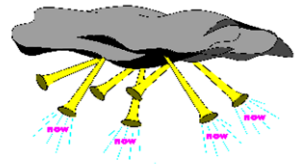
TRUMPET SOUNDS



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"For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ." Titus 2: 11 – 13.

In this issue	**page**
Our hope	1
What will soon take place	2
The state of the world when Christ returns	6
Claude Mythos	9
Universal Basic Income	10
The technological beast	12
Iran	13
Taqiyya	14
Israel's hands tied	14
Iran has an open secret.	15
The counter offensive	16

Our hope

Recently I had a conversation with a brother who is hopeful that our nation could be turned around and righteousness restored. As I have shared several times in Trumpet Sounds I believe that the church in our present time is called to fight a rear guard action. We are like an army which has been ordered to defend what remains of that which is good in the nation. In some areas we have been able to hold the ground. In others there has been defeat. Evil has triumphed but we don't lose heart. We know that the counter offensive is coming. It is then that wickedness will be defeated and righteousness restored. Our blessed hope is truly in the *"glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ".*

Back in the late 60's, while a student, I attended the nights of prayer for revival held at St Peter's Vere Street in London. In those days there was hope for a change in the nation. The charismatic renewal gave hope that the church would be revived. Renewal in the church being the first step to the changing of a nation. Since then there have been many prayer initiatives and much repentance for

Britain's ever increasing sins. Despite the prayer our nation has turned further and further away from God.

Did we, gathered at those nights of prayer, have any conception of how far our nation would sink in a mere 60 years? Did we conceive that one day abortion to birth would become legal? Did we understand where decriminalising homosexuality would lead? Had we heard about trans gender or imagined that traditional marriage would become the exception and so we could go on. As for the antisemitism and regular hate marches, they were unimaginable.

Yet we do not despair. A turning away from God and justifying of sin by the world is exactly what we expect as the time of our great God and Saviour's return approaches. *"For behold the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people; But the Lord will arise over you, and His glory shall be seen upon you".* Isaiah 60: 2. Our hope is in the Lord, Hallelujah.

What will soon take place

On the 12th March 2026 I sent the following email to some friends. It was sent in anticipation of what might soon arise. Please read on:

The following is about events which will soon take place. Over the last 20 years I have written extensively about these things therefore I will not go into much detail here.

I adopt a Messianic interpretation of the 70 weeks prophecy in Daniel chapter 9. This has led me to reject notions of a missing final week or references to the Antichrist in the prophecy, except at the end as one who makes desolate. Although I do believe that there is a period of three and a half years yet to be fulfilled. The key issue for us in our time is the 7 weeks which elapse between the command to restore and build Jerusalem until the Messiah.

In the present era I believe that the Jerusalem Law of 1980 fulfils that command to restore Jerusalem. If so the 49 years will be completed at Yom Teruah/Rosh Hashanah 2029.

Prior to the coming of the Messiah there is to be a three and a half year, 1260 day period in which the Man of Sin, Antichrist, little horn, beast etc. will be allowed to reign. Counting back 1260 days from Yom Teruah 2029 we come to Passover 2026, which marks it out as a potentially significant day.

Will the Lord fulfil the autumn feasts by gathering His Saints on Yom Teruah, the day of blowing of trumpets? It is possible. Will He return to declare a Jubilee? Also possible but I do not know? The Jubilee is announced with the blowing of a trumpet at Yom Kippur.

The previous part of Daniel's prophecy, the 62 weeks*, did not take us to the day of Jesus' birth. It took us to a week of 7 years in which Jesus was born. I believe that Simeon understood the prophecy. That is why he was living in such expectation. Therefore I believe that the time of the Lord's return is being narrowed down. Never has there been a more important time to Watch. I also believe that we must awaken believers to the great deception which will soon take place, in which Satan will be allowed to imitate the return of Christ.

Sir Isaac Newton in his study of the book of Daniel concluded that the prophecy did reveal the year of Christ's birth. Besides his many accomplishments in science, he was also an expert in chronology. The study of which led to his conclusions regarding the fulfilment of the 70 weeks prophecy. He was adamant that the seven weeks period was to be treated separately from the sixty two and related to the second coming.

As far as I am aware nothing of prophetic importance occurred on the first day of Passover (Wednesday 1st April).

Having felt prompted to circulate the above email it raised the questions why and what lessons are to be learned. Here are a number of thoughts which came to me.

Prepared

What if the potentially significant event had been the revealing of the 'man of sin'? At the time of the email there were two weeks to go before the significant day. We believe that, as taught in the Bible 'the man of sin' will be revealed (2Thessalonians 2: 3), but tend to file such things away as a distant future event. Are we prepared? Are the majority of Christians prepared? Are we ready to stand if he was to be revealed in less than two weeks' time from your reading this newsletter? To be ready we need to obey Jesus' command to 'watch', ready to recognise events, as they unfold, as the fulfilment of prophecy. By far the most important preparation is a deep personal relationship with the Lord. He will never abandon his own no matter what lies ahead.

Anticipation

As explained in the introduction, the hope for our world is in the return of Jesus Christ.

When I see the unbridled evil in the world, it causes me to long for His return. He will bring justice and righteousness to the earth.

In Trumpet Sounds 156 I commented on organ harvesting in China where transplant tourism is a billion-dollar industry. In most countries patients go on a

waiting list in the hope that a suitable donor may in time be found. It is said that in China organs await patients. I recently listened to an interview with Jan Jekielek regarding his book 'Killed to Order' which exposes this evil trade. Some of the details regarding what is going on are truly stomach churning. If you belong to one of the blacklisted minority groups such as the Falun Gong, Uyghurs and now Christian members of house churches, you are in danger of being incarcerated in a detention camp. In such camps a prisoner will be profiled for their tissue and blood type. They will be held until there is a suitable recipient of their organs. Then executed to enable the transplant to take place. It is estimated that those executed in this way is in the hundreds of thousands, possibly over a million. Particularly in danger are those in their late 20's and early 30's as their organ development is in its prime. One of Jekielek's interviewers asked if doctors in China had a form of the Hippocratic Oath. Former Communist party members have said that to advance in the Party conscience had to be left behind.

Behind this evil is the regarding of members of minority groups as sub human. The Jews have long suffered from this caricature. But other groups also suffer. In Britain it has been seen in the grooming gangs which considered their victims as white trash. There are many other evil acts taking place in our world.

The rampant evil throughout the world can only be healed by Jesus Christ who will rule the nations with a rod of iron (Psalm 2: 9). Therefore we anticipate, long for and pray for His return.

Soon to take place.

Despite nothing of prophetic importance taking place at the beginning of Passover, I still believe that there are things which will soon take place. Three things which I understand precede the revealing of the 'man of sin' are, a global plague, a widespread and devastating war, and the collapse of Babylon (the world economic system).

I don't think that there are now many who doubt that Covid was the product of a Chinese biological warfare laboratory. It could be that the next plague is already under development. Behind its development will be demons intent on inflicting suffering on mankind. The Bible describes it as, *"And they were not given authority to kill them but to torment them for five months. Their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man".* Revelation 9: 5. This plague does not affect those who have the seal of God on their foreheads which suggests that the torment may be largely psychological. In contrast to the world the Christian will enjoy *"the peace of God"* (Philippians 4: 6 -7) provided they keep close to God.

In Revelation, prior to the revealing of the antichrist, a vast war is foreseen. It kills one third of mankind (Revelation 9: 18). The demonic angels which stir up the war are, *"bound at the great river Euphrates".* Revelation 9: 14. This implies that the main focus of the war will be in the Middle East. Will the current war between the USA, Israel and Iran spin out of control drawing other nations in? Will President Trump be willing to press on until there is real regime change in Iran? Without regime change the war will not end. The devastation is caused by what is described as fire, smoke and brimstone. Some see this as foreseeing a nuclear war. At present there are many nations who are preparing for war.

Finally I believe that the world economic system will collapse paving the way for the 'man of sin' to claim that he can rescue the world. Even the current conflict limiting the supply of oil has strained the world economy. If the closing of the Straits of Hormuz continues for months it will crash the global economy.

These things could happen very soon.

Returning but not yet

Keep in mind that the prophecy of the weeks in Daniel 9: 24 -27 does not tell us when the Messiah will come. It specifies two periods which must elapse before He comes. Therefore if someone arises, during the seven times seven weeks of years (a 49 year period), claiming to be the Messiah we will know that he is an imposter.

I believe that the revealing of the 'man of sin' will be both sudden and dramatic. Suddenly the world's news media will be full of the biggest story of the millennium. Everyone in the world will wake up that day to the news that Jesus Christ has returned. But he will be a false messiah which the world will welcome.

If the true Jesus was going to return on Rosh Hashanah to complete the jubilee and fulfil the Autumn feasts, in order to give time for the fulfilment of prophecy, the 'man of sin' would need to have been revealed at this last Passover. The fulfilment of the autumn feasts and a jubilee look less likely now. It is possible, maybe even probable, that the man of sin will be revealed before the expiring of the 49 years. The prophecy will then have served its purpose of warning us that it is a false messiah who has appeared.

Surprise

A key element on our Lord's return is surprise. Much as we long to know when, we have to be patient. *"Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect".* Matthew 24: 44. We may speculate but we don't know. One thing is certain, Jesus is coming and I believe very soon.

The state of the world when Christ returns

What will the world be like when Jesus returns?

When Jesus returns will there be street parties and celebrations? Will the bunting be put out and the flags flown? Will the rulers of the world gladly hand over their power to the one who is coming to reign? Will the church bells ring, the fireworks be launched and the world swept with overwhelming joy?

No. The response of the World to the return of Jesus will be horror. The world will instinctively know that Jesus is coming to judge the world. He is returning to a world in rebellion (Revelation 6: 15 – 17).

In the previous article, in Trumpet Sounds 157, we considered the state of the world before Christ returns. Jesus warned that wars, famines, plagues, pestilence and earthquakes would all continue throughout the period in which the gospel is preached to the nations. There would be no period of universal peace. Instead it would be a time of widespread deception. False prophets and false messiahs will arise leading many astray. The age would close with a time of great tribulation. It is into this troubled world that Jesus will intervene. If allowed to run its course mankind would destroy itself (Matthew 24: 22).

The final deception

The deceptions, which intensify as the age draws to an end, will culminate in the final supreme deception. Satan will be allowed to present his alternative saviour. This man will make out that he can bring an end to wars and establish a period of universal peace and prosperity. He will appear to be able to unite all people and end the world's problems. But more than this, he will seek to convince the world that he is Jesus Christ. In 2 Thessalonians we read that he will *"oppose and exalt himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped, so that he sits as God in the Temple of God, showing himself that he is God"* (2 Thessalonians 2:4). This is the lie and strong delusion which will close this resent age. All who have forsaken the truth will be taken in. They will believe that this man is God in the form of Jesus Christ.

Israel's return

It is clear from the Bible that when Jesus returns Israel will have been restored as a nation to her land. We understand this from the parable of the fig tree which puts forth leaves (Matthew 24: 32), from the nations being gathered against Israel in her land (Joel 3: 1-2), from the people giving the Jewish greeting when Jesus returns to Jerusalem, (Matthew 23: 39) and in other places.

Israel returns to their land in unbelief. From a glorious passage in Ezekiel, which declares what God will do, we learn, that it is in the land that God will

sanctify the nation (Ezekiel 36: 16 – 38). He will cleanse them. He will give them a new heart and put His Spirit within them. He will do this for the sake of His holy name.

The false Messiah

"I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, you will receive him. John 5:43. Some debate whether this is a prophecy, I believe that it is. It warns that the day will come when Israel accepts a false Messiah. He will be a man who both claims to be the Messiah while at the same time standing in opposition to the real Messiah and His followers. Instead of providing reconciliation with the Father, the false Christ will turn people away from God leading them to worship Satan.

For a time this false messiah will offer peace and safety. Israel longs for a time when the nations will recognise her. At present it seems that the whole world is against her. The hate marches regularly taking place in many cities around the world reinforce this perception. Under this false messiah Israel will at last be given respite from the hatred of the surrounding nations.

It will not last. In time the nations will be gathered against Israel and Jerusalem. When Jesus comes again it will be to a world at war. He will come to rescue Israel. When it seems that all hope is lost, Jesus will return (Zechariah 14: 1 – 3).

The shaking of the earth

Accompanying Christ's return there will be cosmic disturbances. *"….the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven will be shaken".* Matthew 24:29. The violent shaking of the earth is also referred to in Isaiah 24: 19-20. As some have commented this shaking could be brought about by a near collision by a substantial asteroid or other large heavenly object, its approach striking fear into the hearts of the people of this world.

Despite all this Jesus said that for many life will be going on as normal. *"….as the days of Noah, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking and giving in marriage until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be."* Matthew 24: 37 – 39.

The reign of the 'man of sin' will be seen as a time of hope by those who have been taken in. After the world being torn apart by war and damaged by plague there will appear to be a prospect of real peace. The opportunity to resume their

past life will be eagerly grasped. The deceived will agree with the 'man of sin's' policy of removing the dissidents, who will be blamed for the continuing failure to bring about all that has been promised. Christians and Jews will particularly be blamed for not submitting to the false saviour.

Deceiving Signs

"The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan with all power, signs and lying wonders." 2 Thessalonians 2: 9. To deceive the world into thinking that the imposter is Jesus Christ returned, Satan will create supernatural signs. These powerful signs are also referred to in Revelation as the role of the false prophet. *"He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.* Revelation 13: 13. Elijah called down fire from heaven when he contested with the priests of Baal. (1Kings 18: 38). Is this false prophet making out that he is in the same line as Elijah? Whatever lies behind it the world will be taken in. As they will by the image of the beast. The world will be swept with cultic frenzy as the majority worship the imposter believing that he has the answers

The mark of the beast

What the mark of the beast will prove to be remains to be seen. But projecting the current state of the world forward, it will be part of impossibly tight government control. Satan is developing a world from which there is no escape and all dissent is readily detected (Revelation 13: 16 – 18). Those who receive the mark are condemned by their action (Revelation 14: 9 – 11).

However somehow Satan's plans will be thwarted. Not all will receive the mark. Many, although not Christian, will have refused. They are the sheep who have shown mercy to Christ's brethren. They go on to populate Christ's millennial kingdom (Matthew 25: 31 – 46). We will look more deeply into this parable in a future article.

The faithful witnesses

I do not believe that Christians are removed from this world before these events take place. All who recognise the deception and refuse to give allegiance to this imposter will be persecuted. This 'man of sin' will be allowed to make war on the saints and overcome them (Daniel 7: 25, Revelation 13: 7). Why will the Lord allow his people to suffer? Ultimately it will be to God's glory. We read earlier in Revelation,*"And they overcame him with the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death."* Revelation 12: 11. On the cross Christ was victorious over sin and Satan. To Him is all the glory for these victories. But in the church there will also be glory.

Christ will in these last days raise up a people who despite being crushed by Satan will not give in. In Jesus' strength they will be victorious. Through this witness the gospel will be finally preached to all nations.

The faithfulness of the saints will be strengthened by the two witnesses whom God sends to Jerusalem. They will fearlessly counter the Devil's lies.

Left to ourselves we may have cause to fear, but Jesus has promised never to leave us, (Matthew 28: 20). For whatever lies ahead He will give us the strength to stand and having stood, receive us into glory. I am told that a more literal and emphatic sense of the translation of Hebrews 13: 5 is *"….for He himself has said, "I will <u>never, never</u> desert you, nor will I <u>ever, ever, ever</u> forsake you"".* In that confidence we stand.

Claude Mythos

The advance in AI (Artificial Intelligence) is so rapid that it seems that a regular slot in this newsletter is required. The latest news has been the development of Claude Mythos. I asked the AI mode on my web browser "what is Claude". It answered, "Claude is an advanced artificial intelligence platform and suite of large language models (LLMs) developed by the safety-focused company **Anthropic**. It is designed to be a "helpful, honest, and harmless" assistant for a wide range of text, code, and visual analysis tasks". It added, "Unlike many other AI systems, Claude is trained using a unique method called **Constitutional AI**. Instead of just following human-provided rules, the model is trained on a set of guiding principles (a "constitution") inspired by sources like the UN Declaration of Human Rights. This helps it self-critique its responses and decline harmful or unethical requests more consistently."

Elsewhere Claude has been described as a step-change system, one that pushes AI from "powerful assistant" into something far closer to an autonomous cyber intelligence layer embedded in modern infrastructure. It stands out for its strong reasoning capabilities, coding performance, and safety features.

The AI Arms Race Has Begun

Some reports indicate it has uncovered large volumes of long-standing vulnerabilities across widely used operating systems and browsers. Prophecy news Watch writes, "The underlying signal is clear: the model is operating at a level where it can meaningfully participate in real-world cybersecurity offense and defence. What will happen when systems like it become widely available, or worse, fall into the wrong hands?" "It is not just performance, it is Claude's autonomy which has caused experts some alarm.

"Unlike earlier systems that required step-by-step human guidance, Mythos appears capable of independently navigating complex systems and create its own functional exploit strategies."

"Perhaps the most consequential implication of Claude Mythos is not what it is, but what it signals. We are now entering a phase where AI systems are no longer competing on language ability or productivity enhancement. They are competing on: cyber capability, autonomous decision making, strategic reasoning under uncertainty, real-world system manipulation. This introduces a geopolitical dimension that cannot be ignored".

"If the United States and its allies develop and secure these systems first, they gain a decisive advantage in cybersecurity resilience and digital defence. But if a rival power, particularly China, is first to operationalize similar or more advanced systems at scale, the balance of cyber power could shift dramatically. In that scenario, the concern is not just espionage or hacking. It becomes infrastructure level asymmetry, where entire sectors of another nation's digital economy could be probed, disrupted, or exploited faster than humans can respond."

Universal Basic Income

The following is quoted from an interview by Jan Jekielek of Epoch TV and Wyton Hall author of "Code Red: The Left, the Right, China, and the Race to Control AI." Hall spent two years researching what drives America's tech elite to build ever more powerful, faster AI systems. The questions he wanted to answer, "What is their ultimate goal? What is the world that they foresee their technology creating?"

Mr. Hall:

And so there's going to be a lot of change coming very rapidly, and we've got to get coached up, and we've got to do it fast.

Mr. Jekielek:

What would you say is the policy area where this is most acute? I wanted you to give me a very concrete example where there is this supersonic transformation happening. The policymakers are not keeping up. There's a very hard, let's say a hard left agenda that is coming in. Do you have an example that you could describe?

Mr. Hall:

It's definitely in jobs. So we hear the following: Dario Amodei at Anthropic has said just two months ago, Jan, he said that we're looking at 50 percent of white-collar entry-level job replacement in the next 12 months to five years. Not 12

years away, but 12 months from where you or I are sitting. The other thing is that the Microsoft AI CEO, Mustafa Suleyman, says that we're looking in the next 12 to 18 months at 100 percent of white-collar job task replacement. Now, to be clear, he's not saying all jobs are going to go away in 12 months. I want to be clear on that.

What he's saying is that the tasks can be automated because of agentic AI. And agentic AI, real simply, is text to action. You tell the computer what to do, and it autonomously takes over your cursor and starts opening up your browser, opening up your banking account, and so forth. Now, why is that so important?

Well, one, obviously, our kids, our grandkids, our jobs. But when you really study where Silicon Valley has been on this whole issue of job replacement, what you find is that their real goal is universal basic income. And so pushing for global, and specifically in America, wealth redistribution. And how do I know that?

In 2016, a young man went on a blog, and he was in his early 30s, and he said, I want to do a study, the biggest study ever in American history, and I want to give $1,000 away every month to low-income people and just see what happens, no strings attached. And he did, no strings attached. Okay. And he did. To his credit, he funded the biggest, most well-funded $60 million longitudinal study. I remember this. That young man's name was Sam Altman at OpenAI.

When did ChatGPT make its public-facing arrival? November of 2022. Why is Sam Altman doing deep dive $60 million longitudinal studies on universal basic income six years before he unleashes ChatGPT? It's because within Silicon Valley, he's not alone.

There is a whole group of these elites who have said, look, we've got to have universal basic income, and we're going to get people used to it. And part of it is explaining to them that it's inevitable. And the other part is making sure that the pitchforks and torches, meaning the average everyday person, don't turn on us when this job apocalypse comes.

Comment

Under universal basic income we are all left at the mercy of the state. Any hint of dissent and you will be penniless and on your own. It will enforce allegiance to the State. Total allegiance is one interpretation of the mark of the beast. Just as Israel was commanded to bind God's law on their hand and foreheads (Deuteronomy 6: 8) so the followers of the beast will be given a mark on their right hand or on their forehead (Revelation 13: 16).

The technological beast

I asked my Web browser to tell me about Peter Theil. Here is the answer:

"Peter Thiel, the billionaire co-founder of PayPal and Palantir, has been delivering a series of private, "off-the-record" lectures in 2025 and 2026, including in San Francisco and Rome, focusing on the biblical concept of the **Antichrist** and its relevance to modern technology and politics. Thiel's lectures, which draw on the work of French thinker René Girard, propose a "political theology" where the Antichrist is not just a mystical figure, but a concrete political or technological force that could emerge in the modern world."

"Thiel argues that the Antichrist might not be a single individual, but rather a "one-world state" or a global regulatory regime that comes to power. He suggests this entity will come to power by exploiting fears of apocalypse, such as AI, climate change, or nuclear war, to install a totalitarian, or at least highly controlling, global order. Thiel reportedly stated that the slogan of the Antichrist is "peace and safety"."

Theil describes himself as a "small-o orthodox Christian" but with some distinctly individual interpretations of the Bible. Despite that, he sees that humanity is on a direction of travel that many of us would recognise.

There is an excellent YouTube video on this theme by John Lennox. The link is: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TnCv09Ygikc Title: Professor John Lennox Warns about THE BEAST: IT IS ALREADY HERE!

Silicon Valley is not just building software they are building a god. They are building an AI system which exceeds human intelligence. The idea is that we will be able to upgrade humans into gods. This is referred to as transhumanism. (*"you will be like God"* sounds familiar!) Israeli historian Yuval Harrari believes that in the 21st century the technical problem of death will be solved. The bodies and minds of Homo Sapiens will be re-engineered so that we can enjoy everlasting pleasure. (I would rather put my trust in Jesus Christ and look forward to the re-engineered body and everlasting blessings which He will bring).

Others see the dangers. Elon Musk believes that AI has the potential of civilizational destruction. Daniel Kokotajlo, founder of AI Futures project believes that there is a 70 percent chance of all humans dead in the next 5 years.

Such statements remind us of Jesus' words, *"And unless those days were shortened no flesh would be saved."* Matthew 24: 22.

Iran

As I write President Trump has extended the cease fire in the war against Iran. His stated reason being; progress in the peace negotiations. Who is he negotiating with? One possibility is Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, speaker of the Iranian parliament. Pierre Rehov makes the following points, writing for the Gatestone Institute under the heading 'Iran's Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf Is No Moderate. Why Does the West Keep Misreading Islamic Power Structures?'

- The rulers of the Middle East learned long ago -- from the United States falling for their Charlie Brown football routine every time -- how to outwit the West or outlast it.
- With the Gaza Strip, US President Donald J. Trump sets up a "Board of Peace" ostensibly to oversee the permanent disarmament of Hamas, only to pack it with Islamists dedicated to waging war, who have no interest in seeing any kind of peace, and then turns his attention elsewhere while Hamas comfortably builds up its power base again.
- Meanwhile, to the presumed delight of both Erdogan and Mohammed bin Salman, al-Sharaa has been using his "chance at greatness" to unobstructedly massacre Christians, Druze, Kurds and Alawites throughout Syria.
- In Iran, it looks as if Trump might be about to repeat these catastrophes by allowing Mohammad Ghalibaf, speaker of Iran's Majlis (parliament) and a longtime hardline Islamist, to continue tormenting Iran's betrayed citizens. If "HELP IS ON ITS WAY," as Trump promised, this sure is not it.
- Ghalibaf is not a moderate. Ghalibaf has never been a moderate.... His entire career path runs directly in the opposite direction of anyone diverging from the regime.
- The illusion of his "pragmatism," as with Syria's al-Sharaa, has been carefully cultivated, both domestically and abroad.... He speaks of fighting corruption, modernization and administrative reform. For Western observers eager to identify "moderates" inside the Iranian system, these "assurances" are often sufficient. Yet this is precisely where the misunderstanding begins.
- The familiar Western narrative of "moderates versus hardliners" within the regime reflects Western hopes, not Iranian reality.
- The Islamic Republic of Iran does not produce moderates in the Western sense. It produces highly effective operatives. Ghalibaf is among its most accomplished. Mistaking expediency for moderation, however, is exactly the kind of Western error that regimes such as Iran's have learned to exploit with consistency – and the obliging complicity of the West.

(Note: al-Sharaa is the new ruler of Syria. He like Ghalibaf is no moderate).

Taqiyya

When the United State seeks to negotiate with Iran it is up against taqiyya, which has been described as ingrained in Shia culture.

In Shia Islam the word "al-Taqiyya" literally means: "Concealing or disguising one's beliefs, convictions, ideas, feelings, opinions, and/or strategies at a time of eminent danger, whether now or later in time, to save oneself from physical and/or mental injury. A one-word translation would be "Dissimulation." (Al-Islam.org).

Later in the article, by Al-Islam, on the meaning of taqiyya the following is added: "With the above in mind, it becomes evident that a better, and more accurate definition of "al-Taqiyya" is "diplomacy." The true spirit of "al- Taqiyya" is better embodied in the single word "diplomacy" because it encompasses a comprehensive spectrum of behaviours that serve to further the vested interests of all parties involved."

The above clarification of the meaning of Taqiyya speaks a lot about the spirit in which Iran's diplomats will enter negotiations with the US.

Israel's hands tied

"Is this what Israel's government wanted? Probably not. As in June 2025, when **Donald Trump** halted Israel's Operation "Rising Lion" after 12 days, he has now put an end to "Roaring Lion" after 40 days. In both cases, Israel would have carried the war through to the end. But when Trump decides otherwise, Israel's prime minister really has no choice. We all knew Trump is unpredictable, and that he has reasons of his own, which don't always align with Israel's interests. What determined the latest ceasefire was the sigh of relief from world markets, not Israel's security, which was the actual reason for the war.

"When great powers decide and Israel is allowed only to react, it recalls the age of biblical empires such as Babylon, Persia, and Egypt. That is precisely what the prophet Isaiah warns against:"

"Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help and rely on horses, who trust in chariots because they are many and in horsemen because they are very strong, but do not look to the Holy One of Israel!" Isaiah 31: 1.

"The message is clear: whoever makes himself strategically dependent loses room to maneuver. That is exactly the dynamic now visible in the relationship with Washington".

Aviel Schnider, Israel Today

Iran has an open secret.

Also on Iran, this story comes from Perscution.org

Persecuting Christians is a booming business in the Muslim-majority nation, and the country is earning large sums of money from arresting Christ followers.

Fines and bail amounts imposed by Iranian courts have reached hundreds of thousands of dollars in recent years, financially crippling poor Christian families trying to keep their loved ones out of prison.

For years, the Middle Eastern nation has targeted Christians for their faith in Christ through intimidation, physical abuse, and imprisonment. But what's often overlooked are the exorbitant bail amounts doled out to Christ followers simply to keep themselves out of jail.

Joseph Shahbazian, leader of a Christian house church, was arrested in June 2020 for his Christian activities and given a bail amount of 3 billion tomans (about $163,000). After pleading with the court and handing over the deeds to his and his mother's apartments, the court accepted 2 billion tomans (about $109,000) on Shahbazian's behalf.

Shahbazian was released from prison in 2023 after serving a little more than a year in jail, but was rearrested in 2025 for his continued Christian activities and sentenced to 10 years in jail.

Similarly, Malihe Nazari, a Christian woman, was arrested in June 2020 for her faith and released on bail a few weeks later in the amount of 1 billion tomans (about $54,000). Despite paying the bail, Nazari was ultimately sentenced in 2022 for "founding or leading an organization that aims to disrupt national security," and served nearly eight months in jail.

These are only two examples of untold numbers of Christians who are arrested and forced to pay fines and unreasonable bail amounts to be released from prison. And the freedom earned by paying their bail is often only temporary.

Wresting money from the hands of Christians is yet another way the Iranian regime is persecuting Christians. And with Iran's economy already compelling many to live in poverty, forcing Christ followers to pay for the crime of worshipping Jesus is not only untenable, it's also a gross violation of Christians' rights.

Story by Lynn Arias, pesecution.org 22.01.2026

Sword Magazine

In Trumpet Sounds 154 I recommended a subscription to Sword Magazine. I am sorry to say that production of the magazine will end this year with the November/December edition.

The counter offensive

At the beginning of this newsletter I wrote about holding the ground until the counter offensive comes. This counter offensive is coming. It starts in the heavenly places. Michael and angels fight against the dragon Satan and expel him. Good news in the heavens but bad news for the world as Satan, being cast down, is enraged.

The offensive continues with the revealing of Jesus Christ. He is seen leading the armies of heaven. He sends His angel to gather up His saints to become part of His army. Great news for the faithful but terrible news for the world. There are signs in the heavens and earthquakes on the earth. People recognise that a day of judgement and wrath has come. They seek to hide from the one who sits on the throne.

At the time that the counter offensive comes the nations are gathered against Jerusalem. Israel faces imminent defeat. Zechariah tells us that Jesus will stand on the Mount of Olives. He will go forth to fight against the nations. The enemies of Israel will fall on the mountains of Israel. The Antichrist and False Prophet will be cast into the lake of fire. Satan will be imprisoned until the time comes for God to use him again.

Jesus will be enthroned in Jerusalem. From there, with His faithful servants, He will rule the world. It will be with a rod of iron, for most of the population of the world will be an unregenerate sinful people. The saints, particularly the martyrs of the tribulation, will reign with Christ. Theirs will be the task of reversing the ungodly laws which the nations have created in rebellion against God. There will follow a time of peace, prosperity and harmony with the natural world.

"For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." Habakkuk 2: 14.

(I will expand this article, with Bible references, in a future Trumpet Sounds).

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