaments, condemns homosexuality.[3]

Created in 1978, the rainbow flag is the most commonly used pride flag.[79][80]

Today, the values of 1960 in this nation have flipped. Expressing disapproval of what is now known as the "LGBTQ lifestyle" not only brings about societal stigma and media outrage, along with the labels referenced above, but it can also cost you your job. I once worked in the same office with a gay co-worker; he was a nice guy and we got along just fine. He knew my faith is at odds with that lifestyle, but I never once preached to him to repent because, first of all, I'm not a preacher and secondly, try as I might to be righteous before Yahweh, I'm a sinner myself. Also, I believe in the principle of "hating the sin, but loving the sinner." If he had asked my opinion, I would have gladly shown him the pertinent Bible verses, but he did not. I would have done so in love, not in "repent or go to hell" fashion. Today, any expressions critical of the gay lifestyle in the workplace may be treated as discrimination, resulting in termination. In fact, some would say this very study may leave my employment future hanging in the balance.

2024 Update: A friend asked me to deliver a presentation on this topic, which I presented in September as a Zoom PowerPoint presentation titled "Addressing the LGBTQ Deception." Due to time constraints, what I gave was a condensed version. I split the unabridged version into two parts, and it is now available for viewing on YouTube. Here's the link to Part 1, and here's the link to Part 2.

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[1] For those who may think this law was "done away," homosexuality is also condemned in several New Testament passages: Romans 1:26–27, 1 Cor 6:9–10, and 1 Timothy 1:9–10.

[2] "Homophobic" is not found in our 1971 edition of *New Webster's Dictionary of the English Language* (Deluxe Encyclopedic Edition), published by Delair Publishing Company, Melrose Park, IL. Merriam-webster.com defines it as "irrational fear of, aversion to, or discrimination against homosexuality or gay people." We would challenge the "irrational fear of" portion of their definition.

[3] Various segments within gay Christianity have contrived several arguments from Scripture aimed at defending their lifestyle, including at least five *completely different* interpretations of the key Greek word commonly translated "homosexual" (*arseno-koitai*). In September 2024, I delivered a PowerPoint presentation via Zoom meeting to various believers in India addressing these and other claims put forth by gay Christians. I later recorded a 2-part unabridged version, which is currently available for viewing on YouTube. Here's a link to Part 1 of "Addressing the LGBTQ Deception," and here's a link to Part 2.

Does Scripture Condemn Abortion?

Another hot topic in today's divided political climate is that of *abortion*. Abortion, like the LGBTQ movement, wasn't an issue in the 1960's. It was universally understood that ending an unborn child's life was *unthinkable*. I remember, at my great-aunt's funeral, a stranger and his family lingered in the background. My dad, who never met a stranger, introduced himself to the man and asked him how he happened to know his aunt. My dad was shocked by the answer: it turns out he is her *son*. We didn't know all the particulars, but we soon found out my great-aunt became pregnant while yet unmarried, but she knew an abortion was out of the question; she successfully hid his birth from the family, gave him up for adoption, yet maintained a close, yet secret, relationship with him all the days of her life. She loved her son dearly, but was too ashamed of what she did in her youth to let anyone know of his existence. That was the understanding and *respect for life* that our society as a whole once held dear. But that was then.

Today, the solution is to terminate the pregnancy. Many so-called intellectuals dare to make the claim that Scripture doesn't actually speak against abortion. I beg to differ, but I need to add that which *version* of Scripture you read makes a difference. I have personally found the readings of many Bible verses to be more sensible and plausible when read from the Septuagint translation (the LXX) rather than the Masoretic Text (the MT), which many consider the "original Hebrew." Rather than delve into those particular discrepancies here, I will instead focus on the one addressing whether or not killing a fetus, even if unintentional, is a capital offense. The fact is, the Septuagint was translated in the 3rd century BCE, proving how *those* ancients felt about aborting an unborn child. A careful reading of the Septuagint translation reveals that even *unintentionally* causing a miscarriage may invoke the death penalty. I have actually had believers identifying themselves as rabbinic Jews argue with me, insisting that nothing in the Bible speaks against abortion, but their reference is always traced to a translation from the Hebrew Masoretic Text, *not* the Septuagint. Melanie Howard, PhD, Associate Professor of Biblical & Theological Studies at Fresno Pacific University, submitted a commentary on abortion to *Nevada Current*, in which she attempted to refute any attempts to uphold Exodus 21 as Scriptural prohibition against abortion. As we are about to see, the version she waves in defense of her position is the Masoretic Text, *not* the Septuagint:

> Exodus 21, for example, suggests that a pregnant woman's life is more valuable than the fetus's. This text describes a scenario in which men who are fighting strike a pregnant woman and cause her to miscarry. A monetary fine is imposed if the woman suffers no other harm beyond the miscarriage. However, if the woman suffers additional harm, the perpetrator's punishment is to suffer reciprocal harm, up to life for life.[4]

According to Melanie Howard, the only real concern is the life of the mother, whereas only a fine is imposed if the mother is unharmed, but the baby dies.

[4] Melanie A. Howard, PhD, "What the Bible Actually Says About Abortion May Surprise You," *Nevada Current*, July 20, 2022.

Pro-Choice advocate and author Katha Pollitt echoes much of Melanie Howard's sentiments in her 2014 book *Pro: Reclaiming Abortion Rights*. I haven't read the book, but I *did* read an excerpt from it, published online by *Time* magazine that same year. The magazine article is titled "6 Myths About Abortion." The only "myth" relevant to our faith is the first one she listed, so we will only address "myth #1" in this study. Here's the pertinent excerpt:

> **1. The Bible forbids abortion.**
>
> It shouldn't matter what the Bible says about abortion. The United States is not a theocracy. Still, given the certitude of abortion opponents that abortion violates God's Word, it might come as a surprise that neither the Old Testament nor the New mentions abortion—not one word.
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> It's not that the Old Testament is reticent about women's bodies, either. Menstruation gets a lot of attention. So do childbirth, infertility, sexual desire, prostitution (death penalty), infidelity (more death penalty), and rape (if the woman is within earshot of others and doesn't cry out . . . death penalty). How can it be that the authors (or Author) set down what should happen to a woman who seeks to help her husband in a fight by grabbing the other man's testicles (her hand should be cut off) but did not feel abortion deserved so much as a word? Given the penalties for nonmarital sex and being a rape victim, it's hard to believe that women never needed desperately to end a pregnancy, and that there was no folk knowledge of how to do so, as there was in other ancient cultures. Midwives would have known how to induce a miscarriage.
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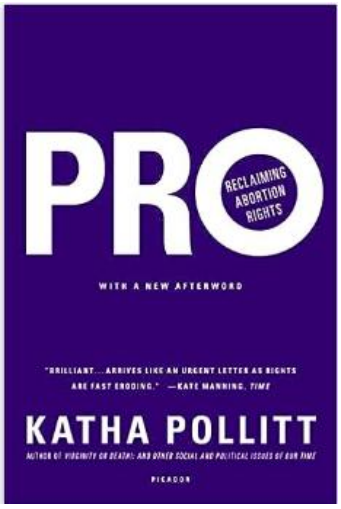
> 
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> A passage often cited by abortion opponents is Exodus 21:22–23:
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> If people are fighting and hit a pregnant woman and she gives birth prematurely but there is no serious injury, the offender must be fined whatever the woman's husband demands and the court allows. But if there is serious injury, you are to take life for life….
>
> Contemporary abortion opponents interpret this passage as distinguishing between causing a premature birth (fine) versus causing a miscarriage (death penalty), which is indeed what most modern translations suggest. Unfortunately for abortion opponents, at least one thousand years of rabbinical scholarship say the fine is for causing a miscarriage and the death penalty is for causing the death of the pregnant woman. If anti-abortion exegetes are only now finding in this rather obscure passage evidence for an absolute biblical ban on abortion, you have to wonder why no one read it that way before. The Talmud permits abortion under certain circumstances, in fact requires it if the woman's life is at stake.
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> The New Testament was a second chance for God to make himself clear about abortion. Jesus had some strong views of marriage and sex—he considered the Jewish divorce laws too lenient, disapproved of stoning adulteresses, and did not shrink from healing a woman who had "an issue" (vaginal bleeding of some sort) that had lasted twelve years

> and would have made her an outcast among Jews. But he said nothing about abortion. Neither did Saint Paul, or the other New Testament authors, or any of the later authors whose words were interpolated into the original texts.[5]

On the surface, the above Biblical exegesis performed by Melanie Howard and Katha Pollitt may seem reasonable. Certainly, if only a fine was imposed upon the man responsible for causing a miscarriage, one could argue that a life *after birth* is more valuable than that of an unborn child. A deeper study reveals their reasoning to be flawed and therefore mistaken. A strong clue as to Pollitt's less-than-stellar exegetical prowess should be made evident by her opening remark: "It shouldn't matter what the Bible says about abortion." Since whatever the Bible says has no bearing on Pollitt's worldview, her decision to even *address* what the Bible says seems at once nonsensical.[6] Nevertheless, since a large contingency of Pro-Choice individuals agree with the exegesis of Exodus 21:22-25 as explained by these two authors, I am compelled to explain where they failed in their research.

First, to address Pollitt's remark about the New Testament's silence pertaining to abortion, even a novice Bible student should agree that silence regarding a certain topic doesn't mean the topic no longer held any meaning for believers living in that time period. It is true that we do not read about abortion in the New Testament. *Does this silence mean abortion was therefore sanctioned?* That is obviously the desired conclusion that Katha Pollitt wants us to make regarding the New Testament's treatment (or lack thereof) of abortion. This is flawed reasoning. We likewise don't read anything in the New Testament forbidding anyone to curse the deaf or place a stumbling block in front of a blind person (Lev. 19:14). Does that mean it is now permissible to do those things? I personally *rejoice* that abortion isn't mentioned in the New Testament because that means it wasn't the "hot topic" that it is today. The New Testament's silence about such things as abortion, placing stumbling blocks in a blind person's path, etc., should not be summarily understood as a removal from Torah, but rather *status quo*, as in a general and universal understanding among believers that those laws were still in place.

Of course, even if the New Testament *did* expressly forbid abortion, this would mean nothing to Katha Pollitt because **(a)** she doesn't believe whatever the Bible may say about abortion should matter anyway, and **(b)** the gay

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[5] Katha Pollitt, "6 Myths About Abortion," excerpted from *Pro: Reclaiming Abortion Rights* by Katha Pollitt, published by Picador. Copyright © 2014 by Katha Pollitt. All rights reserved. I accessed this article at time.com, November 13, 2014 6:03 PM EST, https://time.com/3582434/6-abortion-myths/

[6] Pollitt politically reinforced her extreme pro-abortion bias in a June 2020 article she wrote in *The Nation* magazine. She wrote, "I would vote for [Pro-Choice Presidential candidate] Joe Biden if he boiled babies and ate them." She is also one of the signers of the Humanist Manifesto, which lists the following as one of its six primary beliefs: "Humans are an integral part of nature, the result of unguided evolutionary change." In other words, Katha Pollitt doesn't believe in a Creator, let alone His instruction manual for humanity. On an even more serious note, I cannot imagine how Katha Pollitt conjured up the notion of someone who would boil babies and eat them, nor do I want to try; it's sickening to even contemplate such a thing, but to come up with such an evil thought makes me wonder what *other* devious thoughts roll around in her brain. It's truly concerning and ultimately speaks to her true character and moral values. Anyone who would boil babies and eat them can be properly classified as a monster and a murderer. Katha Pollitt the same as stated that she would vote for a *monster* and a *murderer*. What does that make *her*? I support Pro-Life candidates, not Pro-Murder ones, because *all* lives matter, even those who are unborn.

lifestyle is expressly forbidden in both the Old *and* New Testaments, but that doesn't even stop liberal so-called believers from supporting the LGBTQ movement. So how and why would anything negative the New Testament might say about abortion stop someone who has no regard for what the Bible says?

As displayed above, authors Pollitt and Howard would protest my claim about abortion being forbidden by Torah. As Pollitt puts it, "… the fine is for causing a miscarriage and the death penalty is for causing the death of the pregnant woman," i.e., the *miscarriage* isn't that big of a deal, it's the life of the mother on which hinges the death penalty. And since Pro-Choice advocates do not regard a fetus as an actual "life," such a reading of the Bible text would seem to lend credence to their conclusion. Indeed, when I read the translation of the Hebrew Masoretic Text of Exodus 21:22-25, I reach the same conclusion. Here's the *King James Version's* translation of the Masoretic Text:

> 22 If men strive, and hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart *from her*, and yet no mischief follow: he shall be surely punished, according as the woman's husband will lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges *determine*.
> 23 And if *any* mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life,
> 24 Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot,
> 25 Burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.

The key verse in the above passage is verse 23. Some might say the "mischief" that follows applies to the child; however, a careful reading of the text indicates otherwise. The *New American Standard Version* renders it thus: "But if there is *any further* injury, then you shall appoint as a penalty life for life, …." The question becomes "Any further injury to *whom*?" To the mother or the child? Since a child born prematurely is most likely not going to survive, especially under such violent circumstances, the more reasonable understanding, according to the Jewish sages, is that the victim of the "mischief" in verse 23 is the mother.[7] This would also apply to the word "mischief" as found in verse 22. The classic understanding, then, is that if two men are fighting and one of them strikes a pregnant woman, causing her to miscarry (losing her child), the man must pay a fine, assuming she does not suffer any additional physical harm. But if the mother *does* suffer additional harm up to and including death, then he must bear the consequences, up to and including his very life. This is the classic interpretation of Exodus 21:22-25 in the Hebrew Masoretic Text.

However, that was *not* how the Hebrew scholars who translated the Septuagint into Greek during the 3rd century BCE understood this passage. Not at all! Based on the evidence I've seen over the years, I am persuaded the Hebrew scholars who translated the Septuagint translated it from a Hebrew original that *predates* the Masoretic Text's Hebrew. What follows is a literal translation of the Septuagint's rendering of Exodus 21:22-23:

> 22 And if two men should do combat, and should strike a woman having one in the womb, and should come forth her child not completely formed, a fine he shall be penalized, insofar as should put upon him the husband of the woman, and he shall give by means of what is fit.
> 23 And if it might be completely formed, he shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.

[7] *Cf.*, *The Chumash*, Rabbi Nosson Scherman/Rabbi Meir Zlotwitz, Mesorah Publications, Ltd, Brooklyn, NY, commentary on Exodus 21:22-23.

According to the Septuagint's rendering of Exodus 21:22-25, the concern is not about the *woman's* welfare, but rather the *aborted child*. This should not suggest that the woman's welfare wasn't important, but the specific concern addressed in the Septuagint's rendering of this passage is that of the miscarried/aborted child. According to the above reading, if a man strikes a pregnant woman, resulting in a miscarriage, he only pays a fine if the child isn't *completely formed*. But if it's completely formed, ***then*** he pays with his life. This fact makes abortion a very, very serious matter. The Septuagint translation presents a radical distinction between the two versions of Scripture, and even if you reject the Septuagint translation, there's no getting around the fact that this is how those scholars way back in the third century BCE regarded the status of an unborn child: *It was a life*. The only question is, "When is a fetus 'completely formed'?" According to the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai website, the fetus is for all practical purposes, fully developed at 10 weeks. Keep in mind that by the ninth week, arms grow and elbows develop, and the baby's essential organs have begun to grow. But by the 10th week, notice how far along it is:

- The baby's eyelids are more developed and begin to close.
- The outer ears begin to take shape.
- The baby's facial features become more distinct.
- The intestines rotate.
- At the end of the 10th week of pregnancy, the baby is no longer an embryo. It is now a fetus, the stage of development up until birth.
- Fetal heart tones may be detectable by Doppler testing.[8]

The above represents the more *clinical* definition of a "completely formed," yet unborn, child that some will require; I maintain that if the miscarried child has a head, torso, arms and legs, it is "completely formed." While a greater value is certainly attributed to a completely formed child, this should by no means be taken as a license to willingly abort a fetus at *any* stage of life. If the question is, "When does life begin?" the answer *cannot* be "When the fetus is completely formed"; otherwise, why impose a fine if it's *not*? And at what point did the *non*-life-form become a living being? The only reasonable conclusion is that life begins when the fetus is *conceived*. The value of this unborn life should not be minimized by the fact that only a fine is levied if it's not yet completely formed. This would certainly have been regarded as a horrible tragedy, and you can be certain the fine cannot be legitimately compared to paying the fine for an overdue library book!

If pro-abortion authors would conduct *historical* research, they would find that a first-century Jew named Philo adamantly disagreed with their interpretation of Scripture. Here is what Philo wrote in his treatise "The Special Laws, III":

> (108) But if any one has a contest with a woman who is pregnant, and strike her a blow on her belly, and she miscarry, if the child which was conceived within her is still unfashioned and unformed, he shall be punished by a fine, both for the assault which he committed and also because he has prevented nature, who was fashioning and preparing that most excellent of all creatures, a human being, from bringing him into existence. <u>But if the child which was conceived had assumed a distinct shape in all its parts, having received all its proper connective and distinctive qualities, he shall die</u>; (109) for such a creature as that is a man, whom he has slain while still in the workshop of nature, who

[8] *Cf.*, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, New York, NY: https://www.mountsinai.org/health-library/special-topic/fetal-development

> had not thought it as yet a proper time to produce him to the light, but had kept him like a statue lying in a sculptor's workshop, requiring nothing more than to be released and sent out into the world.[9]

Suffice it to conclude that Philo, who authored the above commentary 2,000 years ago, shared my understanding and interpretation of Exodus 21:22-23. Philo was pro-life.

It must also be emphasized that the potential scenario depicted in Exodus 21:22-23 refers to an *accidental* miscarriage when the woman is struck by one of two fighting men. They weren't fighting with the woman; she was simply "in the wrong place at the wrong time." Even so, if her baby is "completely formed" and one of the men *accidentally* strikes her, resulting in a miscarriage, he must pay with his life. If that's the penalty for an *accidental* miscarriage, then what's the penalty if it's done *on purpose*? What if the woman decides to *purposely* abort her own child? Shouldn't the answer to this question be obvious?

A Jewish first-century historian named Josephus supplied the answer to the above question. In his book *Against Apion*, he wrote the following:

> The law, moreover, enjoins us to bring up all our offspring, and forbids women to cause abortion of what is begotten, or to destroy it afterward; and if any woman appears to have so done, she will be a murderer of her child, by destroying a living creature, and diminishing human kind; if any one, therefore, proceeds to such fornication or murder, he cannot be clean.[10]

Pro-life activists often refer to abortion as *murder*. Josephus expressed this same sentiment over 1,900 years ago.

Rabbinical Judaism's Position on Abortion

I want to return to Katha Pollitt's statement pertaining to Rabbinical Judaism's position on abortion. Here, again, is what she wrote:

> Unfortunately for abortion opponents, at least one thousand years of rabbinical scholarship say the fine is for causing a miscarriage and the death penalty is for causing the death of the pregnant woman. If anti-abortion exegetes are only now finding in this rather obscure passage evidence for an absolute biblical ban on abortion, you have to wonder why no one read it that way before. The Talmud permits abortion under certain circumstances, in fact requires it if the woman's life is at stake.[11]

The above remark is misleading because it subliminally creates the impression that Judaism historically upheld a woman's right to choose to terminate an inconvenient pregnancy. This is not so. I have

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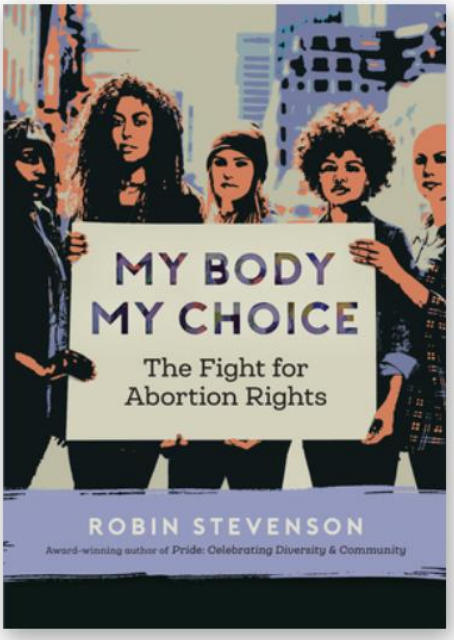
[9] Philo, *The Works of Philo*, "The Special Laws, III," chapter XIX, sections 108-109, translated by C. D. Yonge, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1993, p. 605. This writing may also be viewed online.
[10] *Cf.*, *The Works of Flavius Josephus*, Vol. 4, translated by William Whiston: *Against Apion*, Book II, 25, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1992, p. 225. This writing may also be viewed online.
[11] Katha Pollitt, *op. cit.*

already presented historical information from two respected Jewish sources, one of which plainly categorizes willful abortion as murder. Of course, this is because their Torah reading was based on the Septuagint translation versus the Hebrew Masoretic Text. While most, *but not all*, constituents of Rabbinic Judaism uphold abortion,[12] it is *not* in the same vein as that promoted by Katha Pollitt. Their official conclusion mirrors then-Senator John F. Kennedy's summary: *repugnant*.[13] What follows is Rabbi David M. Feldman's conclusion to his 1983 article titled "Abortion: The Jewish View":

> Accordingly, abortion for "population control" is repugnant to the Jewish system. Abortion for economic reasons is also not admissible. Taking precaution by abortion or birth control against physical threat remains a mitzvah, but never to forestall financial difficulty. Material considerations are improper in this connection. In the Jewish community, today, with a conscious or unconscious drive to replenish ranks decimated by the Holocaust, contemporary rabbis invoke not the more lenient, but rather the more stringent responsa of the earlier authorities. The more permissive decisions, they point out, were in any case rendered against the background of far greater instinctive hesitation to resort to abortion. Against today's background of more casual abortion, rabbis are moving closer to the position associated with Maimonides and Unterman, allowing abortion only for the gravest of reasons.[14]

I support the above conclusion. Rabbinic Judaism figuratively opens the door a crack, upholding abortion "only for the gravest of reasons"; author Katha Pollitt attempts to burst the door wide open, lending her support for abortion without limits.



In considering the history of mankind, abortion has only recently become a political issue. Today, "a woman's right to choose" to terminate the life of her unborn child is a rallying cry of the Democratic party. Women in pro-abortion protest marches are often seen carrying signs that say things like, "My body – My Choice!" Of course, they disregard the fact that the unborn child *also* has a body, which is why they won't give him or her *their* choice in the matter. For those who have no regard for the Bible, that is their approach. Sadly, they do not understand that we are not our own. None of us are. *Our bodies are the property of Yahweh*. The Apostle Paul expressed this under-standing in his first letter to the Corinthian believers:

> Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from the Almighty, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify Yahweh in your body and in your spirit, which are Yahweh's.[14]

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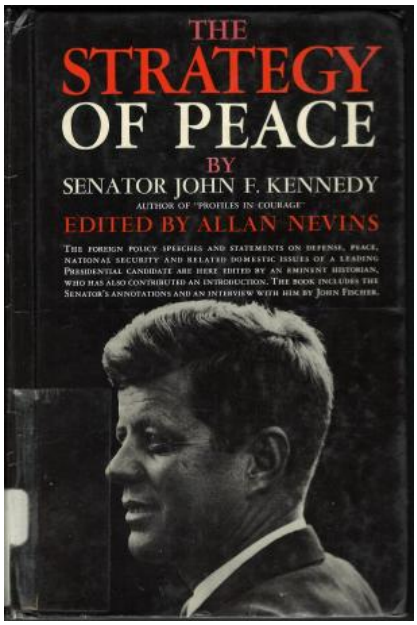
[12] See "The Jewish Position On Abortion Isn't What You Think It Is," by Rabbi Mitchell Rocklin, Ph.D. and Howard Slugh from the General Counsel of the Jewish Coalition for Religious Liberty, *Public Discourse*, website of The Witherspoon Institute, July 16, 2018.
[13] *Cf.*, *The Strategy of Peace*, by John F. Kennedy, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1960, p. 224.
[14] "Abortion: The Jewish View," by Rabbi David M. Feldman, *Responsa 1980-1990, Hoshen Mishpat: Harming Others*, August 1983, p. 806. Lifted from the website of the Rabbinical Assembly (www.rabbinicalassembly.org), New York, NY.
[15] *Cf.*, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20.

If our bodies belong to *Yahweh*, this brings new perspective to the discussion, at least insofar as both parties agree that we are created beings and that the Bible is the Creator's instruction manual for how we live our lives.

As I mentioned earlier, a rallying cry of the Democratic party is "a woman's right to choose," i.e., the right to choose to terminate the life of her unborn child. Many are unaware of the fact that even the liberal Democratic party at one time recognized abortion as a heinous act.[16] When it comes to the icon of the Democratic party, many point to President John F. Kennedy. To their embarrassment, John F. Kennedy once declared abortion to be "repugnant." During his campaign for the presidency in 1959, Senator Kennedy agreed to an interview with *Harper's* magazine editor John Fischer. The interview was recorded in Kennedy's book *The Strategy of Peace*. One of Fischer's questions was, "Do you see any hope at all of slowing up the rate of population increase?"

Kennedy replied, "Now, on the question of limiting population: as you know the Japanese have been doing it very vigorously, through abortion, which I think would be repugnant to all Americans."[17]

To be sure, Kennedy's expressed opinion reflected the overall convictions of American citizens in the 50's and 60's. I remember the stunned reactions of the residents of the small farming community where I was raised when, in 1973, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of abortion in the infamous *Roe v. Wade* case. I was a teenager at the time, heavily influenced by secular education, so I was more or less indifferent to the entire controversy. Four years later, I had a college roommate who opposed abortion. We had a few discussions in which we aired our differences; at the time, I felt that if a woman became pregnant and didn't want the child, the world would be better off with one less person anyway. I should add that it was during this time of my then-agnostic life in which I wasn't at all certain if we were created beings or if we evolved from primordial soup, so whatever the Bible had to say about abortion was of little or no consequence to me. That time period of my life remains an embarrassment, but thankfully, the following semester, I was enrolled in a class taught by an unapologetically zealous Christian professor whose creation-themed lectures completely changed my perspective. Within five years, I found myself and another believer knocking on doors seeking support for a group known as Americans Against Abortion, and paying for newspaper ads calling attention to the sanctity of all human life, including unborn children. Nevertheless, my memories of those days are such that, looking back, I recognize that a division was forming in our nation, a division between conservative Christians who opposed abortion and self-avowed liberals who supported it.



Today, anyone who speaks out against abortion becomes a target of the liberal media, and there are several liberal media outlets that will ostracize you if you're on their radar. As with speaking out against the gay lifestyle, speaking out against abortion may also impact your employment. It is common for those

[16] In fact, of the seven Supreme Court justices who supported the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision legalizing abortions, five had been nominated by Republican Presidents. Only one Republican-nominated Justice, as well as one nominated by a Democrat President, dissented in the final 7-2 vote.
[17] Kennedy, *op. cit*, p. 224.

who oppose abortion to be labeled *misogynists*, another term that didn't exist in the 60's or 70's. When I first heard the word, I had to look it up, and it took some time to find out what it means. Today, a quick Google search will tell you all you need to know—"a person who dislikes, despises, or is strongly prejudiced against women." Since we are acquainted with many women who, like us, are opposed to abortion, I learned that even *women* can be, and *are*, labeled misogynists. Suffice it to say it's an unfair label. We don't dislike women at all—rather, we embrace *life*, recognizing that we, as created beings, have a responsibility to respect all forms of life, including the unborn and the elderly. As the husband of a loving wife, father of a loving daughter, and grandfather of two adorable granddaughters, I'm pretty sure I don't harbor any dislike or prejudice against women!

To those who label us *misogynists*, I counter that instead we are *biophiliacs*.[18] If we should find ourselves in a name-calling feud, which we would prefer to avoid, we could label abortion activists as *misopedists*.[19] Once we learn that all life is in fact *sacred*, and especially once we realize that Scripture recognizes unborn children as living human creatures, the perspective changes, at least for those who agree that the Bible is the Almighty's instruction manual to His children. Those who believe we evolved from primordial soup most likely will not understand. Those who reject the Bible as the Almighty's instruction manual for the benefit of mankind will *never* understand. We can only hope and pray that those who read this article agree that there *is* a loving Creator who has given us His Word to guide us through this life. *They* are the ones who are most likely to agree with the next portion of this study.

2024 Update: A friend asked me to put together a presentation on this topic, and my PowerPoint presentation titled "The Abortion Cover-Up Exposed" is now available for viewing on YouTube. I also dedicated my October 2024 newsletter to this same topic as it relates to the political landscape. That article is titled "Republicans Shooting Themselves in the Foot With Abortion Restrictions."

The Divided States of America

Along life's way, June and I have been introduced to many deceptions. We address what we feel are the most obvious ones in most of the studies we have composed. One that we haven't addressed is the major misnomer involving the name of the country in which we reside, the *United* States of America. Many folks fall for the deception that we live in a united nation because the very name of our nation says it is; the notion that "the land of the free and the home of the brave" could actually be a *divided* nation is foreign to the thought processes of many Americans. *But divided we are*. The "united" misnomer may not have been all that evident in the 1950's or 60's. Our nation even seemed fairly united during the 1980's, at least

[18] *Dictionary.com* defines *biophilia* as "a love of life and the living world; the affinity of human beings for other life forms."
[19] *Misopedist* is defined as "one who hates children."

from our perspective. Nevertheless, an inkling of the misnomer should have become fairly obvious at least as early as the 1860's, when our nation was at war with itself. We were certainly *not* a united nation then, and we are most definitely not a united nation *now*. We could start with the two issues outlined above, *homo-sexuality* and *abortion*, both of which are condemned by Scripture, and both of which were condemned by our forefathers, but supported by an ever-increasing number of residents today. Even a large contingency of believers professing faith in the Creator as presented in the Bible ex-press support for a "woman's right to choose," and widespread acceptance of gay clergy in both Protes-tant and Catholic churches exempli-fies the LGBTQ stand taken by contemporary religion of today's world.

But these "hot buttons" are only a *part* of what makes our nation so divided. How united are our families? According to a 2017 report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 55% of all homicide victims in the United States were murdered by their intimate partners.[20] According to Guiness World Records.com, in 2002 the United States had the third highest divorce rate in the world (4.3 di-vorces per 1,000 people), trailing only the Maldives and Belarus. According to an August 2023 report on forbes.com, the United States still has one of the highest divorce rates in the world, but thankfully the rate has declined since 2002. The report goes on to state, "In fact, the U.S. crude divorce rate is 2.5 [per 1,000 people], while the worldwide average crude divorce rate is just 1.8."[21] Just in case a 2.5 divorce rate doesn't seem all that high, please consider the fact that from 1867 to 1879, the annual divorce rate was 0.3 divorces per 1,000 Americans.[22] The rate steadily crept up to its current rate since that time. As anyone can see, many marriages in our nation are divided.

Racial tension has also contributed to the dividing of our nation, culminated by the "Black Lives Matter" movement. We should all be "color blind"; instead, there is a pervading racial divide saturating our nation, with frequent cries of discrimination, whether it be employment-related, housing-related or racial profiling by law enforcement. I can tell you and others that I am truly "color blind," but only Yahweh knows my heart. Sadly, I can say I have witnessed an African-American man assault an African-American woman, knocking her to the pavement of a parking lot. I was powerless to stop him, but as he walked away, I helped the woman to her feet and made certain she was okay. I have worked as a minority individual in a socially-friendly environment where I was treated as an equal, but I have also been a pas-senger on a train where I was the victim of counter-discrimination. All I could do was wait until the angry man finished shouting racial slurs at me, blaming me for all unfair treatment he has received from those of my race. Once he ended his tirade, I calmly explained that I had done nothing to him, I had nothing a-gainst him, and I think *everyone* should be considered innocent until proven guilty. Thankfully, we ended up shaking hands. But that's not the prevailing state of mind in our nation these days.

I haven't even mentioned other divisions weakening the moral infrastructure of the USA, such as gun control laws and public schools where even small children have been targeted. Once-quiet neighborhoods are often interrupted by the sound of racing cars with loud mufflers, likely driven by males with a low self-esteem who are taking out their frustrations on their neighbors with the knowledge that our also-weakened police force will likely look the other way. And who in the 1960's could have envisioned a nation in which a biological male can identify as female and therefore gain access to women's restrooms?

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[20] This information is borrowed from the Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence website, posted November 2018.
[21] Source: forbes.com, "Revealing Divorce Statistics in 2023," by Christy Bieber, J.D., updated August 8, 2023.
[22] Source: insider.com, "How the Divorce Rate Has Changed Over the Last 150 Years," by Frank Olito, Jan 30, 2019.

I composed this study less than two weeks before the horrific October 7, 2023 attack on Israeli civilians perpetrated by the terrorist group Hamas. To quote Michael Brown in his online article "The Madness and Irrationality of Antisemitism":

> Hamas intentionally targeted civilians. Hamas barbarically, even joyfully, butchered babies, butchered whole families, butchered mothers with chil-dren in arms, butchered the elderly, then celebrated their inhuman accomplish-ments. Israel does its best to avoid civil-ian casualties, even giving warnings and urging non-combatants to flee, and the nation grieves over the loss of civilian lives, especially children. There is NO moral equivalence.[22]

The mere notion of taking someone's life should be *nightmarish*, something you want to immediately purge from your thought processes. But when a grieving father considers his eight-year-old daughter's death at the hands of Hamas a "blessing" compared to the alternative of her being held captive and savagely tortured by the terrorists, the bitter, stinging, heart-wrenching reality of the callousness of men is savagely revealed. And yet, in spite of this inhumane cruelty, right here in the Divided States of America, pro-Palestinian protests supporting Hamas have already begun, some of which are within a few miles of where we currently live. It seems that just when I ran out of items that divide us, I was imme-diately compelled to add "Support for terrorists who stoop to beheading babies and children."

Political parties at one time strove to achieve bipartisanship. Bipartisanship in 2024 is the *exception*—the two main governing parties now seem to be at each other's throats. The liberal party has the liberal media on its side; the conservative party has the conservative media on its side; it has become more and more difficult to find unbiased reporting from *any* media outlet. The primary topics addressed during the 1960 Presidential debate were domestic policy, education, health care, farming, the economy, labor and the Cold War. While both parties continue to have opposing views on these topics, the added burdens of abortion rights, transgender rights, gay marriage, racial disparity, gun control, universal health coverage and the border crisis have further deepened the chasm between the two parties, with no middle ground. Even the media itself recognized that we are no longer the "United" States of America when PBS' FRONTLINE aired a two-part docu-mentary titled *Divided States of America* on January 17-18, 2017. In the introduction, a voice declares, "(President) Obama came

[23] Michael Brown, "The Madness and Irrationality of Antisemitism," published on October 16, 2023, © 2023 The Stream. All Rights Reserved.

on the mandate of changing Washington; by his very presence, he forced more polarization and gridlock than we had seen in the eight years prior."

The politically-charged dividing line became evident when a salesman for a major internet provider recently came to our home. He was a nice guy; although we didn't take him up on his offer, we en-joyed a pleasant conversation. It turns out he supports the Democratic party, the party that currently upholds a woman's right to choose to terminate her unborn baby's life, as well as gay marriage. Although we disagree on these issues, he agreed that yes, we are a *very* divided nation.

And that brings us to the next part of our study.

The Dream of a Coming, Yet Future, Kingdom

Have you ever had a frightening dream, but within seconds of awakening you forgot significant details? This happens to me a lot! That's what happened to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, as recorded in the book of Daniel, chapter two. I think it's a fascinating chapter, so I recommend reading or re-reading it just to make certain I don't leave out any pertinent details. Briefly, King Nebuchadnezzar had a very troubling dream, so disturbing that he knew it had a deep meaning, and he desperately wanted to know its interpretation. But he also forgot the details of the dream. He summoned all the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers, and astrologers, but not only did he demand the *interpretation* of his dream, they were required to tell him the *details*. The seers, in their attempt to not appear quite so incompetent, advised the king that *no man* could possibly do such a thing. They implored him to give them the details, *then* they would tell him what it all meant. Nebuchadnezzar would have none of that. Losing his patience, he advised them that unless they gave him both the details of the dream *and* its interpretation, they would be executed and their homes reduced to rubble. Regretfully for them, they failed to meet the king's demands. For some undisclosed reason, Daniel and his friends were included on the list of those slated for execution.

When word reached Daniel of his impending fate, he asked for some time to come up with the interpretation. The Almighty revealed the dream to Daniel in a vision; he supplied the details to King Nebuchadnezzar, who praised Daniel's Elohim and immediately made Daniel ruler over the entire province of Babylon and chief administrator over all the wise men of Babylon. That dream offers a summary of the world powers from that time until the end, and as the time of Yeshua's return is nigh at hand, we need to consider what it means for us, our nation and how we need to prepare for what's to come.

What was the dream? Daniel related it as follows:

> 31 Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible.
> 32 This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass,
> 33 His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay.
> 34 Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces.

> 35 Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

Daniel told King Nebuchadnezzar that he and his Babylonian kingdom represented the head of gold, which I'm sure the king appreciated; but nevertheless, as he was about to learn, the kingdom over which he presided would eventually be supplanted by another. Without telling him who or what would be represented by the remaining body parts, Daniel explained that the chest and arms of silver represented an inferior kingdom that would arise after Nebuchadnezzar's. That second kingdom is universally recognized as the Medo-Persian empire. The third kingdom was portrayed as having a torso and thighs of brass, which historians universally understand as representing the Greek empire. The fourth kingdom was characterized by legs of iron, and is universally recognized as the Roman empire. The fifth kingdom consisted of feet of iron mixed with clay. *What kingdom might this be?* This is where scholars are divided.

The reason I'm not really a "prophecy buff" is because I've been exposed to too many individuals who thought they had various prophecies figured out, only to fall short. I could start with the Seventh-Day Adventists and their failed prophecy of Yeshua's second coming in 1844, now reinterpreted as the "Investigative Judgment." I once had a friend who, in 2009, was so certain that Yeshua would return between September 2015 and September 2016 that he maintained a countdown clock on his website. When his prophetic expectation failed, his website was taken down and that's the last I have heard of him. Suffice it to say, I love prophecy, but only for the purpose of looking back to see its fulfillment. For example, I cannot imagine that during the years between the prophet Isaiah's ministry and Yeshua's birth anyone *really* believed that an actual virgin would give birth to a child. That is impossible, right? So prior to Yeshua's earthly ministry, I can imagine many believers attributing some *spiritual* meaning to the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14. I'm pretty sure I would have. However, we can now look back and hopefully agree that Yeshua was literally born of a virgin.

In King Nebuchadnezzar's dream, the statue's feet mixed with iron and clay has been somewhat of a mystery to scholars, and I believe it's because that fifth world power's characteristics weren't such that anyone would be able to recognize it—until those characteristics are clearly manifested. I am persuaded that the prophesied characteristics of the fifth world power have not only been manifested, but I am persuaded my family and I are living in the heart of that "kingdom"! What special characteristics did Daniel use to describe the fifth world power? Here's how he described it in Daniel 2:41-43:

> 41 And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay.
> 42 And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken.
> 43 And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.

I have read various interpretations of which world power is represented by the fifth kingdom. Some identify the 10 toes as the European Union, with the 10 toes represented by Italy, France, England, Belgium, Holland, Portugal, Prussia, Austria, Spain and Greece. On the surface, this interpretation seems reasonable, and I have read some very persuasive arguments supporting it. Yet one has to wonder, "*Does the*

United States of America not have a place in terms of being an established world power?" The United States emerged as a world power when it defeated Spain in the Spanish-American War of 1898, eventually becoming the leading world power.

As we have already shown, this nation, out of all nations of the earth, best exemplifies a divided kingdom (world power). LGBTQ, abortion, racial issues, gender identity issues, gun control, protests aimed at defunding the police, two hotly-divided political parties, and now hordes of pro-Palestinian activists staging rallies in support of terrorists killing thousands of civilians—these issues collectively demonstrate that the United States of America is more accurately the "*Divided* States of America," fulfilling and nailing the prophecy of the fifth kingdom in King Nebuchadnezzar's dream. Many commentators have interpreted the "divided kingdom" as being divided by *borders*; if my understanding of the prophecy's fulfillment is correct, the division is not only represented by *borders*, but also by *people*, as described above.

Michael Jones, a contributor to the *Quora* website, authored a study titled "World Powers Foretold by Daniel," and I think he expertly explained how the Anglo-American world power best represents the feet of the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream:

> The once traditional ironlike rulerships have been obliged to listen more and more to the common people, who want their say in the governments ruling over them. Amid a multitude of contending opinions and interests, there is no sticking together of authoritarian rule and the common people—no more than there could be a uniting of iron with clay.
>
> In the Anglo-American World Power, people have risen up to claim their rights through civil rights campaigns, mass protests, labor unions, and independence movements. The common people undermine the ability of the Anglo-American World Power to act with ironlike strength. Their influence weakens the ability of this world power to implement its policies. Opposing ideologies have weakened the power base of even popular leaders, so that they have no clear mandate to implement their policies.
>
> The end result is a world power that is politically fragmented and has difficulty in achieving a political consensus—like iron mixed with clay.[24]

Jones concludes:

> The fact that today's world power is the ***last remaining power*** represented in the immense image of Daniel's prophecy and the ***last Kingdom*** mentioned in John's vision in Revelation, highlights how close to the end we are. More than that, John says, it "must remain a short while." Time is running out for everyone to decide which kingdom they support—man's governments or God's Kingdom.[25]

Apart from the author's use of "God" in reference to our Heavenly Father[26], I wholeheartedly agree with his interpretation of who is represented by the fifth kingdom of the image in Nebuchadnezzar's

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[24] Michael Jones, "World Powers Foretold by Daniel," https://www.quora.com/Why-do-Jehovahs-Witnesses-add-a-fifth-kingdom-Anglo-America-at-Daniel-2-37-43-when-Daniel-explained-the-image-to-only-represent-four-kingdoms.
[25] Ibid.
[26] *God* is the name of a heathen idol whose worship is condemned by Yahweh in Isaiah 65:11. The name *God* is covered up in the English translation of that verse, and is translated "that troop." We address this name in detail in our study *God's Identity*

dream. There may be other facets of that prophecy that are yet to be fulfilled, including the possibility that we ain't seen nuthin' yet in terms of how divided our nation may eventually become. I've already edited this study so as to include the division over whether to support Israel or Hamas. What is next?

Are We in the Kingdom Now?

I recently gave a small presentation in which I made reference to the coming Kingdom, but to my surprise, the audience was not receptive to my message. It was summarily rejected by the leader of the assembly, who, for reasons I'll never understand, believes we're in the Kingdom *now*. He made reference to Yeshua's statement in the book of Luke that "the Kingdom is within you":

> 20 And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of the Almighty should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of the Almighty cometh not with observation:
> 21 Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of the Almighty is within you.[27]

I was stunned by the pastor's regarding the above phrase as proof we are now in the Kingdom. Let's overlook for the moment the issues I've already mentioned identifying our nation as the most divided nation on earth. Let's focus instead on crime statistics: According to the FBI's "Crime Clock," in 2017 a violent crime was committed every 24.6 seconds. A murder occurred every 30.5 minutes, a rape every 3.9 minutes, a robbery every 1.7 minutes, and an aggravated assault every 39.0 seconds. A property crime offense was committed every 4.1 seconds. A burglary offense occurred every 22.6 seconds, a larceny-theft every 5.7 seconds, and a motor vehicle theft every 40.9 seconds.[28] There were 689 mass shootings in 2021[29], 647 in 2022, and 656 in 2023.[30] Suffice it to say crime is still rampant here in 2024, and I highly doubt any of the parents of the 19 school children (and two teachers) massacred in Uvalde, Texas on May 24, 2022 would agree that we are now in the Kingdom. As of this writing, we are most assuredly ***not*** in the promised Kingdom.

We could also focus on how Yeshua taught His disciples to pray "… Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done …." Would the leader of the assembly referenced above teach others that we no longer need to bother praying "Thy Kingdom come"?

Let's also not lose sight of the fact that there's a vast difference between having the Kingdom "within us" and physically *being* in the Kingdom. One could legitimately ask, "What does it mean to have the Kingdom within us?" Amy-Jill Levine, in her book *The Misunderstood Jew*, offers the

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According to Ancient Hebrew Scholars, and I also put together a five-part PowerPoint presentation titled "Tracing the Origin of the Word 'God'."

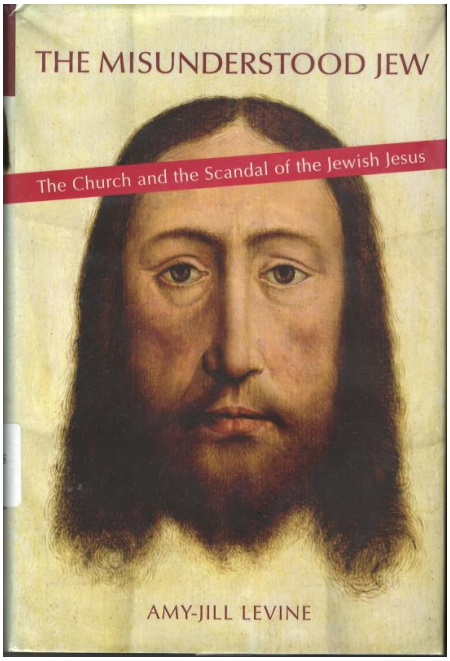
[27] *Cf.*, Luke 17:21, *King James Version*.

[28] Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) 2017 Crime Clock Statistics, https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2017/crime-in-the-u.s.-2017/topic-pages/crime-clock#:~:text=A%20violent%20crime%20was%20committed,was%20committed%20every%204.1%20seconds.

[29] Source: "US Surpasses 500 Mass Shootings in 2023: Gun Violence Archive," by Miranda Nazzaro, 09/17/2023, The Hill, Washington, DC, © 1998 - 2023 Nexstar Media Inc. | All rights reserved.

[30] Source: "Mass Shootings Increased While Gun Violence Deaths Dropped in 2023," by Sareen Habeshian, Axios Media Inc., Arlington, VA, Jan 9, 2024.

perspective that having the Kingdom within us is a *state of mind*, not a physical experience. Levine quotes from a book authored by Megan McKenna:



> In a dream, a devout disciple of the master was permitted to approach the Temple in Paradise where all the great old sages who had studied the Talmud all their lives were now spending eternity. He gazed in at them, and to his amazement, they were all sitting around tables, just as they had done on earth, studying the Talmud still! The disciple watched them passionately exclaiming and arguing and reverently fingering the text. He wondered, "Is this really Paradise? It seems like the earth." But then his thoughts were interrupted by warm laughter. "You are mistaken. This is not Paradise. The sages are not in Paradise. Paradise is in the sages."[31]

If in Luke 17:21, Yeshua was explaining to the Pharisees that Paradise was in *them*, it would have been in the same sense as those sages sitting around tables, studying and arguing Talmud. It was some-thing they enjoyed doing and something that was perfectly harmless. If you're one of those who enjoys sitting with friends and discussing Bible topics into the night, then you, like me, might not mind spending eternity doing the same!

However, I highly doubt Yeshua was communicating to the Pharisees that the Kingdom was within them. That translation as found in the King James Version is very dubious. I'm not saying it's not possible to be translated that way, but there's *another* translation that makes much more sense to me. Here's how that same verse is translated in the *New Revised Standard Version*:

> 21 nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There it is!' For in fact, the kingdom of God is among you.

In his *Interlinear Bible*, translator Jay P. Green offered the following literal translation of Luke 17:21:

> 21 nor will they say, Lo, here! Or, Lo, there! For behold the kingdom of God is **in your midst**."[32]

Although I have major issues with Jehovah's Witnesses' theology, I find agreement with their understanding of what Yeshua meant when He told the Pharisees the Kingdom was in their midst: Yeshua *is* the King, and He was indeed in their midst. Here's what we read in the Jehovah's Witness book *"Let Your Kingdom Come"*:

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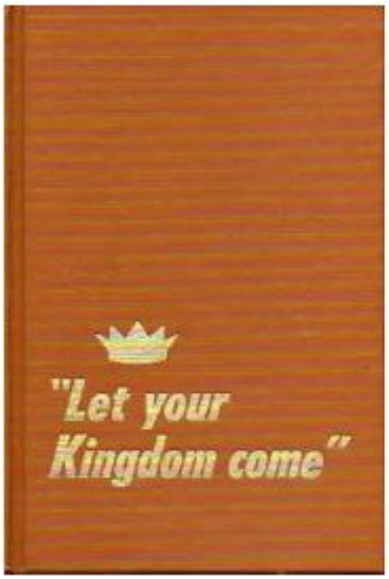
[31] Amy-Jill Levine, *The Misunderstood Jew*, HarperSanFrancisco, San Francisco, CA, 2006, p. 227 (citing Rites of Justice: The Sacraments and Liturgy as Ethical Imperatives, by Megan McKenna, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997, pp. 200-221).
[32] From *The Interlinear Bible: Hebrew-Greek-English*, Jay P. Green, Sr., General Editor and Translator, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1986, literal translation of Luke 17:21, p. 808.

> [7] Think, too, about this: To whom was Jesus talking when he said, "The kingdom of God is within you"? It was to the hypocritical Pharisees that Jesus applied God's words by the prophet Isaiah: "Their heart is far from me." (Matthew 15:1, 8, AV; Isaiah 29:13) How could the Kingdom enter into those hard hearts? What, then, is the meaning of Jesus' words? There is a clue in editions of the *King James Version* that have marginal readings. There the alternative reading given is: "The kingdom of God is among you." And this is the way that many other translations of the Bible, such as the Catholic *Jerusalem Bible* and *The New English Bible*, also read.
>
> [8] So, then, Jesus was here speaking of himself, the King-designate, as being among them. He was actually there in their midst, as a real person. And this should bring home to us, too, that the Kingdom is a real kingdom, an actual government, even as its King is an actual person.[33]

Yes, the Kingdom is a real kingdom, an actual government that will be governed by its King with a rod of iron (Rev. 2:27). That King will be Yeshua, and that's the kingdom that will succeed the "divided kingdom." That kingdom is coming soon! To paraphrase Michael Jones, Time is running out for every-one to decide which kingdom they support—man's governments or Yeshua's Kingdom."



How Do We Prepare for the Kingdom?

Quite simply, we prepare for the coming Kingdom by bearing the fruits of the spirit, which must of necessity include imitating Yeshua, living by the examples He set for those who follow Him. It's all in the Bible, but I can show right here and now how mainstream Christianity has *perverted* Yeshua's teachings, effectively deceiving millions.

Years ago, when I was confronted with the proper interpretation of the text of Matthew 5:17-19, it hit me like a truck that, contrary to what we had been taught by the church we were attending, *none* of the law was destroyed, or as our church pastor put it, "done away." We need to re-read those verses, and I will demonstrate quickly that it is utterly *impossible* for the law to have been "done away" or "nailed to the cross." Such interpretations can be shown to be *misinterpretations.* Here's the pertinent text:

> 17 Think **not** that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil (Greek *plerosai*, #4137 in *Strong's Concordance*).[34]

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[33] Excerpted from "Let your Kingdom come," anonymous author, Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., 1981, pp. 8-9.

[34] References such as *The New Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon* (p. 518) plainly assert that by "fulfil," Yeshua meant that He had come to cause Yahweh's law to be obeyed as it should be obeyed. Let's take a moment to examine the meaning of the word Greek word translated "fulfill" (Greek πληρόω, "plērŏō, plerosai), as presented by this lexicon:

> Universally and absolutely, *to fulfil*, i.e. *to cause God's will* (as made known in the law) *to be obeyed as it should be, and God's promises* (given through the prophets) *to receive fulfillment*: Mt. v. 17; cf. *Weiss*, Das Matthäusevang. u.s.w. p.146 sq. [COMP.: ανα-, αντ-ανα-, προσ-ανα-, εκ-, συμ-πληρόω.]

As presented by Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon, Yeshua's use of the word "fulfill" had nothing to do with "completing a contract" that would result in the law being abolished (destroyed), but *everything* to do with causing and demonstrating how

> 18 For verily I say unto you, Till **heaven and earth** pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled (Greek *genētai*, #1096 in *Strong's Concordance*).[35]
> 19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Long before Yeshua uttered the above warning, all of Israel vowed to keep Yahweh's laws at Mount Sinai (Ex. 24:3; 7). Moses sealed their vow with these words in Deut. 30:19:

> 19 I call **heaven and earth** to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:

Yahweh produced *heaven and earth* as witnesses to Israel's vow to keep His laws. It didn't take them very long to break their vow, and that is precisely why we need redemption from our own rebellious acts. None of us is righteous, for all have sinned (Romans 3:23). *The only possible means of redemption is the shed blood of a sinless man*. For us flesh and blood humans, redemption is not possible. However, when Yeshua divested Himself of His eternal nature (Phil. 2:6) to become a flesh and blood Man, the impossible became possible.

But His sacrifice didn't mean He was about to exempt His followers from obeying the commandments! In fact, He recalled the witnesses, *heaven and earth*, as confirmation of the permanence of that original vow at Sinai. That vow was (and is) still in effect. Nominal Christianity ignores the original witnesses, focusing instead on Yeshua's instruction that no part of the law will be destroyed till all be *fulfilled* (Greek *genētai*), and then they stamp the "fulfilled" part on Yeshua's redemptive act on the cross, as in bringing Torah observance to an end–a direct *insult* to the selfless, life-giving act in which He willingly offered Himself to be tortured, stripped naked and nailed to a cross, shedding His blood for *and because of* our sins—providing the *only* means by which we may be saved. Teaching that this redemptive act released us from the law is nothing less than a slap in Yeshua's face, effectively cheapening the value of His shed blood.

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the Almighty's will should be obeyed. In this way, Yeshua not only fulfilled the law, but He also showed us how we should live our lives–by following His example of obedience.

[35] References such as *The New Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon* (p. 115) show that the Greek word γένηται (*genētai*), as used in Matthew 5:18, means "*to become,* i.q., *to come to pass*, *happen,* of events." Here's the literal translation of Matthew 5:18 as found in *The Interlinear Bible*, Jay P. Green, Sr., Translator and General Editor, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1986: "Truly I say to you, Until the heavens and the earth pass away, in no way shall one iota or one tittle pass away from the law until all comes to pass (*genētai*)." Yeshua was not referring to something that would come to an end with His death on the cross; rather, He was referring to the fact that a "jot or one tittle" shall in no wise pass from the law till **all** *come to pass.* Let's just say that "all" has not yet come to pass. There is more to come.

Way back in 1985, when June and I put two and two together, concluding that Yeshua did *not* mean for His followers to think He had come to "do away" with the law, our pastor begged to differ, in-sisting that Yeshua *fulfilled the law* when He died on the cross, thus releasing us from the vow at Sinai. I knew that could not have been what Yeshua meant, but at that time I was ill-equipped to prove the pastor wrong. That has changed.

For quick and effective proof that Yahweh's law has not been "destroyed" or "done away," please read what Yeshua told His disciples the night He was betrayed, at the Last Supper. Here's what we read in Luke 22:14-16:

> 14 And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him.
> 15 And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer:
> 16 For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled (Greek *plērōthē*, #4137 in *Strong's Concordance*) in the kingdom of the Almighty.

Did you catch that? Yeshua told His disciples that He would not again eat the Passover ***until it be fulfilled in the Kingdom of the Almighty***! Has that Kingdom come yet? No, it has not. Has the prophecy of the coming Kingdom as prophesied by Daniel arrived yet? No, it has not. Has Yeshua's reign begun? No, it has not. When that prophesied Kingdom comes, ***that*** is when **ALL** will be fulfilled. Until that Kingdom comes, ALL has ***not*** been fulfilled! It's that simple.

If you're looking for excuses to opt out of obeying Yahweh's commandments, such as resting on His weekly Sabbath day, abstaining from the meat of ritually unclean animals, understanding that marriage is a sacred union between a man and a woman, under-standing that willful abortion of a child is murder—if you think it's the will of the Father to go against these and other Torah commands, you're going to have to *at the very least* wait until the coming Kingdom as prophesied by Daniel is ushered in, i.e., when that "stone cut out without hands" comes crashing down (Dan. 2:34). ***That*** is when ALL will be fulfilled. This understanding sheds new light on what it means to follow Yeshua's example of obedience (1 Peter 2:21).

If you are currently living a lifestyle *not* governed by Yahweh's Torah, then you are living in rebellion with sin reigning in your life. It is not too late to repent! Turn away from sin! Turn to Yeshua, following Him and His example of faithful obedience to His Father. He is full of grace and loving-kindness towards those who seek Him with all diligence. May we all live to see and experience fulfillment of the Passover in Yahweh's coming Kingdom—the marriage supper of the Lamb[36]!

Updated October 21, 2023, July 28, 2024 & October 8, 2024

[36] *Cf.*, Revelation 19:6-9.