



# PTN News

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*(Examining Current Events in the Light of Bible Prophecy)*

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## Violence and the End of a Culture

*“And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me: for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.” [Genesis 6:13](#)*

By Mike Wingfield

Have you ever wondered what God sees and hears as he looks down upon the earth each day? The Bible tells us that God is everywhere present in His creation. He sees, hears, and knows everything that is happening each moment, both in heaven and earth. He knows the thoughts of every creature, both mankind and angels. ([Jeremiah 17:10](#)) God never learns. He is never surprised. He knows every person on the planet by their name. He knows everything about them.

While speaking about the value of a person, Jesus reminded His disciples that in His divine providence, God governs and is aware of the smallest details. Jesus said not one sparrow can fall to the ground without the Father's knowledge. Furthermore, God has every hair on the head of every person numbered. ([Matthew 10:29-30](#)) As the Psalmist said, “*Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.*” ([Psalm 139:6](#)) What a God! He is truly beyond our human comprehension!

Nothing can be hidden from God's eyes. [Psalm 33:13-14](#) says, “*The LORD looketh from heaven; he beholdeth all the sons of men. From the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth.*” In [Psalm 14:2](#), the Bible declares: “*The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God.*” In the context of this psalm, the conclusion to God's search is given. “*The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good. ... They are all gone aside, they are*

### Attention

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***altogether become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*** (Psalm 14:1, 3)

In the beginning, God created everything for His glory and for His praise. How God must be grieved every day as He looks down upon the 7.6 billion people that inhabit this planet. As God gazes upon earth each day and hears all of the words, sees all of the actions, and understands all of the thoughts and motives of each human being, what is it that captures His holy attention? The answer to this question is found in [Genesis 6](#). In this chapter, God looked out over the global population in Noah's time. ***“And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”*** The magnitude of man's wickedness ***“grieved [God] at his heart.”*** ([Genesis 6:5](#)) It was this grief that caused the holy Lord to declare that He was going to send a global flood to destroy all that were not on the ark.

When you read God's indictment in [Genesis 6](#), it is abundantly clear there were two sins that God's eyes were riveted upon each day as He gazed upon humanity. He was grieved because of their sexual corruption and continual violence. ([Genesis 6:11-13](#)) Earlier in [Genesis 6](#) God declared: ***“My spirit shall not always strive with man.”*** ([Genesis 6:3](#)) Many Bible scholars agree this is a reference to the work of the Holy Spirit in the conscience of man. So, God was declaring that man can come to a point when His Spirit ceases striving in the conscience of man.

The Bible teaches that a person can gradually defile his conscience to the point that it is ultimately silenced or ***“seared.”*** ([1 Timothy 4:2](#)) When this happens to enough people, the culture collectively reaches the spiritual point of no return and is slated for divine judgment. A study of the context of Genesis 6, and the greater context of all of God's revelation, indicates there are two things that defile the conscience of man – sexual immorality and violence.

It has come to my attention that most believers, and the church as a whole, do not understand the impact of violence on the conscience. Some may grasp the impact of sexually immorality upon the conscience. However, the church has been almost completely silent in addressing the dangers of violence. It is the purpose of this edition of the newsletter to expose and address the Biblical view of

violence and its impact upon our global culture in light of the Word of God.

Most people are so selfishly engaged in their own little world that they have not stopped to assess the fact that we are living at a time of incredible global violence. In America and around the world, we are experiencing a tsunami of violence. In recent decades, the world has been made aware of the threat of Islamic terrorism. The violent images of ISIS, Boko Haram, and a host of other terrorist organizations have been broadcast across the planet by our media. The carnage of war and loss of life due to advanced weaponry of war are alarming. The growing displacement of refugees fleeing from war-torn Middle Eastern countries is creating a logistical nightmare – and it is being accompanied by the spread of global Islamic terrorism among the Western nations.

In addition to this carnage, the dramatic increase in domestic violence is frightening. We have violence in our schools, homes, churches, airports, and many other public places. We talk about road rage, bullying, violence against women and children, and the savage brutality against the unborn. Violence is marketed as entertainment in our culture. Many Americans come home from work or school to watch hours of programming that features people being shot, stabbed, or blown up. Blood, killing, gore and sensual violence permeates the entertainment industry. Violence in cartoons, music, videos, movies, and television is helping to shape a new generation that will be more violent than the present one. As a result, increasing levels of lawlessness will permeate our world!

Statistical data shows that there are more than 1.5 million people incarcerated in the U.S. state and federal prison systems. The United States has more people per capita incarcerated in its prison systems than any nation in the world. And, the number and costs of these incarcerations keeps increasing at an alarming rate. In 1985, the state prison systems cost \$6.7 billion. Now it costs more than \$60 billion.

Before we turn to the Bible to examine what it has to say about violence, please read what a conservative secular group, *The Media Education Foundation*, has to say about violence in America.

- “Research indicates that media violence has not just increased in quantity; it has also become more graphic, sexual, and sadistic.”

- “By the time the average child is eighteen years old, they will have witnessed 200,000 acts of violence and 16,000 murders.”
- “Media violence is especially damaging to young children (under 8) because they cannot easily tell the difference between real life and fantasy.”
- “Most of the top-selling video games (89%) contained violent content, almost half of which was of a serious nature.”
- The level of violence during Saturday morning cartoons is higher than the level of violence during prime time. There are 3-5 violent acts per hour on prime time, versus 20-25 acts per hour on Saturday morning.”
- “Nearly 75 percent of violent scenes on television feature no immediate punishment for or condemnation of violence.” ([www.mediaed.org](http://www.mediaed.org))

Let us now examine four Biblical considerations about violence:

## 1. The Biblical Definition of Violence

One of the most common Hebrew words translated “violence” in the Old Testament is “hamas.” [Note that this is the same name chosen by the terrorist group that controls the Palestinian people in Gaza. The world does not understand this, but Israel does. These people have chosen the name “violence” as a true expression of who they are. They are in the face of Israelis, threatening to murder them and destroy the nation of Israel.] The word “hamas” speaks of bringing great harm to people physically and mentally. It points to an act that is destructive, hateful, lawless, disrespectful, wicked, wild, ruthless, and/or brutal. It is usually accompanied by loud expressions of hatred. Violence is not only an act but is also verbalized as a demonstration of hatred. **Proverbs 10:6** says, “... *but violence covers the mouth of the wicked.*”

Violence is an action, gesture, or expression due to the lack of moral restraint. Its aim is to destroy, shame, maim, kill, or terrorize its victim. Violence is an expression of defiance and disrespect for the very basic code of behavior that the Spirit of God desires to instill in the conscience of mankind. Violence and its ultimate expression –murder – are the exact opposites of the character and nature of God. **(1 John 3:11-16)** Jesus said that Satan “*was a murderer from the beginning.*” **(John**

**8:44)** When people are moved by hatred to commit acts of violence they are acting like the devil, not like God.

Violence and murder draw immediate attention from God. God said to Cain after he slew his brother: “... *the voice of thy brother’s blood crieth unto me from the ground.*” **(Genesis 4:10)** This was not an isolated reaction from God. When God established human government He instituted capital punishment as the cornerstone of governmental law to protect those who had been created in His image. He said: “*Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.*” **(Genesis 9:6)** Read **Numbers 35:29-34**. God told Israel that the shed blood of a person through murdered defiles the land and demands divine judgment. The only way to cleanse the land was to kill the murderer.

The 10 Commandments are aimed at a reverence for God and respect for human beings. They are the code of conduct that maintains the very foundation of life in any society. Thus, violence is the result of a total departure from this law and its author – God! In essence, that culture is in a mode of self-destruction! “*If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?*” **(Psalm 11:3)**

## 2. The Cultural Impact of Violence

When expressions of violence are allowed to permeate in a culture they will create a society that is void of a godly conscience, leading to increasing levels of wickedness, lawlessness, sensuality, and brutality. This is clearly demonstrated in two New Testament passages – **Romans 1:18-32** and **2 Timothy 3:1-9**. Notice that these passages speak of brutality, murder, hatred, and disrespect for God and man. A part of the work of the Spirit of God in the conscience of man is to create an atmosphere of peace, respect, and submission to the rule of law that God intended to be enforced by human government. It is God’s design that the work of God in man’s conscience and the rule of law created and maintained by human government are to complement one another. **(Romans 13:5)** This is one of the reasons why Paul instructed Timothy to pray for those who “*are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.*” **(1 Timothy 2:2-4)**

It should be understood that the ability to effectively share the gospel in a culture is directly connected to the levels of respect for mankind that are promoted within that society. When violence is allowed to permeate a culture, it not only leads to dangerous times, but also the gospel is hindered. The effectual working of the Holy Spirit through the gospel is hampered because of the explosion of violence in a society which takes place when the collective conscience of that society has been seared. The conscience is where the Holy Spirit strives with lost men to convict them of their sin and bring them to Christ. When people in a culture reach a spiritual point of no return, divine judgment takes place and their consciences are darkened. ([Romans 1:21](#)) In essence, God gives them up! ([Romans 1:24-27](#)) These same rebels no longer want “*to retain God in their knowledge.*” ([Romans 1:28](#)) And, they become “*haters of God.*” ([Romans 1:30](#))

Jesus’ Parable of the Sower and the Seed in [Matthew 13:1-23](#), gives us a perfect illustration of this. In this parable, as Jesus explained to His disciples, the sower is the evangelizer and the seed is the gospel. The conditions of the soil in the parable are conditions of the human heart [conscience]. The seed that falls on the hard pathway does not penetrate into the soil for germination to take place. Consequently, the birds come and snatch up the seed. Later, Jesus explained what happened to the seed that was sown in a hardened heart: “*Then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart.*” ([verse 19](#)) Jesus explained that the birds that took away the seed (the gospel) were demons. The Apostle Paul clearly elaborated upon the truth illustrated in this parable. In [1 Timothy 4:1-2](#), he described how some deny the teaching of the Bible and at the same time cling to deceptive teachings promoted by demons. Consequently, the lives of these people are marked by hypocrisy and a seared conscience.

Therefore, one of the results of a culture where violence has become prevalent is the open hatred for the God of the Bible and the visible suppression of the truth revealed in the Scriptures. The growth of Islam among the nations is a clear sign that the global culture has reached the point of no return. Islam promotes violence against innocent human beings, especially the followers of Christ and the Jewish people. Their brutality and delight to terrorize people demonstrate that they do not believe that humans have been created in the image of God. Islam vehemently rejects the gospel of Jesus Christ.

It is shocking to watch the growing number of Americans who embrace Islam while they attack the church and the teaching of the Bible. Why? Islam does not provide conviction against the unrighteous lifestyles within the godless American culture. However, the message of the Bible does bring conviction. Jesus has reminded us that this is why the world hated Him and why it will hate us. Read [John 15:18-16:1](#). Hatred for Christians and the moral biblical values of the Bible are being openly and violently rejected in America as never before in the history of this nation.

### 3. The Divine Judgment Due to the Permeation of Violence in a Culture

A study of the Bible and human history will demonstrate that when every culture came to its end, it was always filled with violence. Look back through the pages of human history. When you examine all of the great superpowers of the past, such as the Roman Empire, it is evident that when each one came to its end, it was filled with violence.

As mentioned above, when individuals in a culture reach the spiritual point of no return, it seems to speed up the rate of violence, hastening their divine judgment. As [Proverbs 29:16](#) states: “*When the wicked are multiplied, transgression increaseth.*” Sinners seem to embolden one another in their defiant rebellion against God and man. In other words, the increase in the magnitude and frequency of violence has a snowball effect upon a culture. As the snowball rolls down the hill, it gets bigger and gains momentum. It is apparent that our global culture is experiencing this now.

While commenting on the violence during the days of Noah in [Genesis 6:11](#), Matthew Henry wrote: “There was no order nor regular government; no man was safe in the possession of that which he had ... there was nothing but murders, rapes, and [stealing]. ... Take away conscience and the fear of God, and men become beasts and devils to one another, like fishes of the sea, where the greater devour the less. Sin fills the earth with violence, and so turns the world into a wilderness, into a cock-pit.” (Matthew Henry, [Commentary on the Whole Bible](#))

Biblical and secular history demonstrate that violent cultures destroy themselves. Then, God sends another

nation to conquer them, completing the cycle of His divine judgment.

In essence, this divine judgment is an act of mercy on the part of God. If these violent cultures were allowed to continue unrestrained, they would become a threat to the entire global population as they were in the days of Noah. God stops brutal regimes. He visits *“the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate [Him].”* ([Exodus 20:5](#)) We can be thankful that God in His infinite wisdom and mercy limits wickedness. God does have a toleration point! He demonstrated that when He destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah and when He caused Israel to drive the Canaanites out of the land. Many generations later, God sent in the Assyrians and Babylonians to bring divine judgment upon His own people because of their violence and wickedness. ([Ezekiel 7:23-24](#)) Then, in turn, He caused Assyria and Babylon to fall because of their violence and wickedness.

#### 4. Concluding Biblical Admonitions Concerning Violence

Violence has terrorized mankind during the entire history of his time on this earth. From the murder of Abel to the crushing forces of the Antichrist at Armageddon, violence has grieved the heart of God.

God hates violence! When Jesus rules on this earth for 1,000 years from Jerusalem, His government will not tolerate violence. In [Isaiah 60:18](#) God gave the following promise to His people: *“Violence shall no more be heard in thy land.”* Among the Gentile nations, war and conflict will not be permitted. Finally, the world will have a righteous King who will also be the judge of all the nations. *“And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”* ([Isaiah 2:4](#))

The Lord exhorts His people to live at peace with everyone. *“[Return] to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.”* ([Romans 12:17-19](#))

In light of what we have discovered about violence, I would hope that you realize how serious it is to guard your conscience. We must protect our consciences by refraining from viewing or listening to violent expressions of any kind. We must not permit violence to enter our homes or minds with any level of acceptance or pleasure!

This is a serious matter. We must guard what enters our minds and consciences through the gates of our eyes, ears, and mouth. [Proverbs 4:23](#) warns us: *“[Guard] thy heart [conscience] with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.”* This is especially critical for small children.

When God looks down upon all of mankind each day and sees all of the violence and wickedness, His heart is broken. As we saw at the beginning of this newsletter, the wickedness of mankind in Noah’s day grieved God’s heart. This was also God’s reaction to the wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah. In [Genesis 18:20](#) God exclaimed, *“the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and ... their sin is very grievous.”* I am often reminded of the tears of Jesus when He wept over Jerusalem and He said: *“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!”* ([Matthew 23:37](#)) Oh, what love! The human mind cannot comprehend the infinite love of God.

God’s love for us was so great that He permitted His Son to suffer for us on the cruel cross of Calvary. Although Jesus *“had done no violence”* ([Isaiah 53:9](#)), *“yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him.”* ([Isaiah 53:10](#)) Jesus was *“stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.”* ([Isaiah 53:4](#)) Oh how the Father must love us!

Jesus suffered the abuse and violence of a horrific death on a cross to pay for the penalty of all of our sins. He *“became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore, God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”* ([Philippians 2:8-11](#))

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Join Mike for his 24<sup>th</sup> tour to the land of the Bible.

**May 27-June 3, 2019**

**\$3,899.00 from JFK in NY**



It is hard for me to put into words the incredible experience of visiting the land of the Bible. Each day your soul is moved by touching Biblical history. Thoughts are always racing through your mind: Did Jesus walk here? Is this where the pilgrims went up to the Temple? Is this the exact spot where Jesus knelt to pray? Is this the path that Jesus traveled on Palm Sunday? However, not only are you touching the historical pages of the Bible, you will experience the fulfillment of Biblical prophecies each and every moment of the day. You will enjoy seeing the fulfillment of the return of the Jewish people to their land. You will be awed at the beauty of the barren land coming to life with beautiful flowers, trees, and lush vegetation. You will be thrilled to hear the sound of the Israeli children speaking Hebrew while they play in the streets of Jerusalem. You may visit other places that have many beautiful sights, but no place on earth will touch the soul of the child of God like the Holy Land. Come and join us for the journey that will thrill your soul!

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**We only have 16 more rooms available and you should be in one of them!**

## Mike and Joyce celebrate 50 years together this month!

This month, Mike and Joyce will be celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. Consequently, they are taking off the entire month of September from ministry responsibilities. The Prophecy Today office will be closed. Pray for them as they travel and enjoy being together.

## Mike's Upcoming Speaking Schedule

Share this schedule with your family or friends that may be living in an area where Mike will be speaking.

August 17-18- Vienna, WV	River Valley Community Nazarene Church	1-304-295-7801
August 19-21- Coolville, OH	Grace Brethren Church	1-740-667-3710
<i>September – Mike will take off the entire month to celebrate his 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.</i>		
October 8- Rocky Mount, VA	<u>Monthly Bible Study at Franklin Heights</u>	1-540-798-5110
October 13- Salem, VA (10am-noon)	Faith Baptist Church	1-540-353-6357
October 14-17- Floyd, VA	Grace Baptist Church	1-540-239-4211
October 18- Roanoke, VA	<u>Monthly Bible Study at South County Library</u>	1-540-798-5110
October 21-23- Peru, IN	Peru Grace Brethren Church	1-765-473-3881
November 1- Rocky Mount, VA	<u>Monthly Bible Study at Franklin Heights</u>	1-540-798-5110
November 15- Roanoke, VA	<u>Monthly Bible Study at South County Library</u>	1-540-798-5110

**Mike's monthly prophetic Bible study begins at 7:00 pm in both locations.**

**Please complete this form and return it to us by September 30th**

Dear Friend,

It is our privilege to send you our newsletter. Our desire is to help believers like you develop a biblical worldview. As ambassadors of Jesus Christ, it is very important for us to understand what time it is on God’s calendar and the condition of the culture in which we are living. We need to see our world in light of the Scriptures. Obviously, this is not an easy task. Believers need help understanding the times in which they are living. This is the assignment the Holy Spirit has given to us.

This ministry is very small and it has limited resources. We are constantly striving to be good managers of the resources the Lord has given us. We are extremely thankful for those who have been faithfully and generously supporting this ministry with their prayers and finances. It is our desire to stretch our financial resources to accomplish our goal of reaching out to the body of Christ to encourage them to be looking, longing, and waiting for the return of our Lord.

We have been publishing the PTNews newsletter 10 times each year since 1990. This newsletter is available on our website and by regular mail. There is no set subscription fee required to receive it. We very strongly believe we need to make it available to the body of Christ without a charge. However, we do ask that everyone who receives the newsletter make an annual donation to help us with the cost of sending it to them. We are not and will not change this policy.

We print the newsletter at our ministry facility and have about 25 volunteers to help us process it for mailing. The cost for printing and mailing our newsletter is currently about \$3,800 each month. The annual cost is \$38,000. It is very important that we know that those who receive this newsletter read it and find it helpful. In light of this, we are asking everyone who receives this newsletter to complete and return the request form at the bottom of this page. Please let us hear from you **no later than September 30<sup>th</sup>**.

**If we do not receive this request form from you by September 30<sup>th</sup>, we will assume that you no longer want to receive this newsletter. Consequently, you will be deleted from our mailing list. If you change your mind, you can simply contact us at a later date and we will be glad to put you back on our mailing list.**

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