



PROPHECY *Today* UK

Bringing the unchanging word of God to a changing world

DANGER MONOCHROME THINKING

“When I was a child, ..., I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me.” (1 Cor 13:11)

When I was young, I saw things in black and white, seeing things as either bad or good. Yet, the fact is that often movements, groups, ideas and people are a mix of good and bad, positive and negative. Life, maturity, and a willingness to confront my prejudices by seeking a fuller understanding have softened or changed my preconceptions.

In a meeting many years ago, a preacher placed a vase of flowers in front of those gathered. He asked them to identify which flowers were real or fake – no-one could do so.

That forms a picture of what is often the reality in many of our situations – we have the good and the bad, the real and the fake, mixed together. Jesus used a similar metaphor, in the parable of the wheat and weeds (Matt 13:26-29).

Nor is theology as black and white as we sometimes like to think it – though life would be so much easier if it were. There are some very clear-cut biblical principles – such as the ten commandments. Yet Christians often adopt dogmatic views on a whole host of other issues as wide-ranging as Israel/Palestine, the End times, physical healing, and male leadership.

But simplistic explanations are for the young in faith. As we mature, we should move from milk to solid food (Heb 5:12-14), partly as we chew on and reflect on our faith, seeing its outworking in a complex world, dialoguing with others and questioning our own interpretations and prejudices.

Even God cannot always be described in unequivocal terminology. God is at the same time both judge and the one who saves us from judgement; both lion and lamb; both one and three.

Yet many people seem to have reverted to viewing the world in simplistic terms. This has been amplified by social media, where people are able to connect more easily with others of like mind, forming echo-chambers, thus only encountering information or opinions that reflect and reinforce their own.

With new technologies and the widespread dispersal of ideas, black and white thinking is now ironically a bigger danger than ever, both in secular and religious circles, as the last few years have highlighted:

In lockdown, there was only one

acceptable way to think – efforts were made to ‘silence’ sceptics.

Net zero is promoted as ‘settled science’; the voices of scores of environmentalists and scientists with differing views ignored by mainstream media.

Covid vaccine zealotry led to those who expressed reservations about the jabs being tarnished as dangerous.

Yet ironically, black-and-white thinking pervades those who (understandably) became highly suspicious of the ‘official’ narratives above, now often refusing to believe anything printed in *The Guardian*, *The Telegraph* or the BBC. Naturally, they tended to surround themselves with other sceptics, and in their opposition to the ‘established’ line, became prone to disbelieve everything that contradicts their strict counter-narrative – often alienating everyone who can’t ‘see’ their ‘truth’.

That way of thinking is just as dangerous as an unquestioning acceptance of all we hear. For as soon as someone instinctively disbelieves

(rather than considers or questions) ‘official’ narratives, many become open to believing almost anything that confirms their new, dystopian worldview. This is particularly dangerous, as it opens us up to alternative views from those who would seek to destabilise society. For years, the most pernicious anti-West comments have come from hard-Left ideologues, frequently infused with antisemitism. Now the same ideas are coming from Christians who no longer trust Western governments, who then unintentionally share ideas which have originated in antisemitic, anti-Christian neo-Marxism.

We need to be aware that it can be notoriously difficult to distinguish truth from error, whatever the source. Indeed, we cannot do so except by Holy Spirit discernment – together with the whole Word of God, rather than the internet. Truth and error so often come wrapped in the same package. This can happen intentionally, in order to deceive; but mostly, it occurs through human frailties and inconsistencies. This is why it’s important that we defend free speech, promoting a cautious, intelligent, questioning approach, in order to “*test everything, hold fast to the good and avoid every kind of evil*” (1 Thes 5:21). Without it, black and white thinking will prevail, to the detriment of everyone.

■ Kathryn Price





OUR STORY

From 1985 to 2006, Prophecy Today was published in print and grew to become one of the most widely read Christian magazines in the UK. It was an iconic publication renowned for declaring the word of God for our times.

In 2015, Prophecy Today was reborn online as Prophecy Today UK, under the leadership of original founder Dr Clifford Hill, taking a new format but keeping the same vision. Our small but dedicated team is now led by Tom Lennie, author of several books on historical revivals, and operates under the umbrella of Issachar Ministries, publishing fresh editions each Friday. You can sign up on our website to receive these straight to your inbox, for free!

At Prophecy Today UK, we believe that God is as involved in the world today as he was in biblical times. We also believe that he longs to give Christians understanding about the world and how he is working out his purposes in it.

These four pages contain excerpts from the contemporary ministry of Prophecy Today UK, which includes commentary on public affairs, teaching articles and book reviews.



Covers of the original Prophecy Today magazine, in print 1985-2006

Every one of our articles published since 2015 is available on our website – find us at www.prophecytoday.uk.

CHOOSE YOU THIS DAY

Nicola Sturgeon's resignation has plunged SNP party loyalists, and indeed Scotland, into deeper turmoil than it already was.

In her seven-year reign as First Minister, Sturgeon has overseen a catastrophic decline in the vital areas of health, transport and education, while concentrating on a woke agenda which ultimately caused her political demise. While flawed Covid policies crippled Scotland economically, it was ultimately the untenable outworking of Ms. Sturgeon's personal crusade on gender transitioning which has precipitated her downfall.

What has emerged from the completely unworkable scenarios created by the Gender Recognition Reform Bill is a leadership contest whereby the leading contenders are a Christian woman and a Muslim man. By the time you read this, the winner may well have been announced – but it exposes the much bigger battle for Scotland.

In 2019, the then Justice Secretary, leadership hopeful Humza Yousaf, piloted the Government's 'Hate Crime' poster campaign. The message, and the targeted group, were clear: *"Dear bigots, you can't spread your religious hate here. End of sermon."*

His rival, Kate Forbes, as a committed Christian, is totally unafraid of declaring her biblical beliefs, including on sexual relations, gender identity and marriage. It might appear that she has thus given Yousaf a veritable stockpile of ammunition to use against her. However, he may be reluctant to weaponise these issues; Islam, the faith to which all devout Muslims adhere, believes much the same things as Ms. Forbes in regard to these matters. Indeed a headline claims: *"Muslim leaders praise Forbes and snub Yousaf in SNP contest statement"*.

Whatever public or private political support she may get from Christians



Credit: Alamy stock photo

– many of whom do not align themselves with the nationalist dream – Ms. Forbes certainly is most deserving of prayer; for protection, enduring courage and wisdom. She has been surprised, not by the nature of the attacks against her, but by their intensity. And even some Christians refuse to support her stance, with political expediency trumping faith.

However, irrespective of the outcome, politics and politicians will not extract us from the mess that these have brought us into. Scottish independence, if ever it is achieved, will most likely lead to further fragmentation within an already divided nation, with the Highlands, Borders and islands all culturally distinct from the populous Central belt. Fixing the nation's multiple problems is no small challenge even for a capable First Minister. Serving a cultural span and disparate demographic, while simultaneously

seeking to unify a fractious party, will be an immense task for anyone.

However, socio-political and economic issues aside, the vital challenge and deeper crisis in Scotland is seen in the spiritual realm, far beyond the abilities of politicians. Scotland has cast aside its spiritual heritage, in part due to the failure of major churches to uphold biblical values and the conspicuous silence of most church leaders on the issues over which Kate Forbes is being crucified.

But soaring well above the political realm, God's eternal purposes are not ultimately to save the political entity that is Scotland. Rather, His eternal plan of salvation is to each individual, through a personal relationship with his Son. And the first step on that path is the old-fashioned word 'repentance'. The destiny of any and every Scot is not, and will never be, shaped by a political process; certainly not by

an independent Scotland, even if it were to be headed up by a deeply committed Christian.

The contest in Scotland is not ultimately a political one: it's a deeply spiritual battle being outworked in a political arena, and there is no conflict more deadly than the battle for the soul.

Many years ago, at the transition from one leader to another, the successor threw down a stark choice to the people – to serve God or their own gods. On inheriting the leadership of Israel from Moses, Joshua set the question and challenge: *"Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve."* (Jos 24:15).

Indeed, for SNP members, and every individual in Scotland, that is the critical issue which will define their future; for now and into eternity.

■ Colin Wilson



THE KEY TO FAMILY LIFE

Family breakdown leads to statistically much worse outcomes for children, in all areas, including education, employment, health and forming relationships. They also become disproportionately more involved in crime, drug-taking and alcohol abuse.

I believe that the majority of suffering and wretchedness in our society could be cured if people would accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour and allow Him to refashion their lives. A major positive impact would be that we would abandon the secular worldview which has brought about the disintegration of the family, and instead adopt God's biblical standard for marriage and family life.

However, the Bible does not contain a single clear definition of what a family is. A superficial reading of Scripture reveals very differing examples of family life. We witness polygamy, concubinage, adultery, and worse. Some of the most celebrated men and women in Scripture were spectacularly bad parents.

But the Bible is a realistic book and accurately describes human behaviour as it is, warts and all, rather than giving these as examples to follow. What we have to do is look for the principles within Scripture which teach us about family life.

From the opening chapters of Scripture, we see that God's plan has always been for men and women to live together in harmony and to bring up their children to work usefully within creation (Gen

1:28, 2:24). This is reinforced in the Ten Commandments. The fifth commandment, the first of those about inter-human relationships, concerns the honour that children owe to their parents, indicating that there is a family unit, and roles within it, to be respected. The seventh commandment, which prohibits adultery, protects the sanctity of marriage. The health of the basic family unit of husband and wife was so important to God that it formed part of His fundamental law for all mankind.

Jesus speaks on the sanctity of marriage between a man and a woman in Matthew 19:1-9 where he speaks out against 'no-fault divorce'. The apostle Paul talks about what Christian homes should look like when he gives the twin commands

of "children, obey your parents" and "parents, don't provoke your children" (Eph 6:1-4; Col 3:20-21).

The biblical pattern for family life is one where the differing people within the family honour each other and respect their roles and positions within the family unit. This entails caring for each other. The Bible has harsh words to say to those who don't take care of their own relatives, especially the ageing. Jesus describes as 'hypocrites' those who try to wriggle out of their financial responsibility to their parents (Matt 15:4-9). Paul says that failure to do so makes a supposed Christian "worse than an unbeliever" (1 Tim 5:8).

Harmony within the family is built on an attitude completely at variance with the way of the world. Our society is marked by 'demands':

for our rights, that our opinions be approved, our wishes be respected. The scriptural way to a harmonious life is the opposite: it is that of mutual submission. Problems inevitably arise in families; we could avoid many of them by following the teaching in Philippians 2:2-4, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others."

Whether believer or not, all can

benefit from following God's instructions, as God is creator of all. Christians have the great advantages of a closer knowledge of God's revealed will, recourse to prayer, the aid of the Holy Spirit and the underlying desire to live in Christ's way. Even then we Christians can fail in our relationships: there are no perfect families. But we know that by listening to God and attempting to live by His principles we have happier and more fulfilled lives.

God's pattern for family life is something to which believer and non-believer alike can aspire. A wider recognition of this would have a significant impact on the quality of life generally in our society.

■ Rev. Dr Campbell-Jack



'OUTSIDE IN' - SEEKING TO SERVE 'OUT OF CHURCH' BELIEVERS



In recent years, a growing number of faithful Christians in the UK have become disillusioned with current expressions of Sunday church available to them, or have left altogether.

They are not falling away from the faith, but rather acting in line with their consciences. Unable to find or attend a congregation that affirms the authority of the Bible, they are searching for fellowship in other ways, as they go through a 'wilderness' season with the Lord.

For Christians in this position, **Prophecy Today UK** is pleased to commend 'Outside In', a new area of ministry supporting and connecting believers who are on the 'outside' of current 'church' life but still very much 'in' the Body of Christ.

If you would like more information about this initiative, please e-mail outsidein@issacharministries.co.uk or write to 'Outside In' at Issachar Ministries, Bedford Heights, Brickhill Drive, Bedford, MK41 7PH

THERE IS POWER IN THE BLOOD

In Genesis 12, God calls Abraham to give up everything he knows, everything he feels comfortable with and to walk after Him, where he cannot see any trace of what is coming. Like Abraham, I have always oscillated between trusting God, then trying to wrest back control of my life.

Abraham's call is accompanied by a great promise. God tells him that his descendants will become a great nation that would be a light to the world. And so, the childless, 75-year-old Abram (as he was known then)

begins his walk with God. But like me in my walk, he wavered – before you know it, he is passing off his wife Sarai as his sister to prevent any trouble with an Egyptian Pharaoh. Yet, God gives Abram riches and victory in battle, and he keeps walking with God.

But there is a worm of doubt working away in him. It surfaces in Genesis 15, when God visits him in a vision to encourage him. Suddenly it all comes bubbling out: "Lord All-Powerful, you have given me everything I could ask for, except children."

God swiftly and decisively reassures Abram: "'Look at the sky and see if you can count the stars. That's how many descendants you will have.' Abram believed the Lord, so the Lord was pleased with him." But in the very next verse Abram is wavering again. How can he be sure that he didn't just imagine this? And so came a moment when the Living God did something amazing, which impacts us today.

We read how God told Abram to bring him a cow, a goat, a ram, a

Continued on next page



Audio CDs

Bi-monthly audio CDs of selected Prophecy Today articles recorded by their authors.

ENJOY PROPHECY TODAY ON THE GO!

£25 annual subscription (6 CDs)
For more information, email info@issacharministries.co.uk





THERE IS POWER IN THE BLOOD

dove and a pigeon. He does this, cutting the larger creatures in half, laying the two halves opposite each other on the ground. As the sun was setting, he falls into a deep sleep. God then tells Abram the future of his people: that his descendants will be enslaved in a foreign country, but would be freed to return to and possess the land that God promised them. Then, a smoking cooking pot and a flaming fire passes between the two halves of each animal.

This story seems completely astounding to us, especially in our vegan, woke world of today. However, in the ancient world, this was the way things were done. Marriages, alliances, anything of significance – people cut a blood covenant. Each party brought a set of animals. They were cut in half and set out either side of a trench for the blood to run into. One or both of the parties walked through the blood, by which they effectively said: 'If I break this agreement, I will pay the price of blood, this will be done to me.'

And here comes the key point. When a covenant was cut with someone important, such as a king, it would be the lesser, junior partner who walked between these cut pieces, making the blood covenant promise.

Yet God Himself walks through the blood covenant; the smoking pot and brand are signs of what academics call a 'theophany' – God taking material form. In effect, God says to Abram, 'I am making you an unshakeable promise'.

God made this promise whilst Abram is still wavering with questions. But God does not mind; he accepts him, doubts and all, and makes a promise that will endure for all time. He is saying that if this covenant is ever broken, then He himself will pay the blood price. That is why Jesus had to shed His blood for us. The covenant was broken, by people, and God paid the price.

The incredible message I take from this passage is that God doesn't need us to get our act together, doesn't need us to get right. His love, His grace are so immense, so great, that He made this blood promise when we weren't right, weren't perfect, to bond Himself to us. He knows that He will have to discipline us, correct us, and bear with us, but He is willing. Our faith is forged in blood, the promises of God washed in blood and there is power in that blood. This is our God, and this is His grace.

■ **Nick Thompson**



REVIEWS

Prophecy Today UK reviews books, DVDs and other resources, both old and new, which we hope will bless your walk with God. Read the full reviews of the books below in the 'Resources' section on www.prophecytoday.uk

Questions to ask your Muslim friends: A closer look at Islamic beliefs and texts

Beth Peltola and Tim Dieppe

Wilberforce Publications, 2022, 148pp

This helpful book urges us to "... challenge and stimulate our Muslim friends to think critically about their religion ... we care about our Muslim friends' salvation, which cannot be found in Islam" (p.21).

The authors assert that a basic knowledge of Islam (which they provide), along with confidence in the life-changing power of the gospel, is all that's required.

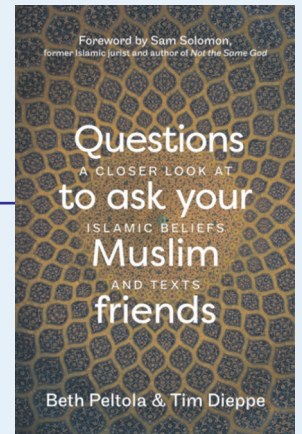
Following Jesus' method of using questions to make people think, the authors consider many topical questions to engage Muslim friends, each question being followed by thoughtful guidelines and observations.

They suggest questions about faith, such as "What do you think God is like", to provoke discussion, and consider others focusing on the Quran – noting, for example, that the Quran actually testifies to the Bible – and comparing Jesus to Mohammed.

Some of the toughest questions focus on women (the Quran allows women to be abused, asserting they are of lesser worth than men), and the violence encouraged in Quranic texts to promote Islam.

But the authors also consider questions of genuine concern commonly asked by Muslims of Christians: e.g., about the Crusades, and 'How can God have a son?' A truly valuable aid in personal outreach.

■ **Tom Lennie**



The Case Against the Sexual Revolution: A New Guide to Sex in the 21st Century

Louise Perry

Polity, 2022, 200pp

Feminist writer (and non-Christian) Louise Perry's withering critique of the sexual revolution stems from natural law or common sense, whereby she rages against its devastating effects on women.

While thoughtful and compassionate, this is actually quite a disturbing read, being necessarily explicit about what goes on.

Perry criticises the idea that sex is only a recreational, meaningless activity and shares evidence that women much prefer committed relationships. She tackles the idea that anything consensual is okay, makes an effective case against the prostitution industry, and rages at porn culture.

It's shocking that she needs a chapter to explain the common-sense statement that Violence Is Not Love – as over half of 18-24-year-old UK women report having been strangled by their partners during sex.

She concludes that marriage is good: "When monogamy is imposed on a society, it tends to become richer". Her advice is "get married. And do your best to stay married".

Yet Perry's argument lacks an objective moral compass. For all Perry's strengths in pointing out the failures of the sexual revolution, a counter-movement needs to present a more powerful argument for sexual purity. For this we need the objective truths and morality that can only be found in Christianity.

■ **Tim Dieppe**



ISSACHAR MINISTRIES UK

Prophecy Today UK partners with Issachar Ministries, a resourcing ministry which derives its name from the Tribe of Issachar (1 Chronicles 12:32).

Issachar Ministries seeks to provide biblical teaching on current issues by understanding the times, listening to the Lord and knowing what should be done.

Are you able to support Prophecy Today UK financially, or would you like to receive more information about the ministry?

Telephone 0333 090 2187, or fill out the following form and post it to Issachar Ministries, Bedford Heights, Brickhill Drive, Bedford, MK41 7PH.

Name:

Contact address / email:

- I would like to give financially to the Prophecy Today UK Heart insert / to Prophecy Today UK
- I would like to find out more about Prophecy Today UK
- I would like to find out more about Issachar Ministries / receive their material