



PTNews

August 2016

Published 10 times annually

All Bible references are from the KJV

(Examining Current Events in the Light of Bible Prophecy)

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The Entitlement Mentality of the American Church

“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves.” – [2 Timothy 3:1-2](#)

By Mike Wingfield

I often wonder what the Lord thinks of the churches in America. Are most of them a reflection of what He really wants the church to be? Does the character and message of the church truly represent the holy and righteous standards and eternal plans of our holy Lord? Do most of the churches in America please the Lord, or do they make Him sick at His stomach? Remember what He said to the church of Laodicea? *“... because thou art lukewarm [filled with apathy], ... I will spew thee out of my mouth.”* ([Revelation 3:16](#))

If the apostles of the early church were to attend our present-day American churches would they recognize them as an extension of the true church that was established in the first century? We should expect some cultural differences. Worship styles can reflect the culture. Dress preferences may reflect the customs of the day. But doctrine, what we believe, cannot and should not

be altered to fit a culture. Truth is truth. God’s truth is eternal and transcends cultures.

In my lifetime, America has experienced an incredible change in the character and makeup of its people. Both born-again evangelical believers and secular unbelievers have adopted a new frame of reference. The entire culture has radically changed!

Today, America is deeply immersed in an entitlement mentality. At the heart of this dangerous philosophy is the love of self. People are preoccupied with the notion that everyone owes them. They believe their parents, the rich, their society, the government, and everyone else owes them. This is the driving force behind the personal rights movement, the free-sex culture, the judicial system that promotes ridiculous law suits, and the welfare system that is rewarding millions who refuse to work or lead a life of discipline. This mentality is dangerous because it allows

people to escape the consequences of their selfish and sinful lifestyle choices. It rewards laziness, covetousness, and selfishness.

The Bible does encourage us to love our neighbor and to give to those who have a need that is beyond their control. But, we are not expected to give to those who refuse to work, or lead a responsible lifestyle. The Bible clearly states: ***"...if any would not work, neither should he eat."*** ([2 Thessalonians 3:10](#))

The Bible teaches that laziness leads to poverty. ([Proverbs 6:6-11; 20:13; 24:33-34](#)) When a lazy and irresponsible person is rewarded with undeserved support, he will waste what he has been given. ([Proverbs 18:9](#)) The desires of the slothful person will never be quenched; he will always demand more. ([Proverbs 13:4](#))

The 1960's were a turbulent era for America. It was the beginning of the entitlement mentality in our nation. That is why President John F. Kennedy said in his inaugural address to the nation on January 20, 1961: "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country." However, today, many Americans are demanding that their country do more for them. Tragically, the present administration in Washington is all too happy to accommodate this crowd because they want to enslave Americans to the federal government. They want to create total dependence upon the government so they can create big government and control the lives of Americans. This would allow our government leaders to radically alter the future of America to fit their New World Order agenda, where the rich and powerful elite rule over the masses with no opposition.

Unfortunately, the professing church in America has adopted this mentality and made it the central focus of the church's ministry outreach. They have allowed the culture to change them, rather than changing the culture to glorify God. Most Christians in America are looking for a God and church that will meet their wants and needs. They are asking: "What can God do for me?" "What can the church do for me?" Consequently, far too many leaders in the church are marketing the church. This model of church leadership is called "the seeker-friendly church," or "the seeker-sensitive church." These pastors do not like Biblical teaching that focuses upon solid Biblical doctrine. Many doctrines are avoided because they are viewed as

being too offensive to people. They don't talk about sin, repentance, judgment, or eternal damnation. Their aim is to make church attendees feel good about themselves.

This religious version of the entitlement mentality is being promoted by pastors and evangelists who are focused upon meeting the "felt needs" of the people around them. Other catch words that reflect a dangerous focus on self are: self-esteem, self-worth, self-fulfillment, and self-image. Many pastors have forgotten that the focus on self is at the core of the sin problem in the last days. ***"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come, For men shall be lovers of their own selves ..."*** ([2 Timothy 3:1-2](#))

When sin began in heaven, it was an expression of Satan's pride-filled heart. Satan's rebellion as a good angel began will self-elevation over God. The Lord said to him, ***"For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars [a symbolic reference to angels] of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north."*** ([Isaiah 14:13](#)) After his sin, Satan attempted to use the same strategy against Adam and Eve. Man's fall was a result of Satan's temptation to put man's desires of self over the commandments of God. ([Genesis 3:1-5](#))

According to the Word of God, the love of self will be one of the major sin issues of the professing church of the last days. ***"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."*** ([2 Timothy 4:3-4](#))

Let us examine three Biblical statements about the proper view of self:

1. True disciples of Christ sacrifice self for Christ.

When Jesus came to this earth, He modeled a self-sacrificing lifestyle. He repeatedly demonstrated and taught that He was a servant. He came to serve, rather than to be served. ([Mark 10:45](#)) Jesus taught that self-denial is a vital prerequisite of being a true follower. He declared: ***"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."*** ([Matthew 16:24](#)) The declaration of John the Baptist near the beginning of Jesus' ministry, should be the motto

of every believer. Speaking of Jesus, John said: ***“He must increase, but I must decrease.”*** ([John 3:30](#))

This is at the heart of making Jesus the Lord of your life. When we serve self, self is our master, not Jesus.

Sacrificing self is not a popular theme in our culture today. Therefore, it is not taught in many of our churches. This means that our churches are full of people who are not really disciples of Christ. Jesus declared that if a person does not sacrifice self for Him, ***“he cannot be my disciple.”*** ([Luke 14:26](#))

2. The Holy Spirit elevates Christ, not self.

While speaking about the coming of the Holy Spirit, Jesus said to His disciples that when the Holy Spirit comes ***“He shall glorify me.”*** ([John 16:14](#)) The work of the Holy Spirit in us is aimed at making us like Christ. He wants to glorify Christ, not self. When we yield to Him, He causes us to please Christ, doing His will, and not our own.

The Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit and the desires within us that are aimed at pleasing self are at war with each other. The apostle Paul wrote: ***“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.”*** ([Galatians 5:16-17](#))

3. Self-esteem is not a correct Biblical view of self.

The proper view of self in the Bible is a delicate balance between respecting and honoring man because he is created in the image of God, yet realizing man is totally depraved. [Psalm 139:14](#) states, ***“I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.”*** God views all people as having value. Jesus Christ gave His life for all sinners.

However, while we have value and should be treated with respect, we are basically not good. ***“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?”*** ([Jeremiah 17:9](#)) The proper view of self is not one of pride, but humility. The Spirit-filled believer will not lose sight of his depravity. He will identify with the testimony of the Apostle Paul: ***“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwellth no good thing...”*** ([Romans 7:18](#)) ***“O wretched man that I am! Who shall***

deliver me from the body of this death?” ([Romans 7:24](#)) The true fact is that we are not capable of doing good without the work of God's grace in our lives. ***“There is none that doeth good, no, not one.”*** ([Romans 3:12](#))

Therefore, Biblically speaking, when churches attempt to make people feel good about themselves, they are driving people further away from a holy God who hates all forms of pride. God is looking for people who are overwhelmed with their own sinfulness. ***“The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.”*** ([Psalm 34:18](#)) ***“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.”*** ([Psalm 51:17](#)) God is looking for people who are broken because they have been confronted with the holiness of God. When the prophet Isaiah was caught up into heaven and saw the Lord on His throne, he was overwhelmed with the holiness of God, and declared: ***“Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.”*** ([Isaiah 6:5](#)) People who walk in God's presence will not be filled with pride, but with humility. As they dwell in God's holy presence they will be overwhelmed with their own depravity, just as Isaiah was.

At the heart of true redemption is repentance. Repentance comes at the moment a person is broken before God and is moved to godly sorrow. Godly sorrow leads to repentance. ([2 Corinthians 7:10](#)) Therefore, every person must be confronted with their own sinfulness. Each sinner needs to know that his sin is an offense to the holiness of God. This confrontation is not comfortable. The depraved heart will seek to escape such confrontation. However, without this Biblical confrontation no one will be saved! Many who attend the seeker-friendly churches have a different view of God and themselves. They have been taught another gospel and many are still lost in their sins. The seeker-friendly approach to evangelism will never work because those who espouse it want to produce happy people, not broken saints.

I have discovered that the lifestyle of self-love is a dead-end road. People who are wrapped up in themselves are miserable! We were made to live for God and others. Jesus demonstrated this in His earthly ministry. While speaking about Him, the Apostle Paul wrote: ***“In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than***

themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 2:3-5)

My friend, we live at a time when the American church has turned from the Bible to preach another gospel about another Jesus. There is a raging river of apostasy taking place in America, as predicted in the prophetic Scriptures. The church is not getting stronger, it is getting weaker. The church is not becoming more Biblically sound, it is becoming more apostate. It is like a raging river; those of us who are still sound in the faith, must stand back from the banks of this river, lest we fall in and get carried to destruction downstream! While speaking about the dangers of self-love, the Bible exhorts us: ***"from such turn away." (2 Timothy 3:5)***

How sad it is that the pastors who are teaching the seeker-friendly model of evangelism have produced mega-churches that have become the desire of many pastors. These men have become the models or idols of all churches who want the glamour and power of being big and successful. This is not only sad, it is tragic! These pastors and churches, like the Pharisees of Jesus' time, may look good on the outside and have a large following, but they are far from God and are confirming people in their sinful pride and helping them on their way to hell!

What can we do to keep ourselves from falling into this river of apostasy of the last days? First, search the Scriptures to discover God, not yourself. ***"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the holy [One] is understanding." (Proverbs 9:10)*** Notice that being in awe of God is the very foundation of wisdom and knowledge of everything! If you don't know God, or are not in awe of Him, you are foolish and void of understanding about life.

Read the Bible to discover the heart, mind, and will of God. As you read the Bible, keeping asking yourself this one question: "What does this tell me about God?" This should be the main passion of your life. Does your soul thirst for God? ***"As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God." (Psalm 42:1)*** This is not an option, it is the very soul of our faith!

Study the Bible to learn God's truth. Spiritual discernment is always in proportion to our knowledge of the Word of

God! Having discernment is very critical when we are surrounded by so many traps aimed at pleasing self! Notice the Apostle Paul's prayer for the believers at Philippi. He said: ***"And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment [discernment]; that ye may approve all things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ." (Philippians 1:9-10)***

If you do not know the Word of God, do not listen to the television evangelists. Their words can seem to be so true, when they are not. The air-waves in America are filled with many false teachers. Jesus gave the following warning: ***"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matthew 7:15)*** Speaking of the signs of the last days, Jesus said: ***"And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many." (Matthew 24:11)***

The Bible warns us to say away from those who teach what is contrary to the Bible. ***"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but rather their own [desires]; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." (Romans 16:17-18)***

Finally, ask yourself: "Am I a taker or a giver?" Are you always thinking about what others can do for you? Or, are you always looking to help someone, or to give to someone in need? God is a giver! When we give to those who are in need, we are acting like God. Those who walk with Him are free givers. Jesus taught: ***"It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35)***

Having an entitlement mentality is Biblically foreign to the lifestyle of one who has the Holy Spirit living in him. Those who are true disciples of Christ will deny themselves and follow Jesus as they sacrifice for Him and others.

From Anarchy to the Antichrist

Since the United Kingdom (UK) voted in June to leave the European Union (EU), the chatter concerning the disintegration of the EU has escalated. There is a growing fear that other countries may follow the UK and leave the EU. Europe has many problems, but there are three

escalating emergencies that are threatening the demise of the EU. First, the ongoing financial crises in several EU countries, especially Italy, are reaching a critical point. Second, there is a growing presence of radical Islam in many influential European cities. This threatens to change the very political and social fabric of Europe. And, third, in the last year there has been a growing debate about how to handle the humanitarian crisis of almost 2 million refugees from the Middle East pouring into the EU. All of these developments are critical. The Europe that we have all known is about to disappear. It will be radically altered!

What does the apparent collapse of the EU teach us? Just five years ago, it appeared that the world was systematically moving toward some sort of international government, in which all nations would participate. The success of the EU was seen as an example of how nations could surrender their sovereignty to participate in a government with other nations. The EU was looked upon as a move toward a one-world government.

However, in the last few years events around the world seem to indicate that we are moving away from the international cooperation necessary to create a New World Order. Russia seems to be reconstructing the Old Soviet Empire, with its invasion of Ukraine and setting up a permanent military presence in Syria. The political landscape in the Middle East has undergone a major change, fueled by the Arab Spring of 2011. Three countries in the Middle East are in total disarray -- Libya, Iraq, and Syria. The Russian/Iranian alliance is forcing Saudi Arabia to form a Sunni alliance to defend itself against Iranian aggression. The Iranian nuclear deal signed by the U.S. and other Western nations has created a nuclear arms race in the Middle East. The EU is ready to unravel. America is facing the beginning of a new wave of violent racial tensions. And, we just witnessed an attempted military coup in Turkey. Does all of this indicate we are moving away from some form of one-world government? Not really!

It is significant to remember that the creation of a New World Order is the dream child of a few powerful global elitists who are operating behind the political scenes. This group has been directing and manipulating the political, economic, and social affairs of the nations for over two centuries to bring about a one-world government

that will control the masses of humanity for their evil agenda. They perceive that their goal is in sight and they are not ready to take a step back. When the next major crisis takes place, they will be ready to seize the moment and force their agenda upon the nations. However, these ruthless power players are not the only ones who want to rule the world!

According to Jesus' response to His disciples in His Olivet Discourse, one of the characteristics of the end of this age would be **"commotions."** ([Luke 21:9](#)) This word refers to social instability. It could be translated as "disorder," "unruliness" or "insurrection."

There is a certain restlessness of disorder, violence, and wickedness that is sweeping across the masses in the nations. This is the very condition out of which the Antichrist and his wicked global kingdom will arise. Please notice that in [Revelation 13:1](#), the Apostle John symbolically depicts the Antichrist as a beast rising up **"out of the sea."** In the Bible, the sea represents the continuous turmoil or restlessness in the Gentile nations. **"But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."** ([Isaiah 57:20-21](#))

Therefore, it seems that the prophetic Word of God indicates that our world is heading for time of incredible anarchy. There are several nations and factions that are strategizing how they can take control of the world. Among them are Russia, Iran, various radical Islamic groups, China, and North Korea. These wicked people are planning to kill millions of people to get what they want -- power. Death and destruction are in their path. It is very fitting that the final kingdom of this age is depicted in the Bible as a wild beast. ([Daniel 7 & Revelation 13](#)) Daniel described this beast as **"dreadful and terrible."** ([Daniel 7:7](#)) In the end it will **"devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces."** ([Daniel 7:23](#))

In addition to this, there is a global effort to oppose God and His commandments. ([Psalm 2:2-3](#)) At this moment the world is rejecting the moral and ethical standards that have guided the Western world for centuries. In essence, they have destroyed the very foundation of organized society. With the foundation destroyed, the roof of organized society is caving in. Lawlessness, violence,

injustice, and wickedness are being unleashed and are multiplying at an incredible rate.

There is only one thing that is holding back the final and ultimate explosion of evil in this world. The presence of the bride of Christ in this world is restraining or holding back the final explosion of evil. ([2 Thessalonians 2:6-7](#)) The church must be raptured, and *"then shall that Wicked [lawless one] be revealed..."* ([2 Thessalonians 2:8](#)) Jesus has promised His church: *"I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."* ([Revelation 3:10](#))

My friend, Jesus is coming soon. Are you ready? Be ready for the shout that will take us out!

A Revived Roman Empire?

Many evangelical believers were taught years ago that the harlot of Revelation 17-18 was a form of apostate Christianity that would be headed by the Catholic Church. As a part of this teaching, they believed that the seven mountains upon which this harlot sat was Rome -- the city on seven hills. However, this is not a good interpretation of this text. First, the major passages being quoted in [Revelation 17-18 \(Isaiah 13, 47 & Jeremiah 50-51\)](#) all point to a religious entity in the area of the former Babylonian Empire, centered in what today is the country of Iraq.

The seven mountains upon which the woman sat ([Revelation 17:9](#)) are not literal mountains. In this text, the seven mountains are equivalent to the seven heads and seven kings. ([Revelation 17:9-10](#)) These terms -- mountains, heads, and kings -- are all symbolic of political power structures. For example, in [Daniel 2:35, 44-45](#), a mountain is symbolic of the Kingdom of God.

In [Revelation 17:10-11](#), the Apostle John gave the historical procession of the Gentile kingdoms that will lead up to the final kingdom of the Antichrist, who is contemporary with the harlot. He said, *"And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition."* Speaking from the reference point of the first century, there were five previous Gentile kingdoms in

history -- Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece. The *"one that is"* was the contemporary kingdom of John's day -- the Roman Empire. Then, John was told that there would be a seventh kingdom that would follow the Roman Empire and that it would *"continue a short space."* ([Revelation 17:10](#)) Then the seventh kingdom would be revived. Notice that it did not say there would be a revival of the sixth kingdom -- Rome. The kingdom that followed the Roman Empire was the Ottoman Turkish Empire that ruled the land of Israel for 400 years. It will be this Islamic kingdom that in some form will be revived.

The harlot imagery supports this conclusion. A harlot in the Bible was symbolic of a false religion. In light of the overall context of [Revelation 17-18](#) and the entire Bible, it seems best to understand that the final kingdom that will be controlled by the Antichrist will be an Islamic kingdom.

In light of world events, all of this makes sense. For those who want to still cling to the idea of a revived Roman Empire, I would like to remind them that current trends in Europe are pointing to the day when Islam will be in control of Europe. So, either way, Islam, with the aid of the Antichrist, will conquer the world.

May the Lord give us great wisdom for living in this troubled world!

The Spiritual State of Europe

In Europe, during the last few years, Jews are leaving, churches are closing, and Islam is growing. The Gatestone Institute recently gave the following report: "The main mosque in Dublin is a former Presbyterian church. In England, the St Mark's Cathedral is now called the New Peckham Mosque, while in Manchester, the Mosque of Disbury was once a Methodist church. In Clitheroe, Lancashire, the authorities granted permission to have an Anglican church, Saint Peter's Church in Cobridge, transformed into the Madina Mosque. It is no longer taboo in the media to talk about "the end of British Christianity." (<http://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/8005/europe-mosques-churches-synagogues>, May 22, 2016)

Remember, America is following Europe! The spiritual darkness is closing in upon us at a rapid pace. It is now more imperative than ever that we let our light shine for the glory of our Father. ([Matthew 5:14-16](#))

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Mike's Upcoming Speaking Schedule

Please pray for these meetings. Please call your family and friends who live near these meetings and encourage them to attend. It is very important for God's people to have a proper Biblical world-view. Please pray for the Lord to send an awakening!

August 4	<u>Rocky Mount, VA</u>	<u>Bible Study: Franklin Heights Baptist Church</u>	1-540-798-5110
August 7-9	Peru, IN	Grace Brethren Church	1-765-473-3881
August 14-16	Catawba, VA	Mountain View Baptist	1-540-375-3227
August 18	<u>Roanoke, VA</u>	<u>Bible Study: Grace Baptist Church</u>	1-540-798-5110
August 21-24	Coolville, OH	Grace Brethren Church	1-740-667-3710
August 27	Salem (10-noon)	Faith Baptist Church- seminar- The Amazing Kingdom of God	1-540-353-6357
September 1	<u>Rocky Mount, VA</u>	<u>Bible Study: Franklin Heights Baptist Church</u>	1-540-798-5110
Sept. 11-13	Listie, PA	Grace Brethren Church	1-814-279-0067
Sept. 15	<u>Roanoke, VA</u>	<u>Bible Study: Grace Baptist Church</u>	1-540-798-5110
Sept. 24-25	Orville, OH	Grace Brethren Church	1-330-683-3526
October 2-4	Rochester, IN	Whippoorwill Community Church	1-574-242-1836
October 6	<u>Rocky Mount, VA</u>	<u>Bible Study: Franklin Heights Baptist Church</u>	1-540-798-5110

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