

Today's News in Light of the Bible

# PROPHETIC Newsletter

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**DR. ED HINDSON**

My dear friends,

Even during the most difficult of times, we can be assured God is at work, drawing people to Him and towards salvation!

Publishers are reporting an increase in sales of Bibles and religious materials. Churches are sharing the number of people who are live-streaming their services are at an all-time high. Even our own website has seen a rise in those watching our recorded messages.

Praise the Lord for technology and the ability to virtually reach the world! We must continue to pray for those nations who monitor the airwaves and restrict the Gospel.

Your continued support makes our ministry possible. Thank you for your faithfulness!

Until He returns,

*Ed Hindson*

## Covid-19 Leads to Increase in Bible Reading and Online Sermon Viewing



While 2020 was an extremely difficult year with the coronavirus, on positive outcome to come from the increase strain and pandemic is that bible reading and online sermon viewing increased through the pandemic. Bible sales increased during the COVID-19 pandemic, according to LifeWay Christian Resources, one of the world's largest providers of Christian books and educational material. Carol Pipes of LifeWay told CBN News that Bible sales have "remained strong since the outbreak of the coronavirus in the U.S." in April and increased through June.

The company's CEO, Ben Mandrell, added that the increase in Bible sales is no accident, as people often go

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# Israeli Government Dissolves, New Elections on the Way

Israel's divided government collapsed on December 23rd, triggering the country's fourth election in under two years and bringing an unprecedented threat to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's lengthy stay as prime minister.

Netanyahu finds himself confronted by a trio of disgruntled former aides who share his hard-line ideology, led by a popular lawmaker who recently broke away from the prime minister's Likud party. Whether Netanyahu can fend off these challengers or not, the country is almost certain to be led by a right-wing politician opposed to concessions to the Palestinians, complicating hopes of the incoming Biden administration to restart peace talks.

The prospects of Israel's center-left bloc appear worse than in previous contests because its leader, Defense Minister Benny Gantz, entered into the ill-fated alliance with Netanyahu. Gantz has lost the support of much of his disappointed base, and the bloc has been left leaderless.

Netanyahu and Gantz formed their coalition last May after battling to a stalemate in three consecutive elections. They said they were putting aside their personal rivalry to form an "emergency" government focused on guiding the country through the health and economic crises caused by the pandemic. Under the deal, Gantz assumed the new role of "alternate prime minister" and was assured he would trade places with Netanyahu next November in a rotation agreement halfway through their term.

The immediate cause of the collapse was their failure to pass a budget. That caused the parliament to automatically dissolve and set new elections for late March. In the previous three elections, Netanyahu was unable to put together a majority coalition with his traditional religious and nationalist allies. Yet he controlled enough seats to prevent his opponents from cobbling together an alternate coalition.

According to recent opinion polls, that equation may be changing, with a number of rivals poised to control a parliamentary majority without him. Those rivals are led by Gideon Saar, a stalwart in Netanyahu's Likud party who announced this month that he was breaking away and forming a new party. Saar, who once served as Netanyahu's Cabinet secretary, has accused the prime minister of turning the Likud into a "personality cult" focused on ensuring its leader's political survival.

If elections were held today, Saar's party would finish second behind the Likud, appearing to give him a veto over a Netanyahu-led government, according to polls. Saar has vowed he will not serve under Netanyahu. Naftali Bennett, another former aide who had a falling out with Netanyahu, leads a religious right-wing party that also has surged in the polls. And Avigdor Lieberman, Netanyahu's former chief of staff and a longtime Cabinet minister who now leads his own party, also says the prime minister is unfit to lead.



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# Iran Nears Collapse Under Covid-19

There are indications that Iran could be among the worst-affected countries in the world by the coronavirus pandemic and its associated problems. Accurate pandemic numbers are hard to come by because of the opacity of the Islamic regime. However, based on sporadic statements by government officials as well as direct testimony from members of the country's beleaguered medical community, it is hard to avoid the grim conclusion that Iran may be among the top three or four worst-hit countries in the world, with the other three—India, the United States, and Brazil—possessing much larger populations.

The world is inundated on a daily basis with stories of suffering and tragedy, but Iran's problems are of a different order of magnitude altogether. Given the endemic problems of governance and the tightening of the sanctions



under the new US special representative for Iran, Elliott Abrams—not to mention the devastating toll on the country's medical community—a consensus is forming among medical professionals that the country is fast approaching a catastrophe.

Right now, Iran is in the throes of its most severe pandemic surge, with many hospitals strained to the point of complete collapse. “There is no way we could continue like this. We are reaching the absolute limits of our technical, physical, and mental capabilities,” said a doctor at Masih Daneshvari hospital in Tehran. The hospital, which specializes in respiratory ailments, has seen its number of Covid-19 patients triple in the space of less than a month. The situation is so dire that makeshift

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All of these rivalries are more personal than ideological, meaning that Israel's next government—led by Netanyahu or not—almost certainly will have a right-wing ideology that opposes Palestinian independence and supports continued Israeli settlement construction in the occupied West Bank. The recent polls indicate that Gantz, who appealed to left-wing voters in previous elections, may not receive enough

votes to even enter the next Knesset.

Yair Lapid, leader of the centrist Yesh Atid party, appears to be gaining some of those voters, but not enough to lead the next government, according to the polls. The left-wing Labor Party, which established Israel and led the country for its first 30 years, is not expected to cross the threshold, while the far-left Meretz party is expected to barely cross it.—PNL

**PRAY:** Pray this election will not lead to greater instability in the region and for ultimately God's will to be accomplished through the election.

to the Bible as a source of hope in times of crisis and uncertainty. People draw hope from Scripture because in it they see a God who is with us during our suffering. The Bible, as God's words to us, is a reminder that He doesn't leave us to walk through difficult times alone," he said.

Fellow faith-based publisher Tyndale House Publishers said they also saw an increase in Bible sales amid the pandemic. This includes their Life Application Study Bible sales going up 44% and sales of the Immerse Bible going up 60%, according to Jim Jewell, an executive at Tyndale. Jewell said he believed concerns over the pandemic "has upended almost everyone's lives in some way. It's not surprising that people turn to the comfort and clarity of the Bible in times of trouble and uncertainty," he said, adding that social media engagement for Tyndale was also growing. "On [our Facebook page for the] New Living Translation, where we post Bible verse memes, engagement was triple what it was last March and up 72% from just last month."

In April, book sales data provider Nielsen BookScan revealed that biblical and liturgical texts had been rapidly climbing the charts. The group said the increase in purchases was an "unusual pattern in comparison to the same period in recent years." Nielsen cited the closure of churches as a factor, adding that "perhaps people are turning to scripture for comfort in these abnormal and melancholy times ... or perhaps people are curious as to whether the coronavirus is prophesied in Revelations."

David Jeremiah, senior pastor of Shadow Mountain Community Church in El Cajon, California, and host of the radio program

"Turning Point," said that ever since the shutdown began, viewership of his online services has dramatically skyrocketed. "The church is alive and well and maybe more responsive now that I can ever remember except for the possible exception of 9/11," he said.

"What we've learned from all of this is God doesn't need a building for there to be a church. I'm preaching right now to more people than I have ever preached to my life," he said, adding that a sermon he delivered in which he addressed whether COVID-19 is mentioned in biblical prophecy received over 1 million views on YouTube. "We've never had anything on YouTube get that kind of traction." When everything in which we have trusted is taken away and we are left with ourselves, we have to ask the hard questions. "If this is it, what happens to me now?" There's a renewed interest in the Gospel and a desire to know what the Bible has to say. Is this the beginning of a revival? This may not be a revival in the truest sense of the Great Awakening, but I believe we are seeing an online revival" said Jeremiah.

While the pandemic is "frightening" and "frustrating" for many people, Jeremiah stressed that God is clearly in the midst of it all, adding: "He is with us wherever we are. You don't have to be in a crowd to have God. You just need a quiet moment." — PNL



Over 60 of Dr. Hindson's messages are available to watch online at: [www.thekingiscoming.com](http://www.thekingiscoming.com)

**PRAY:** Pray this renewed emphasis on the Bible and on the things of God will continue this year even after the effects of the pandemic have subsided.

# Hungary Defines Marriage, Bans Gay Adoption

The eastern European nation of Hungary has passed a constitutional amendment that will preserve the definition of marriage as a union between one man and one woman. The Ninth Amendment to the Fundamental Law of Hungary, the country's equivalent of a constitution, was passed in Parliament by a margin of 134-45.

The amendment, which was backed by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, will amend Section L paragraph (1) of the Fundamental Law to read: "Hungary protects the institution of marriage as the association between a man and a woman and the family as the basis for the survival of a nation. The foundation of the family is marriage and the parent-child relationship. The mother is a woman, the father is a man. The main rule is that only married couples can adopt a child, that is, a man and woman who are married," said Justice Minister Judit Varga.

Varga, who sent the amendment to Parliament, said it will also work to provide "all children with an education based on the values of the Christian culture of Hungary and guarantees the undisturbed development of the child according to their gender at birth," Hungary Today noted.

"The Fundamental Law of Hungary is a living framework that expresses the will of the nation, the form in which we want to live," Varga wrote in the justification section of the bill. "However, the 'modern' set of ideas that make all traditional values, including the two sexes, relative is a growing concern."

"The constant threat to the natural laws of the forms and content of human communities, to the concepts arising from the order of Creation that harmonize with them and ensure the survival of communities, and, in some cases, the attempt to formulate them



with a content contrary to the original raises doubts as to whether the interests, rights and well-being of future generations can be protected along the lines of the values of the Fundamental Law," she added.

The passage of the Ninth Amendment comes less than a year after Parliament voted in favor of a measure that defines gender as "biological sex based on primary sex characteristics and chromosomes." Like the measure preserving the traditional definition of sex, the Ninth Amendment faced strong push back from LGBT advocacy groups.

"This is a dark day for Hungary's LGBTQ community and a dark day for human rights," said David Vig, director of Amnesty Hungary. "These discriminatory, homophobic and transphobic new laws — rushed through under the cover of the coronavirus pandemic — are just the latest attack on LGBTQ people by Hungarian authorities."

The government of Hungary, led by Orbán, has worked to uphold the influence of Christianity on its laws and culture as much of the rest of Europe continues to become more secular. Orbán previously described Christianity as "Europe's last hope."

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beds have been set up in the open air, with rudimentary coverings standing for tents. “Drive-in ventilation” sections have been installed in the parking lots of a number of hospitals, where patients take turns using ventilation machines while staying seated in their cars.

Even before the onset of the pandemic, the purchasing power of an average family had been nearly halved, the general health of the population had deteriorated markedly, prices of pharmaceuticals had skyrocketed, and a massive shortage of medicine and equipment was straining the system to the breaking point. This, coupled with the abysmal mishandling of the pandemic by the government after the February outbreak, is causing misery and havoc on an unprecedented scale.

What most people outside Iran don’t realize is that Covid-19 is not the only pestilence hitting Iran at present. There is also, as an indirect result of the economic depression, a horrific crime spree, a fast-spreading wave of suicides among young people, a pandemic of business

closures, a catastrophic drop in living standards, an epidemic of substance abuse, and a terrifying wave of evictions and relinquished homes (as high as 10 percent in Tehran alone). And all this is exacerbated by a contagion of graft and corruption in high places and the aftermath of several recent earthquakes and floods.

Officially, there have been around 50,000 deaths from Covid-19 and nearly a million infections. However, practically no one takes these figures seriously. Of the 13 medical professionals spoken to for this article in the last week of September (seven doctors and six nurses, from different parts of Iran), the lowest estimate given for the number of fatalities was in the 100,000 range, and the highest was over 400,000. The rest averaged in the neighborhood of 150,000.

Some experts are concerned that Iran’s problems will lead to desperation for its leadership, causing them to act out of desperation and attack Israel before the nation collapses and loses its ability to strike.— *PNL*

**PRAY:** Pray for the Iranian people and that this situation will not lead to an increase in tensions and hostilities between Iran, Israel, and the United States.

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Hungary was one of the 31 other countries that joined the U.S. in signing the Geneva Consensus Declaration, which asserts that “there is no international right to abortion.”

Rather than rely on immigration to counteract the country’s declining birth rates, the Hungarian government implemented pro-family policies designed to incentivize people to have children.

Hungary is one of the last bastions of Christianity remaining in Europe. Some of the other nations, such as France, Spain, and Great Britain, have moved to secularization and are even becoming anti-Christian.

However, God is still at work in parts of Europe and we must pray that places like Hungary can still be a light for Christ in this post-Christian region.— *PNL*

**PRAY:** Pray Hungary will continue to promote the values of Christianity and will shine as a light in the darkness of Europe.