

Today's News in Light of the Bible

PROPHETIC Newsletter

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Reflecting over all the strife and terror of the past year both throughout the United States and abroad, it is easy to be afraid. I pray that you take comfort in the words that Jesus spoke to His disciples in Luke 21:28b, "... stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

In these troubled times, we have hope! Upon Jesus Christ's return we will experience ultimate restoration and renewal!

As we celebrate this New Year, I hope you will take the time to be grounded in the Word of God. I pray that you will join me and my staff in seeking the Lord continually in 2019!

May the Lord bless you in the New Year,

Until He returns,

Ed Hindson



Scientists Genetically Engineer Babies' DNA

In a startling medical procedure, a Chinese scientists recently changed the DNA of newborn twin girls in a procedure that he claims created the world's first genetically edited humans. The scientist; He Jiankui of the Southern University of Science and Technology in Shenzhen, Guangdong, China told the Associated Press that he used a powerful gene editing tool to alter the DNA of twin girls in utero by giving their embryos the ability to resist possible future HIV infection. The ability to resist HIV infection has been shown to be a rare genetic trait that some humans actually do possess. Jiankui elaborated on his motivations by saying, "I feel a strong responsibility that it's not just to make a first, but also make it an example, how to perform things like this, consider morality of the society and consider its impact to the public." While the results of this procedure have not been independently verified, if this

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Hamas Training Children for Terror



In a move that should sicken any sensible person, it has been recently reported by several news agencies that the radical Islamic organization known as Hamas has been training children to carry out terrorist actions in Gaza and Israel. Hamas has been the de facto governing authority of the Gaza Strip since its takeover of that area in 2007 and has instigated numerous conflicts with Israel. A video clip released by the Middle East Media Research Institute showed a televised graduation ceremony at a Hamas youth camp in Gaza. At the ceremony, suicide terror attacks against Israel who they refer to as the “Zionist enemy,” were encouraged and glorified by Hamas officials. The ceremony, for some 1,000 students who took part in camps in the southern city of Khan Yunis, was framed as part of the group’s plan to continue its terror campaign against Israel.

According to the international news agency AFP, Hamas official Ashraf Abu Zayed said the training is necessary within the framework of “preparing for the liberation of Palestine.” Abu Zayed told AFP “We are trying to invest the younger generation and guide them towards the liberation project.” To

carry out this training boys between 15 and 18 years of age were put through military drills at the week-long camp, including shooting drills using live ammunition and training in scouting skills to gather information about Israeli troop positions and to help determine other targets for terrorist attacks. Far from an isolated incident, Hamas has been running these summer camps for a few years. Hamas’s overtly “military wing,” the Izz Al-Din Al-Qassam Brigades, has also regularly trained children at its camps teaching them military skills, such as the use of automatic weapons, and also uses the children in simulated kidnapping of Israeli soldiers.

Sadly, the Bible indicates that humanity—without a saving relationship with Jesus—is readily debased enough to carry out such actions as training children to become murderous terrorists. The war on terrorism is an ongoing conflict for our world. The bad news is it is not going to end anytime soon. The Bible teaches that this is a struggle that stems from the deep-seated tensions that can be traced back to Isaac and Ishmael

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proves to be true many experts believe it will blur the line of medicine and ethics and cross into dangerous new scientific territory.

While a bioethics commission in Great Britain recently determined that it is legally and morally permissible to change the DNA structure of a human embryo — as we reported to you in September 2018 — genetic manipulation is banned in the United States. This is due to the possibility that DNA changes risk damaging other genes and this damage can be passed onto future generations. Dr. Kiran Musunuru, a gene-editing expert and editor of a genetics journal at the University of Pennsylvania called

Jiankui's procedure "unconscionable ... an experiment on human beings that is not morally or ethically defensible ... It's simply too early and too premature." Dr. Eric Topol, who heads the Scripps Research

Translational Institute in California, told the Associated Press, "We're dealing with the operating instructions of a human being. It's a big deal."

Many mainstream scientists are concerned that the procedure will be used to rewrite the DNA blueprint of future babies, giving them certain desired traits, creating what some have called "designer babies." Ethical scientists have agreed it's best to stay away from gene editing in sperm and egg cells and in embryos because in all of those cases the genetic changes can be passed down to future generations and there are too many possibilities for unintended

consequences. For instance, the Chinese twins allegedly created by this process may have reduced their risk of contracting HIV; however, the process increases the chance of the twins getting West Nile virus.

When we consider that Genesis 1:26-28; 2:7 teaches that God created the very first human life and Psalm 139:13-16 indicates that God Himself forms every human life in the womb; and that Jeremiah 1:5 reveals that God knows every individual before He forms them in the womb, it should be a foregone conclusion that we should not attempt to edit the genetic make-up of humans as this Chinese scientist

has recently done! Thus, the efforts of He Jiankui's manipulation of the DNA of human embryos clearly supersedes the role of God!

Frighteningly, the Bible tells us to expect such efforts as the last day

*"Before I formed thee in the belly
I knew thee; and before thou
camest forth out of the womb I
sanctified thee, and I ordained
thee a prophet unto the nations."*

Jeremiah 1:5

draws near. 2 Timothy 3:1-5 teaches us that in the last days much of humanity will be lovers of themselves while denying the power of God. Similarly, many Bible teachers believe that such medical technology equates to the "knowledge [that] shall be increased" in "the end of time" as taught in Daniel 12:4.

Regardless, the Bible is clear that every human life is precious to God and directly created in His image. Humans should be very cautious as we encroach on this divine directive. Given the serious implications of this recent procedure in China, we should be in prayer over this situation.— PNL

PRAY: Pray the leaders of the world would follow the laws of the United States and ban this type of genetic manipulation as has been carried out in China. Pray also for the twin girls whose DNA was edited, that there would not be any lasting complications from this procedure.



In a study conducted by LifeWay, some shocking statistics have been revealed. Researchers surveyed 3,000 American Christian adults to measure their agreement with a set of 47 statements about Christian theology. Shockingly, 64% of those surveyed agreed with the statement that “God accepts the worship of all religions, including Christianity, Judaism, and Islam.”

This statement stands in direct opposition to the Bible that indicates the Gospel is the only way of salvation, and God will not accept the worship of other faiths (Cf. John 4:24). Equally shocking were the responses concerning the divinity of Jesus. A frightening 71% said that Jesus was the first being created by God. The question of Jesus’ origin was largely agreed upon in A.D. 325 with the Nicene Creed, which states that Jesus was “begotten not made.” Similarly disturbing is that 56% percent of those surveyed affirmed that “the Holy Spirit is a divine force but not a personal being” with 29% of those surveyed agreeing that “the Holy Spirit is a divine being, but is not equal with God the Father or Jesus.” This stands in opposition to the Council of Constantinople which condemned the ideas that the Holy Spirit is an impersonal force and is not equal to the other two members of the Trinity in A.D. 381.

Howard Snyder, director of Manchester Wesley Research Center, said “clearly there is confusion about the nature and being of the

Holy Spirit,” calling it “a theological concern.” However, Timothy Larsen, professor of Christian thought at Wheaton College, said the fact that nearly three-quarters of evangelicals are confused about Jesus’ origin isn’t as dire as it sounds. Evangelicals believe in “dramatic, life-changing adult conversions,” he said, and such conversions mean that new believers may have little training in the core doctrines of their new faith. “Much depends on how a question is phrased,” Larsen said. “There is a lot in this survey which shows that the respondents are not even being internally consistent, but have been led to contradict themselves based on how the question sounded to them.”

Thus, while the percentages of Evangelicals who agree with statements that run counter to the tenets of the Christian faith is concerning, it should perhaps motivate us to offer more theological training and teaching at our local churches.

Scripture is replete with admonitions to communicate the essential truths of the faith. As early as their time in the wilderness after the exodus from Egypt, God’s people were commanded to commit God’s truths to memory, teach them to their children, and make God’s Word a matter of conversation in their homes. Moses told the children of Israel “these words ... shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt

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Pontius Pilate's Ring Discovered Near Bethlehem

Exciting news has been recently released regarding an archaeological discovery that gives additional credibility to the historical accuracy of the Bible. The Israeli daily newspaper Ha'aretz recently reported that a bronze ring – originally found 50 years ago during excavations at the Herodium fortress near Bethlehem – may actually bear the name of Pontius Pilate! Pontius Pilate served



as the Roman governor of Judea, and was the man who essentially ordered the crucifixion of Jesus, according to the New Testament. Technically, Pilate was the fifth prefect, or governor, of the province of Judea, serving under Emperor Tiberius from AD 26-37 though there is some dispute about the exact dates. Ha'aretz reports that the ring is a signet ring that was common in ancient times, and was used to seal letters and stamp official documents using molten wax.

Researchers believe the ring may have been used by Pontius Pilate in his day to day work in his role as the governor, or that it belonged to one of his officials or someone in his court who would have used it to sign in his name similar to a signature stamp used in modern offices. Ha'aretz reports the ring was originally found by Hebrew University Professor Gideon Forster shortly after the Six-Day War in 1968-69, but due to heavy oxidation and patina the inscription was not entirely legible.

However, thanks to modern digital imaging technology the name was discovered on the ring by using a special camera at the Israel Antiquities Authority labs. It was determined

that the letters on the ring spelled out in Greek writing "Pilatus." The words surrounded a picture of a wine vessel. Hebrew University Professor Danny Schwartz told Ha'aretz

that Pilatus was a rare name in Israel. "I don't know of any other Pilatus from the period and the ring shows he was a person of stature and wealth," Schwartz said. Adding additional credence to the possibility that this ring belonged to

the Pontius Pilate of the New Testament is the fact that this type of ring was a "hallmark" of the cavalry in the Roman era, to which Pilate belonged, Ha'aretz reports. Some of the significance of this ring is that it is only the second artifact testifying to the historicity of the infamous Pontius Pilate. The only other artifact is the "Pilate Stone," a massive inscribed building block uncovered in 1961 excavations at Caesarea Maritima. Obviously there is no way to determine with 100% certainty who the actual owner of this ring was, but many scholars believe it was none other than Pontius Pilate.

It is interesting that God's Word repeatedly teaches that every issue of testimony must be confirmed by two or three witnesses (Cf. Deuteronomy 19:15; 2 Corinthians 13:1). We are also taught that "Truth shall spring out of the earth," (Psalm 85:11) which many believe demonstrates the principle of a valid witness being offered by the modern science of archaeology. As I read of archaeological discoveries such as this signet ring found at the Herodium I am reminded of Jesus words

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(Genesis 16:3–25:17) almost 4,000 years ago! The situation will never end with peace until the peace of Christ reigns. To do that we must proclaim the Gospel to all the nations of the world, we must speak out against the evils and

irresponsibility we see all around us, and we must encourage other believers to do the same. We have been commissioned by Christ Himself to make a difference in this world until He calls us home.—PNL

PRAY: Pray that the children being exploited as agents of terror by Hamas would be rescued out of that situation. Pray also that the civilized nations of the world would recoil in horror at this latest development and recognize Hamas for the threat they are. Above all, pray for Christ to reveal Himself to those misled by the propaganda of Hamas.

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talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates” (Deuteronomy 6:6-9 KJV). Clearly, God’s truths are to take a central place in the lives of believers. So much so that the Bible encourages all believers to “Study to

shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15 KJV). Moreover, the apostle Paul directed Timothy, and all believers, to entrust the truths of God’s Word to other faithful people who could then, in turn, teach others (2 Timothy 2:2). Therefore, when we see such confusion among believers as this research demonstrates we should be in prayer.—PNL

PRAY: Pray that church leaders will increase their efforts to teach the truths of the Christian faith in such a way as to combat the confusion evident by such surveys as the LifeWay study. Pray also for faithful believers to pour into the lives of others to strengthen them in their faith. For we know as “iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend” (Proverbs 27:17).

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rebuking the Pharisees attempts to silence His disciples. Jesus told the Pharisees that if His disciples were to remain silent, the stones would cry out (Luke 19:37-40). I cannot help but think of this passage every time a new and

exciting archaeological discovery is made that further validates another detail of Scripture. The artifacts of the ancient world continue to cry out to us concerning the real people, real places, and real history of the Bible!—PNL

PRAY: Pray that the LORD will continue to allow us such insight into the historicity of his Word through many more exciting architectural discoveries in the years to come!