

# Newsbytes

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"Let us be alert to the season in which we are living. It is the season of the Blessed Hope, calling for us to cut our ties with the world and build ourselves on this One who will soon appear. He is our hope—a Blessed Hope enabling us to rise above our times and fix our gaze upon Him." Tozer

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## Kings Of The East Solidifying Power - The End Of Hong Kong As We Know It?

FAMILY RESEARCH COUNCIL MAY 25, 2020

"The arms of tyranny have reached Hong Kong," declared pro-democracy lawmaker Ted Hui. The Chinese government has taken advantage of the quiet streets of Hong Kong -- just months ago filled with hundreds of thousands of protesters -- to push an extensive national security law for Hong Kong through parliament. Critics say this overreach by the Beijing marks the end of the freedom and autonomy that has enabled Hong Kong to thrive.

Last year, pro-democracy protesters made international headlines for their fierce defense of Hong Kong's autonomy from mainland China over an extradition bill which would have allowed its citizens to be extradited to China.

Hong Kong currently operates under a unique "one country, two systems" policy agreed upon before the British returned Hong Kong to China in 1997. The city has flourished thanks to its freedom and because it has evaded the tight grip of the Chinese Communist Party.

Pro-democracy activists do not want their city to look like the Chinese mainland, which suffers from countless human rights and religious freedom violations. In contrast, Hong Kong has operated with a high degree of economic, political, and religious freedom -- freedoms most Hong Kongers refuse to relinquish without a fight. Pro-democracy protesters ultimately succeeded in killing the extradition bill last year, and their momentum scares Beijing. The freedom-loving people of Hong Kong are proving difficult to control for the Chinese Communist Party. So much so that Beijing is unveiling a new legislative plan to control them.

So, what does Beijing's new legislation mean for the future of Hong Kong?

Chinese officials have said the sweeping plan includes creating new laws and a new enforcement mechanism for addressing what they deem to be national security threats in Hong Kong. The new law will criminalize anything the government chooses to classify as secessionist activities and subversion of state power.

The accusation of subversion of state power will be familiar to Chinese Christians. Just a few months ago, well-known house church pastor Wang Yi was sentenced to nine years in prison for "subversion of state power." With so-called "national security" laws like these, religious freedom may be at risk in Hong Kong as well.

One thing is sure -- the Chinese government doesn't tolerate dissent or any set of beliefs it may feel

threatened by. The pro-democracy protest movement last year was a challenge to Beijing, one they are now cracking down on.

Pro-democracy protest leader Joshua Wong took to Twitter to highlight the risks of this new legislation: "The new National Security Law in HK will kill future democratic movements, since all pro-democracy protests in the city can be classified as attempts of subversions of China's authority, just like how the Beijing does in China." Activists say this law will effectively silence the people of Hong Kong.

The free world should not stand by silently as Beijing assaults Hong Kong's autonomy with stunning speed. Senator Josh Hawley (R-Mo.) introduced a resolution this week condemning the Chinese government's proposed national security law, calling it a violation of the Sino-British Joint Declaration which established the "one country, two systems" policy that protected Hong Kong. The resolution encourages the U.S. government use diplomatic means, including sanctions, to dissuade the Chinese government from passing this law.

Hong Kong may feel far away, but the Chinese government has proven it has imperialist intentions which won't stop with Hong Kong. Taiwan, another free and prosperous society, is also experiencing heightened tensions with Beijing.

It is important that the leaders of free countries -- including the United States -- speak out loudly and resolutely in support of Hong Kong and against Chinese aggression. This city's legacy as a free society, one which embraces a robust view of religious freedom, is at stake.

To watch Hong Kong become increasingly subject to the tyrannical rule of the Chinese Communist Party is a tragedy for freedom-loving people everywhere.

## First Google/Apple-based contact-tracing app launched

By Leo Kelion      26 May 2020

The team developing Switzerland's coronavirus contact-tracing app says it has become the first to have launched a product incorporating a technology provided by Apple and Google.

Members of the Swiss army, hospital workers and civil servants can now install the SwissCovid app ahead of a planned wider rollout.

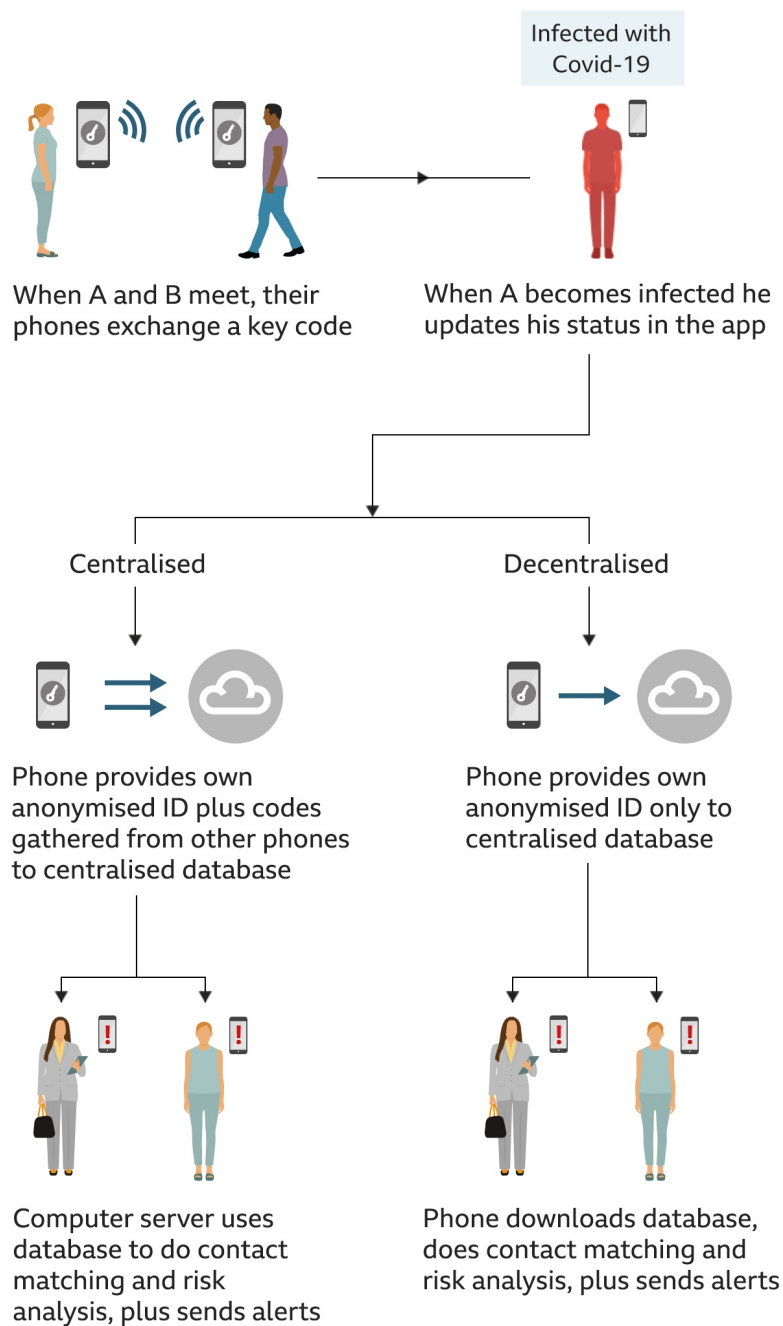
A Latvian coalition says it is running close behind.

But the US tech firms face criticism for their prescriptive approach.

Automated contact tracing involves using smartphones to detect when two people are close to each other for long enough that there is a significant risk of contagion, so that one can be warned if the other is later diagnosed with having the disease.

To make use of their API (application programming interface) - a software tool that gives special access to some features of their iOS and Android mobile operating systems - the two companies have forbidden participants from gathering users' location data, among other restrictions.

That means that apps that pursue a rival "centralised" model will continue to face circumstances when iPhones fail to carry out the required Bluetooth-based "handshakes".



BBC

"The use of digital technologies must be designed in such a way that we, as democratically elected governments, evaluate it and judge it acceptable to our citizens and in accordance with our European values," wrote digital affairs ministers from the German, French, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese governments in a joint letter published in the press.

"We believe that challenging this right by imposing technical standards represents a misstep and a missed opportunity for open collaboration between governments and the private sector."

The BBC has asked Apple and Google for their response.

The Swiss team, however, has welcomed the two firms' involvement.

"Bluetooth was not developed for this kind of large-scale distance measurement," said Prof Srdjan Capkun from the ETH institute.

"Making sure that we can use it in this way requires a lot of engineering skill and collaboration, including collaboration with Apple and Google."

Apple and Google said last week that 22 countries, as well as some US states, had requested access to its API.

Some, like the UK, are testing it as a back-up to their own independent projects, while others are rushing to release apps based on it as soon as possible.

Advocates have highlighted an opinion poll that suggests 70% of Swiss residents support the initiative.

By contrast, the Latvian team - which has also incorporated the API - is able to proceed without a parliamentary vote, and hopes to offer its Apturi Covid app to the public as soon as Thursday.

Local tech companies in Latvia have created the Apturi Covid app, based on Apple and Google's model. A spokeswoman told the BBC that Apple had already approved the software to appear on its App Store, but the developers were still waiting for permission to list it on the Google Play marketplace.

"Of course we would be very happy to be the first [national launch], but the most important thing is to help our inhabitants fight the virus," she added.

In other developments:

– health officials in the Chinese city of Hangzhou have said they are considering making locals' use of a contact-tracing app a permanent fixture beyond the current pandemic

– fewer Australians are using a local contact-tracing app than officials had hoped, reports the Guardian. It says the government is still considering whether to switch to the Apple-Google system

– Israeli MPs have been told that smartphone surveillance tech used by the country's security agency Shin Bet helped identify more than 4,000 cases of Covid-19, according to the Ctech news site. However, the report says mistakes and malfunctions also occurred, which a panel of politicians will need to take into account as it weighs up whether to extend the controversial programme.

## Secret Deal Results in Saudi Arabia Challenging Turkey for Control of Temple Mount

By Adam Eliyahu Berkowitz June 1, 2020

An article in the Hebrew-language Israel Hayom on Sunday reported on secret negotiations that have been held between Israel and Saudi Arabia since December that would result in including Saudi clerics in the Waqf council that oversees the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

The Waqf has managed the Temple Mount since the Muslim conquest of Jerusalem in 1187, with the latest version instituted by the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan after its conquest of the West Bank and East Jerusalem during the 1948 war. Accordingly, the King of Jordan currently supplies all of the funding needed to operate the waqf, which is in effect the civil administration for the holy site. The Grand Mufti of

Jerusalem is in charge of Islamic religious affairs at the site. The Palestinian Authority has parallel organizations claiming an interest in these same matters which Israel does not officially recognize.

Israel Hayom cited top Saudi diplomats who remained anonymous as saying that senior diplomats and security officials from Israel, Saudi, and the United States were in dialogue concerning the implementation of President Trump's Middle East Peace Plan. According to the report, Jordan objected to the proposal but in the wake of recent Turkish interference in East Jerusalem and the Temple Mount, the Jordanian government now supports having Saudi clerics as part of the Waqf council.

This seems to be a total reversal of the Jordanian Temple Mount policy. In February 2019, the Jordanian government, which controls the Waqf, enlarged its council from 11 to 18 members last week including Palestinian clerics for the first time. At the time, the move triggered a wave of Muslim violence on the Temple Mount. It was reported at the time that the move was an attempt by the Hashemite Kingdom that rules Jordan to ally with the Palestinian Authority in an attempt to prevent the Saudis from replacing them as custodians of the Jerusalem holy sites considered important to Islam. Rather than create an alliance, the restructuring of the Waqf council to include Palestinian clerics led to greater conflict as the PA tried to put Abbas loyalists in place, a move the Hashemite rulers of Jordan strongly opposed. The PA loyalists were also closely allied with Turkey and President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan who funded their organizations to the tune of tens of millions of dollars.

As Turkey's influence over the Palestinian Waqf members increased, the Hashemite Kingdom let it be known to Israel and the US that they would be open to including Saudi Arabia in the custodianship of the Temple Mount as long as it is not to the detriment of their special status as custodians of the Jerusalem holy sites. The Jordanian government also required that the Saudi government will provide several million dollars to Islamic institutions in east Jerusalem and the Temple Mount as a means of putting diplomatic pressure to remove the Turkish influence operating under the protection of the PA.

Dr. Mordechai Kedar, a senior lecturer in the Department of Arabic at Bar-Ilan University, explained the complex background and interests.

"You have to understand that the Sunni world today is sharply divided between pro-state organizations and movements which are by definition a rebellious, anti-establishment form of Islam," Dr. Kedar explained to Breaking Israel News. "The pro-state Muslims are headed and funded by Saudi Arabia and the anti-establishment Muslims, which include the Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas, and Hezbollah, are headed ideologically by Erdogan and sponsored by Qatar. This is a giant struggle between two kinds of Islam: revolutionary Islam and state Islam."

Unfortunately, Turkey is now a factor in internal Israeli politics.

"Turkey infiltrated Jerusalem in a very big way, pouring millions of dollars into recruiting Palestinians and setting up his form of Muslim institutions," Dr. Kedar said. "This includes close ties between Erdogan and the Northern Branch of the Islamic Movement which was banned by the Israeli government in November 2015 due to close ties with Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood."

"The Palestinian Authority is, unfortunately, allying with Turkey for the money since they don't want to lose power and relinquish power to Hamas," Dr. Kedar noted. "Jordan is willing to ally with Saudi Arabia because of its economic difficulties." "Israel wants to ally with Saudi Arabia because it is a pro-establishment form of Islam. You can talk with them. They are reasonable. It does not go against the interests of Israel. Since Israel and Saudi Arabia have shared interests, it is preferable that they have a say in the custodianship of the Temple Mount and a stronger influence on the Palestinians."

"It is important to have the status connected with holy sites but when faced with the existential threat posed by Turkey, Jordan will choose to ally with Saudi Arabia."

## Meant to eradicate locusts, pesticides affect soil, crops

The Locust Warning Organisation (LWO) sprayed Malathion 96 and Chlorpyrifos, both organophosphate pesticides, to control the locust swarms across states.

The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations said on Friday that it may declare the locust invasion a plague if it takes a turn for the worse after breeding by the voracious, crop-crunching insects in India, Pakistan and West Africa.

FAO now categorises the locust invasion that has reached India as an “upsurge”. Swarms of desert locusts have chomped through vegetation and crops across farm lands in Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and Chhattisgarh.

The Locust Warning Organisation (LWO) sprayed Malathion 96 and Chlorpyrifos, both organophosphate pesticides, to control the locust swarms across states. Both are extremely toxic and high level of exposure to the pesticides may cause nausea, dizziness and even death. They can also impact soil fertility by altering the ecological balance.

“We have conducted control operations in 47,000 ha in Rajasthan, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh by spraying pesticides,” said KL Gurjar, deputy director of the LWO. A swarm near Jhansi in UP has scattered. Gurjar said there is no clear indications the locusts will head towards Delhi.

FAO, saying it may declare a plague of locusts, cautioned that farmers shouldn’t try to control the swarms. “Unfortunately, spraying of chemical insecticides is the only effective method when desert locusts are in such large numbers. There are bio-pesticides which are safe ways of controlling them, but may not be as effective. FAO doesn’t encourage control of desert locusts by farmers. State or federal teams that are trained in locust invasion management should do it with safety equipment,” said Keith Cressman, senior locust forecasting officer at FAO, at a webinar organised by the Centre for Science and Environment on Friday.

One of the options with farmers is to dig trenches around their farms to prevent hoppers from entering. Noise can scatter locusts, but they prevent focused control operations by the authorities as the swarms move in different directions. Cressman said the current severe locust invasion was linked to climate change-induced aberrations in rainfall. “There was good breeding in India last year, the monsoon was protracted which allowed further increase in locust populations. The drying vegetation in south-west Pakistan also led to them reaching India a month in advance,” he said. India was alerted by FAO last year about the possibility of waves of invasions.

The desert locusts were expected to remain limited to its habitat in Rajasthan, but the swarms scattered to Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra because of the strong north-westerly winds following cyclone Amphan, which struck West Bengal and Odisha on May 20.

“Except for Malathion 96, the rest that they are spraying are highly poisonous pesticides. They are red-labelled. They are meant for locust control in desert areas which are largely uninhabited. But the same pesticides are being sprayed on in areas with habitation and with water bodies. These pesticides will drift and residue will remain. They will definitely disturb the ecological balance of the area and kill natural enemies—pests which can counter other crop pests. So, we can expect outbreak of other pests,” said GV Ramanjaneyulu, executive director at the Centre for Sustainable Agriculture.

“Desert locusts don’t multiply in non-desert areas so there is no point in spraying toxic pesticides in such large quantities in other states. They have a short life cycle and will die in due course. Government must

consider biocontrol agents,” he added.

With the onset of monsoon rains, the locusts will come back to their summer breeding sites in the desert along the India-Pakistan border. “They will be flying back and forth with the winds till monsoon arrives,” Cressman said. The other forecast that FAO has made is that with the south-west monsoon winds, desert locusts that bred in the Horn of Africa will travel to Rajasthan across the Indian Ocean in June.

“Spraying of insecticides is compounding environmental problems in the Horn of Africa. We do not have wherewithal to undertake these measures at the scale required, we need aircraft to spray, expertise to spray. Biotechnological interventions should be considered...locust invasions are an existential challenge if they are allowed...in the coming years,” Richard Mark Mbaram, technical adviser to the Nigerian ministry of agriculture, said

## Be Wary of Misleading, Controlling and Apostate YouTube Ministry Channels

Published on: May 31, 2020 Candy Austin

1 John 4:1 (all scripture Berean Study Bible) “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God. For many false prophets have gone out into the world.”

In this piece I hope to shed some light on how to spot the ‘Misleading, Controlling, and Apostate Ministry Channels’ on YouTube. I will not ‘Name Names’ but instead point out some of the ‘Errors’ we should look out for. Seeing how over the past several years I have ‘grown in my discernment’ through the gleaning of sound and even learning ‘what is error’ from the unsound information from multiple YouTube Ministry Channels. Therefore, I feel this is an important topic to write about, especially in these Last Days!

The information gleaned was from things concerning what the Bible has to say about the End Times and the Pretribulation Rapture. After watching and listening to literally countless hours of preaching, interviews, and shows from several ‘reputable ministries’ on YouTube, I feel led to share what I have learned over the years.

Back when I first started out in this ‘gleaning of information,’ it was like I had this ‘voracious appetite’... I absolutely ‘could not get enough’ on the hearing/learning about Our Blessed Hope! One of the first channels I started listening to/watching was about visions and dreams concerning the Rapture. For a while I really enjoyed this channel and even periodically supported their biblical outreach efforts.

Over time though, I started to discern that this channel was more or less ‘Sensational’ in the fact that visions and dreams are just that. One, we really do not have the capacity to interpret them, and two, we ultimately should not look to them for answers concerning our future. So, to base one’s whole ministry on these kinds of subjects tends to be ‘Speculative’ at best, especially when it comes to heeding one’s discernment.

To reinforce this stance, I recently revisited this channel and found out that after all these years, they still interpret visions and dreams, but now they also seem to base a lot of their ministry on ‘certain prophecies’ too. Prophecies, mind you, that come from a ‘Modern-Day Prophet’ who has since passed away in recent years. Basically, the ‘discernment takeaway’ is this: if a book, site, or ministry claims to have ‘certain knowledge or prophecies’ that comes from any ‘Modern-Day Prophet or Prophetess,’ then one would be wise to steer clear of those kinds of claims!

Foreknowledge: awareness of something before it happens or exists.

Synonyms: far-sightedness, foresight, psychic powers, clairvoyance, prediction, prognostication, divination,

prophecy, insight, vision, intuition, perception, third eye

Even if some of the 'so-called modern-day prophecies' have come true, the fact of the matter is that there will be others that will not come true. The reason that modern-day prophecies will not always come true is because God has already sovereignly given us all the prophecies that we need! Most of His Prophecies have already been fulfilled, and the remaining ones will soon come to pass in the very near future!

God's Prophecies from His Prophets are already all recorded in His Holy Word! His Word of Truth is all that we will ever need! Therefore, we should not look to 'Extrabiblical Sources' much less 'New Revelations' to tell us what God has already sovereignly told us through His Divine Foreknowledge!

Deuteronomy 18:22 "If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the LORD does not take place or come true, that is a message the LORD has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously, so do not be alarmed."

Another Misleading Ministry Channel I started following around that time concerned 'Stargazing' as in the observance of the alignment of the Sun, Moon, and Stars. This channel used the means of stargazing to search for signs in connection of when the Rapture is to happen. This channel, first of all, should have raised flags right off the bat due to their heavy focus on Astrology, not to mention the 'constant astronomical observations' which tended to wear one out over time! Wearing their audience down with their day-after-day surveillance, having us waiting and watching exhaustively for the astrological signs to manifest into the final coming of our King in the Rapture!

Over time I came to discern that this too was mainly 'Speculation.' Speculation includes things like Date-Setting, Signs, Numbers, Numerology, Repetition (seeing repeated words and numbers), Dreams, Visions, Astronomy, Astrology, and the like. These are things that create 'hype and give people things to constantly look for' without any real substance to go on and/or any sound judgment and/or theology behind it all.

Deuteronomy 4:19 "When you look to the heavens and see the sun and moon and stars—all the host of heaven—do not be enticed to bow down and worship what the LORD your God has apportioned to all the nations under heaven."

Some other channels had 'certain heretical pastors' that taught things like 'only follow the teachings of Paul and not Jesus'... which obviously makes no sense whatsoever! Also, that when the Rapture happens, all of a sudden there is going to be rivers of blood everywhere because 'flesh and blood cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven' ... seriously?! Talk about unsound doctrine and theology! Another one taught that Jesus is Michael the Archangel... Where have we heard that before?! Blatant and obvious heresy, to say the least!

Some pastors raised alarm bells by their 'heavy affiliation' with celebrities... it should not take much discernment to see what is wrong with this picture. Also, some with their 'Avid Globetrotting,' which showed that they were obviously hardly ever at home, for one thing. Then to compound the issue, they never seem to 'show much love' concerning their wives, much less mention them 'even in passing' on social media! This speaks volumes to me when I remember God's command is for Husbands to love their Wives as Christ loves the Church. So, when I see a pastor who does not seem to carry this out, it is pretty discerning and concerning at the same time.

2 Peter 2:1 "But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction."

In more recent years, I have been following what seemed like a 'great ministry' concerning these Last Days



and the soon-coming Rapture, but 'recent events' have clued me in to the fact that this ministry is not without its flaws either. 'Controlling' would best describe this channel, as in 'controlling the narrative,' so to speak. For example, the main premise of this ministry is to 'call out' other ministries who are either apostate and/or who are teaching heresy.

On the one hand, this has been 'highly beneficial' to the Church in discerning who we should and should not listen to or adhere to. On the other hand, though, when this ministry is also 'called out' because they have their own flaws as well, the narrative suddenly changes on a dime! It was as if they had to 'change the storyline' in order to 'save face' and/or do 'damage control.' Basically, when it came time for them to 'take a little dose of their own medicine,' all of a sudden the portrayal becomes, 'we are being attacked, this is not ethical or right, everyone needs to support and encourage one another instead'! So, in essence, they can 'dish the criticism out,' but when the shoe is on the other foot, it suddenly becomes unfair. Discernment says that this is a very 'manipulative and controlling' practice, to say the least.

Matthew 24:4 "Jesus answered: 'Watch out that no one deceives you.'"

There are more or less other 'quack' ministry channels that I could elaborate on as well, but the examples I mentioned are some of the more pressing ones that we should look out for. In these last days and hours, it becomes imperative that we rely more and more on what God's Word has to say, and less and less on what certain pastors, ministries, and/or channels have to say.

If turning away from channels or ministries like these is what we have to do, then so be it, no matter how hard it may be. For people like me, these friendly voices have become a 'sort of companion,' if you will, over the years, but I ultimately want the Truth and nothing but the Truth! So, my Admonition is to Pray and ask God for His Wisdom and Discernment and for the Holy Spirit to lead you into All Truth! More importantly, deception is running rampant and blatant lies are being told every day throughout our media, news outlets, and television; so we need Truth over Error now more than ever!

The takeaway is this: 'be wary, be discerning, and be careful of what you allow in'! Secular TV, movies, music, books, and all worldliness is not our friend! Deception has even crept into the Church! New Age, Masons, Witches, Yoga, Buddhism, and Hinduism among other 'Satanic Practices and Religions' have all infiltrated! So again, I say be wary, be discerning, and be very careful of what you allow into your lives! YouTube has been a 'godsend' in many ways for me, but it can also be very detrimental to some who do not know what to discern and look out for!

Matthew 10:16 "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves."

Until next time... Maranatha!