



# **SIGNS OF THE TIMES**

**News Articles for Episode 312**

# [Norway, Ireland and Spain say they will recognize a Palestinian state | AP News](#)

#bibleprophecy, #palestinian state, #countries, #unified

May 23, 2024

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — Norway, Ireland and Spain said Wednesday they would recognize a Palestinian state, a [historic but largely symbolic move](#) that further deepens Israel's isolation more than seven months into its [grinding war against Hamas in Gaza](#). Israel denounced the decisions and recalled its ambassadors to the three countries.

Palestinian officials welcomed the announcements as an affirmation of their decades-long quest for statehood in east Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip — territories Israel seized in the 1967 Mideast war and still controls.

While some 140 countries — more than two-thirds of the United Nations — recognize a Palestinian state, Wednesday's cascade of announcements could build momentum at a time when even close allies of Israel have piled on criticism for its conduct in Gaza.

The timing of the move was a surprise, but discussions have been underway for weeks in some European Union countries about possibly recognizing a Palestinian state. Proponents have argued that the war has shown the need for a new push toward a two-state solution, 15 years after negotiations collapsed between Israel and the Palestinians. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government opposes Palestinian statehood.

It was the second blow to Israel's international reputation this week after the chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court [said he would seek arrest warrants](#) for Netanyahu and his defense minister. The International Court of Justice is also considering allegations of [genocide that Israel has strenuously denied](#).

In addition to recalling the ambassadors to the three countries, Israel summoned their envoys, accusing the Europeans of rewarding the militant Hamas group for its Oct. 7 attack that triggered the war. Foreign Minister Israel Katz said the European ambassadors would watch [grisly video footage of the attack](#).

In that assault, Hamas-led militants stormed across the border, killing 1,200 people and taking some 250 hostage. The ICC prosecutor is also seeking arrest warrants for three Hamas leaders. Israel's ensuing offensive has killed more than 35,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, and has caused a humanitarian crisis and a near-famine. The ICC prosecutor has accused Israeli leaders of using starvation as a weapon.

“History will remember that Spain, Norway, and Ireland decided to award a gold medal to Hamas murderers and rapists,” Katz said.

In response to the announcements in Europe, Israel’s far-right National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir paid a provocative visit Wednesday to the Al-Aqsa mosque compound — [a flashpoint in Jerusalem](#) that is sacred to Muslims and Jews, who refer to it as the Temple Mount.

“We will not even allow a statement about a Palestinian state,” he said.

In further retaliation, Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich said he would stop transferring tax revenue earmarked for the Palestinian Authority, a move that threatens to handicap its already waning ability to pay salaries to thousands of employees.

Under interim peace accords in the 1990s, Israel collects tax revenue on behalf of the Palestinians, and it has used the money as a tool to pressure the PA. After the Oct. 7 Hamas attack, Smotrich froze the transfers, but Israel agreed to send the money to Norway, which transferred it to the PA. Smotrich said Wednesday that he was ending that arrangement.

U.S. national security adviser Jake Sullivan said the cutoff was “wrong” because it “destabilizes the West Bank” and undermines “the search for security and prosperity for the Palestinian people.”

The international community has viewed the creation of a Palestinian state alongside Israel as the only realistic way to resolve the conflict.

The United States and Britain, among others, back the idea of an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel but say it should come as part of a negotiated settlement. Netanyahu’s government says the conflict can only be resolved through direct negotiations.

The formal recognition by Norway, Spain and Ireland — which all have a record of friendly ties with both the Israelis and the Palestinians, while long advocating for a Palestinian state — is planned for May 28.

Their announcements came in swift succession. Norway, which helped broker the Oslo accords that kicked off the peace process in the 1990s, was the first. “There cannot be peace in the Middle East if there is no recognition,” said Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre.

The country plans to upgrade its representative office in the West Bank to an embassy.

Irish Prime Minister Simon Harris called it a “historic and important day for Ireland and for Palestine,” saying the announcements had been coordinated and other countries might join.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez, who announced his country’s decision before parliament, has spent months touring European and Middle Eastern countries to garner support for recognition and a cease-fire in Gaza.

“This recognition is not against anyone, it is not against the Israeli people,” Sánchez said. “It is an act in favor of peace, justice and moral consistency.”

President Mahmoud Abbas, the leader of [the Palestinian Authority](#), which administers parts of the Israeli-occupied West Bank, welcomed the decisions and called on other nations to “recognize our legitimate rights and support the struggle of our people for liberation and independence.”

Hamas, which Western countries and Israel view as a terrorist group, does not recognize Israel’s existence but has indicated [it might agree to a state on the 1967 lines](#), at least on an interim basis. Israel says any Palestinian state would be at risk of being taken over by Hamas, posing a threat to its security.

The announcements are unlikely to have any impact on the war in Gaza — or the long-running conflict between Israel and the Palestinians.

Israel annexed east Jerusalem and considers it part of its capital, and in the occupied West Bank it has built scores of Jewish settlements that are now home to over 500,000 Israelis. The settlers have Israeli citizenship, while the 3 million Palestinians in the West Bank live under seemingly open-ended Israeli military rule.

Netanyahu has said Israel will maintain security control of Gaza even after any defeat of Hamas, and the war is still raging there. An Israeli airstrike early Wednesday killed 10 people, including four women and four children, who had been displaced and were sheltering in central Gaza, according to hospital authorities.

AP correspondent Charles de Ledesma reports on European nations recognizing the state of Palestine.

Hugh Lovatt, a senior policy fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations, said “recognition is a tangible step towards a viable political track leading to Palestinian self-determination.”

To have an impact, he said, it must come with “tangible steps to counter Israel’s annexation and [settlement of Palestinian territory](#) – such as banning settlement products and financial services.”

Norwegian Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide defended the importance of the move in an interview with The Associated Press, saying that while the country has supported the establishment of a Palestinian state for decades, it knew that recognition is “a card that you can play once.”

“We used to think that recognition would come at the end of a process,” he said. “Now we have realized that recognition should come as an impetus, as a strengthening of a process.”

# [ICC Prosecutor Seeks Arrest Warrants for Netanyahu, Hamas Leader Sinwar \(msn.com\)](#)

#bibleprophecy, #anti-semitism, #netanyahu, #arrest, #icc

May 20, 2024

The International Criminal Court's prosecutor is seeking arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the leader of Hamas in Gaza, Yahya Sinwar, a move that Israeli officials have warned could scuttle efforts to end the conflict in the enclave.

An ICC court would need to decide whether to issue a warrant for their arrests.

The court's prosecutor said there were "reasonable grounds to believe that" Netanyahu and Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant "bear criminal responsibility" for a series of "war crimes and crimes against humanity," committed since at least Oct. 8, the day after the Hamas-led attack on Israel.

Among the alleged crimes the court listed against the Israeli leaders was the willful killing of civilians, starvation of civilians as a method of warfare and persecution as a crime against humanity. More than 35,000 people have died in Gaza since the outbreak of fighting last year, most of them civilians, according to Palestinian officials. The figure doesn't specify how many were combatants.

The Biden administration has opposed an ICC move against Israeli leaders, saying it doesn't believe the court has jurisdiction to rule on the case. A number of U.S. lawmakers have warned that if the court goes for Israeli officials, they would seek to sanction the court's senior officials.

The Israeli prime minister's office didn't immediately respond to a request for comment. The country's Foreign Ministry declined to comment.

Netanyahu has said previously that "Israel will never accept any attempt by the ICC to undermine its inherent right of self-defense."

"The threat to seize the soldiers and officials of the Middle East's only democracy and the world's only Jewish state is outrageous," he said last month.

In a statement Monday, Karim A.A. Khan, the ICC prosecutor, also said that it had reasonable grounds to believe Hamas leaders Sinwar, as well as Mohammed Diab Ibrahim al-Masri and Ismail Haniyeh, bear criminal responsibility for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed on the territory of Israel and the Gaza strip from at

least Oct. 7, the day of the attacks on southern Israel that left 1,200 people dead. The crimes included extermination, murder, taking hostages, rape and sexual violence, the prosecutor said.

Hamas didn't respond to a request for comment.

Based in The Hague, the ICC is an independent tribunal established by treaty in 2002 to hold military and civilian leaders accountable for breaches of humanitarian law when a nation's own legal system can't or won't do so. It is separate from the International Court of Justice, an arm of the United Nations that hears disputes between nations.

Israel, like the U.S., isn't a party to the Rome Statute, which puts countries under the ICC's jurisdiction. But under its rules, the 124 state parties to the court are obliged to detain officials who face arrest warrants, putting many Israeli allies in a bind.

The court in 2015 recognized the State of Palestine as a signatory, and in 2021 determined itself as having jurisdiction in the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem. Palestine isn't recognized by the U.S., Israel and many other countries.

"Today we once again underline that international law and the laws of armed conflict apply to all," Khan said in his statement. "No foot soldier, no commander, no civilian leader—no one—can act with impunity."

Last year, the ICC issued a warrant for Russian President Vladimir Putin.

# Progressive senator backs potential ICC arrest warrant for Netanyahu: 'unprecedented war' | Fox News

#bibleprophecy, #anti-semitism, #netanyahu, #sanderson, #icc

May 20, 2024

Bernie Sanders said of the response to Hamas' Oct. 7 attacks that Netanyahu has 'waged an unprecedented war of destruction against the entire Palestinian people'

Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., deviated from some of his Democratic colleagues and jumped on board with International Criminal Court prosecutor Karim Khan's move Monday to file applications for arrest warrants against [Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu](#), Defense Minister Yoav Gallant and Hamas leaders for allegedly committing "war crimes" during the conflict in Gaza.

"The ICC prosecutor is right," Sanders said in a statement Monday afternoon on X. "These arrest warrants may or may not be carried out, but it is imperative that the global community uphold international law. Without these standards of decency and morality, this planet may rapidly descend into anarchy, never-ending wars, and barbarism."

Sanders' comments come hours after Democratic lawmakers came out [largely divided](#) over ICC's petition.

## NETANYAHU RIVAL THREATENS TO QUIT WAR CABINET OVER GAZA STRATEGY

[Sanders also](#) said that in the last several years, ICC issued arrest warrants for multiple political leaders who violated human rights laws and international war policies, including Russian President Vladimir Putin for the Ukraine invasion and Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar for the Oct. 7 terrorist attacks in Israel.

Now included on that list is Netanyahu, "who, in response, has waged an unprecedented war of destruction against the entire Palestinian people, which has killed or injured more than 5 percent of the population."

## ICC REQUESTS ARREST WARRANTS FOR NETANYAHU, HAMAS LEADERS OVER 'WAR CRIMES'



Khan said in a statement Monday that based on evidence collected and examined by his office, he has "reasonable grounds" to believe Netanyahu and Gallant "bear criminal responsibility for... war crimes and crimes against humanity committed on the territory of the State of Palestine."

He said those alleged crimes include "starvation of civilians as a method of warfare" and "intentionally directing attacks against a civilian population."

### [NETANYAHU ARREST WARRANT CALLED 'GIFT TO TERRORISTS' AS PRO-ISRAEL LAWMAKERS VOW REVENGE](#)

Meanwhile, [House GOP lawmakers](#) called the ICC's petition for arrest warrants "a gift to terrorists around the globe."

"The ICC's decision to equate Israel with Hamas as a war criminal is a gift to terrorists around the globe and a slap in the face to the only free-standing democracy in the Middle East," House Majority Whip Tom Emmer, R-Minn., the No. 3 House GOP lawmaker, told Fox News Digital. "There is no comparison between the deliberate killing, raping, and torturing of thousands of innocent civilians and those who are rightfully defending themselves against it."

[Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La.](#), said in a statement, "In the absence of leadership from the White House, Congress is reviewing all options, including sanctions, to punish the ICC and ensure its leadership faces consequences if they proceed. If the ICC is allowed to threaten Israeli leaders, ours could be next."

# Potential derecho could slam central US Sunday with destructive winds, large hail | Fox Weather

#bibleprophecy, #derecho, #hail, #wind, #weather

May 19, 2024

'Significant damage' reported as storms with 100-mph winds, baseball-sized hail rip across Kansas

A gust of 100 mph was reported near Fowler, Kansas, while the town of Russell, Kansas, reported at least three structures were leveled by a storm.

## [Watch: Hail pounds Kansas](#)

Hail came down fast and furious during a thunderstorm in Salina, Kansas. The largest stones were marble to quarter-sized.

Major damage was reported Sunday as powerful storms tore across the central U.S. with destructive winds, giant hail and even a few tornadoes.

The [severe weather](#) threat included the potential for a [derecho](#) that could sweep across portions of [Kansas](#) and [Oklahoma](#) with [wind](#) gusts higher than 100 mph and baseball-sized [hail](#). That is the same type of storm that barreled across [Texas](#) and [Louisiana](#) on Thursday, blasting the [Houston](#) metro area with winds up to 100 mph that [left at least seven people dead and more than 1 million customers without power](#).

Tornado, Severe Thunderstorm and Flash Flood warnings were issued across several states Sunday.

The National Weather Service has already received eight reports of tornadoes across Colorado, Kansas and Oklahoma on Sunday, with one believed to have crossed Interstate 70 west of Russell, Kansas. Officials from Russell posted images on [Facebook](#) of damage to trees, power lines and homes left in the wake of the storm.

"The storm that hit Russell this afternoon caused significant damage across the community, including the electric distribution system, homes, businesses and vehicles," officials wrote on Facebook. "At least three structures have been leveled.

[WATCH VS. WARNING: HERE ARE THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THESE WEATHER TERMS THAT COULD SAVE YOUR LIFE](#)

Widespread damage was also reported in and around the Wichita, Kansas, area, where winds of 75 mph were reported. The town of Newton, north of Wichita, appeared to be hit especially hard. Winds of up to 80 mph were reported in Whitewater to the northeast of Wichita.

A wind gust of 100 mph was reported at the airport in Salina, Kansas, on Sunday evening. A gust of 90 mph was reported near Fowler, Kansas.

Hail between tennis ball- and baseball-sized has also been reported with several storms. The largest report to the NWS as of Sunday evening was 3-inch hail in Ellis, Kansas.

### Monday's severe weather threat

There are two areas of concern for severe weather on Monday.

The SPC has placed just over 17 million people in a Level 2 out of 5 risk, which includes portions of Colorado, Nebraska, Kansas, [Missouri](#) and [Iowa](#), as well as portions of [Illinois](#), [Indiana](#) and [Wisconsin](#) in the Midwest.

The cities of [Norfolk](#), [Omaha](#), [Lincoln](#) and [McCook](#) in Nebraska are all included in the risk, while [Des Moines](#) in Iowa is just outside that Level 2 threat.

[Kansas City](#) in Missouri is also included in the Level 2 threat on Monday.

[Milwaukee](#) and [Chicago](#) have also been placed in a Level 2 out of 5 risk on Monday.

Thunderstorms that develop in the Plains and Midwest will all be capable of producing damaging wind gusts, hail and possible tornadoes.

### Tuesday's severe weather threat

The SPC issued a Level 3 out of 5 risk for severe weather on Tuesday, which includes more than 9.5 million people.

This threat will have people in seven states from the Plains to the Midwest on alert for storms capable of producing damaging wind gusts, hail and possible tornadoes.

And while those areas will see a greater severe thunderstorm threat on Tuesday, more than 31.5 million people in areas stretching from Oklahoma to [Michigan](#) have been placed in a Level 2 out of 5 risk.

This Level 2 risk includes the cities of [Oklahoma City](#) and [Tulsa](#) in Oklahoma, [St. Louis](#) in Missouri, Chicago in [Illinois](#), [Minneapolis](#) in [Minnesota](#) and Milwaukee and [Green Bay](#) in [Wisconsin](#).

# 'Most ruthless' Mexican cartels operate in all 50 states, bring turf wars to US: DEA | Fox News

#bibleprophecy, #cartels, #drugs, #illegals

May 20, 2024

"Together, the Sinaloa and Jalisco cartels have caused the worst drug crisis in US history," the DEA said

[Mexico's "most powerful and ruthless" cartels](#) operate in all 50 states and clash in American cities, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration said in a May report.

The Jalisco and Sinaloa cartels have flooded major U.S. cities with [meth and fentanyl](#) and use violence to protect their turf, the report found.

"The deadly reach of the Mexican Sinaloa and Jalisco cartels into [U.S. communities](#) is extended by the wholesale-level traffickers and street dealers bringing the cartels' drugs to market, sometimes creating their own deadly drug mixtures," the DEA report says. "Together, the Sinaloa and Jalisco cartels have caused the worst [drug crisis](#) in U.S. history."

The DEA's National Drug Threat Assessment report details the cartels' leadership structures, the areas they control, how they operate and their global reach [beyond Mexico](#) and the U.S.

Synthetic drugs like fentanyl are more potent than plant-based drugs, cheaper to make and easier to move, which allows both cartels to infiltrate American and control all aspects of the drug trade from production to delivery.

Sinaloa and Jalisco have "effectively eliminated any competition in U.S. markets" and "dictate the flow of nearly all illicit drugs" into the country, according to the report, which notes that thousands of cartel-linked dealers currently operate in the U.S.

Late last week, the "Skittles Man," whose real name is Roque Bustamante, was one of seven Sinaloa Cartel members arrested [in Florida](#) for allegedly supplying thousands of Mexican-made fentanyl pills, according to federal prosecutors.

The notorious nickname was created because he allegedly sold large supplies of rainbow-colored fentanyl pills.

An undercover [law enforcement](#) operation also busted the cartel members arranging a weapons-smuggling operation into Mexico, including .50 caliber high-powered rifles, court documents allege.

During the investigation, the DEA seized about 21 kilograms of pure fentanyl, 70,000 rainbow-colored fentanyl pills, 3,000 M30 blue fentanyl pills, 243 pounds of crystal meth, two kilos of cocaine and 24 guns, including 18 rifles and six pistols.

### [ONCE 'OFF LIMITS,' MEXICAN CARTELS WAR OVER POPULAR RESORTS LIKE CANCUN: 'THE RULES HAVE CHANGED'](#)

In late April, 12 [traffickers tied to the Jalisco cartel](#) were sentenced to 4.5 to 40 years in federal prison after they were busted in Del Rio, Texas, in 2021 for coordinating a shipment of nearly 200 kilograms of liquid methamphetamine worth \$9.9 million.

Over the course of that particular investigation, law enforcement seized about 650 kilograms of methamphetamine, 17 guns, \$220,922 in cash and \$12,200 in real and personal property, federal North Texas prosecutors said.

There were nearly 38,000 fentanyl-related deaths in the first six months of 2023, according to the DEA report.

"Fentanyl is the deadliest threat the U.S. has ever faced," the report says. "Fentanyl and other synthetic drugs, like methamphetamine, are responsible for nearly all the fatal drug overdoses and poisonings in our country."

### Operations Last Mile and Overdrive: Drugs, money and violence

The DEA's "Operation Last Mile" tracked the Jalisco and Sinaloa cartels' distribution networks across the country.

In total, the major operation, which included countless law enforcement agencies from the local to federal levels, included 1,436 investigations and resulted in 3,337 arrests.

### [MEXICAN CARTELS USE U.S. BORDER TO ARM THEMSELVES WITH 'MILITARY-GRADE' WEAPONS: DOCS](#)

The DEA seized nearly 44 million fentanyl pills, over 6,500 pounds of fentanyl powder, more than 91,000 pounds of methamphetamine, 8,497 firearms and over \$100 million, according to the report.

In 2023, law enforcement agencies within 150 miles of the border conducted nearly 600 bulk cash seizures valued at \$18 million, the report says.

Most of the bulk cash seizures in 2023 were executed [in Arizona](#), California, Texas and New Mexico.

Moving forward, the DEA has Sinaloa and Jalisco cartel members in its scope with "Operation Overdrive."

"DEA's top operational priority is to relentlessly pursue and defeat the two Mexican drug cartels ... that are primarily responsible for driving the current fentanyl poisoning epidemic in the United States," the report says.

The operation "puts resources into the U.S.'s most violence- and overdose-plagued cities to target the violent dealers who kill thousands of Americans every week with fentanyl and with weapons."

Mexico's president has pushed back on outside pressure to deal with the cartels

Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador and his administration have routinely denied or downplayed cartel violence and criminal activity.

He omitted any reference to drugs, crime or the cartels during his September 2023 State of the Union address.

### [MEXICAN PRESIDENT CALLS GANGS, CARTELS 'RESPECTFUL PEOPLE' WHO 'RESPECT THE CITIZENRY](#)

He also said last March that his government was "not going to permit any foreign government to intervene in our territory, much less that a government's armed forces intervene," [Al Jazeera reported](#).

Mexico had a chance to rip a major hole in the Jalisco cartel after arresting the brother of the cartel's kingpin, Nemesio "El Mencho" Oseguera Cervantes.

### **WATCH: MEXICAN PRESIDENT DENIES CARTELS SUPPLYING AMERICA WITH DRUGS**

El Mencho's brother, Abraham Oseguera, was captured on April 21 by the Mexican army, but he was a free man nine days later. Mexican Judge Rogelio Leon released Oseguera, claiming there were no legal grounds to charge or keep him.

Jay Armes III, a private investigator who specializes in kidnappings in Mexico, told Fox News Digital that he expected a "shock-and-awe" violence campaign similar to when the son of former Sinaloa cartel boss Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán, Ovidio Guzman Lopez, was arrested in 2019.

"When (El Chapo's son) was captured by police, his soldiers, his henchmen basically put the entire town of Culiacan under siege," Armes said. "They blocked all six entrances and exists to the city. They captured buses and lit them on fire."

The cartel also opened fire on Mexican police and military, shot down a Blackhawk helicopter and passenger aircraft and blasted airports so authorities couldn't get Lopez out of the country, he said.

"They were wreaking mayhem throughout the city to the point where it became so painful that the president of Mexico himself instructed law enforcement to release him," Armes said. "He said it wasn't worth the lives of so many people for the life of one."

In total, 30 people died before he was released.

But none of that happened with El Mencho's brother, proving how terrifying the threat of the Jalisco cartel really is.

"The most dangerous enemy is not always the one that can exert the most brute force," Armes said. "The most dangerous enemy is actually the one who can accomplish their objective, or get themselves out of a giant problem, without firing a single shot."

"And that's what you see here (after El Mencho's brother was released). I'll let you draw your own conclusions."

# 'We've Reached a Time of Christian Invisibility in Our Culture', George Barna Says - Milton Quintanilla (christianheadlines.com)

#bibleprophecy, #church, #george barna, #apostasy

May 21, 2024

Veteran researcher George Barna of the Barna Group recently said that we've reached "Christian invisibility in our culture" amid a decline in biblical worldview and diminishing interest in spiritual formation.

*"People have become more selfish, churches have become less influential, pastors have become less Bible-centric," Barna, a professor at Arizona Christian University and the director of research at its Cultural Research Center, told [The Christian Post](#) in a recent interview. "Families have invested less of their time and energy in spiritual growth, particularly of their children. The media now influences the Church more than the Church influences the media, or the culture for that matter. The Christian Body tends to get off track arguing about a lot of things that really don't matter."*

Barna noted a troubling trend, such as a decline in discipleship and the lack of solid, biblical training in seminaries. He also contended that churches use measures for success, such as attendance, fundraising, and infrastructure have little to do with Jesus' mission.

"There is poor leadership in seminaries that mislead local churches into thinking that they're actually training individuals whom God has called to be leaders and are qualified to be leaders and certifying them to lead local churches, not knowing any better bringing them on," he said. Despite seminaries having "good intentions," Barna said they are setting up young leaders for failures.

"You get what you measure," he argued. "So if you measure the wrong things, you'll get the wrong outcomes ... [pastors] measure how many people show up, how much money they raise, how many programs they offer, how many staff persons they hire, how much square footage they built out. Jesus didn't die for any of that. So we're measuring the wrong stuff and, consequently, we get the wrong outcomes."

In response to these issues, Barna called for a return to biblical roots, adding that it would entail rethinking the modern church structure.

"If we were to go back to the Bible, I think we'd recognize the local church, the institutional church, as we've created it, is man-made. It's not in the Scriptures," he



said. "The programs, the titles, the buildings, all the stuff that has become sacrosanct in American culture and around the world is not necessarily biblical."

"Jesus didn't come to build institutions, He came to build people. And we see that model in His life. He devoted the ministry portion of His life to investing in individuals. And that's what each of us who are followers of Christ need to be doing."

# [More Young Adults Say the Bible Changed Their Lives, Survey Finds - Milton Quintanilla \(christianheadlines.com\)](#)

#bibleprophecy, #bible, #young adults, #changed lives

Apr 15, 2024

A new survey by the American Bible Society found that more young adults believe the Word of God has transformed their lives.

According to the first installment of the State of the Bible USA 2024 [report](#), 58 percent of respondents either “somewhat” or “strongly” agreed that the Bible transformed their lives in comparison to 2023 (57 percent).

The first chapter of the report, “The Bible in America Today,” also found that the percentages of Generation X adults born between 1965 and 1980 who “somewhat” or “strongly” agreed about the transformative effect of the Bible on their lives in both 2023 and 2024 were the same as the figures for the overall population.

One notable finding is that 54 percent of Generation Z, the youngest group of American adults born in 1997 or later, said the Bible transformed their lives, an increase from 50 percent in 2023.

“Our youngest adults show signs of interest in the Bible, curiosity about it, and transformative interaction with it,” John Farquhar Plake, American Bible Society Chief Program Officer and Editor-in-Chief of the State of the Bible series, said in a statement.

“If this trend continues, we have good reason for hope,” he added.

The most significant increase in the percentage of respondents was seen among Baby Boomers, adults born between 1946 and 1964, who “somewhat” or “strongly” agreed on the transformative effect of the Bible on their lives in 2024, a 5 percent jump from the 64 percent who said the same in 2023.

On the other hand, millennials, adults born between 1981 and 1996, were the generation that saw a decreased percentage when asked about the Bible’s transformative effects (50 percent in 2023 to 48 percent this year). As reported by [The Christian Post](#), millennials were also the only generation to have read the Bible less frequently in 2024 (12 percent)

Millennials were also the only generation to have more people (12 percent) say they read the Bible less frequently in 2024 compared to 2023; 11 percent said their Bible reading increased.

Overall, 15 percent of respondents had increased their Bible reading in the past, while 10 percent had done the opposite. When it came to Gen Z, 21 percent said their Bible reading increased over the past year, while 9 percent said it decreased. Boomers and those born before 1946 (16 percent) had an increase in Bible reading, along with 15 percent of Gen X adults. However, there was a drop in Bible reading among 10 percent of the oldest and 9 percent of Gen X adults.

The report, which surveyed 2,506 U.S. adults, was conducted between Jan. 4 and 23, 2024, with a margin of error of +/-2.73 percentage points.

# [Satanist Accepts Jesus During Largest US Baptism Ever - 12,000 People Immersed in California | CBN News](#)

#bibleprophecy, #baptism, #california, #changed lives

May 21, 2024

A massive gathering of Christians across California reportedly broke a record over the weekend when participants collectively held the nation's largest-ever baptism.

[Baptize California](#), an event that unfolded Saturday and Sunday at various locations throughout the Golden State saw a historic number of people immersed at individual churches and during a main-stage event at Huntington Beach.

The two-day extravaganza showcased countless examples of life change and spiritual renewal, featuring speakers, worship music from leaders like Sean Feucht, and more.

## The Stunning Numbers

According to preliminary numbers, there were over 6,000 people baptized at the Huntington Beach location alone, with an additional 6,000 people immersed in churches across the state.

“You can smell another Great Awakening in the air like rain before it hits,” Pastor Mark Francey, who founded the event, told CBN News on Monday. “God lit a match yesterday! If God can do this in the church in California, it can — and it will — happen in the rest of America!”

Photos show some of the incredible baptism moments that unfolded at Huntington Beach Sunday night.

As [previously reported](#), Francey, pastor of Oceans Church in California, shocked the nation last year, when he hosted [Baptize SoCal](#). The event attracted thousands of spectators and led to nearly 4,200 baptisms, which was reportedly the largest recorded baptism in U.S. history at the time.

However, that record was upended a few weeks later, when Pastor Greg Laurie hosted a similar event and saw over 4,500 people get baptized.

For Francey, Baptize SoCal was just the beginning.

He's been planning Baptize California, a follow-up event that would rally the entire state in hopes of seeing God work in an incredible way — and, based on the initial projections, his efforts paid off.

“My wife, Rachelle, and I could hardly sleep thinking about how God could be so kind to let us be a part of the largest baptism in the history of America,” Francey said, expressing his elation over how the event took form. “We are proof that God really can use anybody.”

*Listen to the latest episode of the “Quick Start” Podcast*

The pastor said this year's event was massive, crediting God for bringing it all together.

“It was a surreal and extraordinary day!” Francey told CBN News. “[It] felt like we were living in the pages of the books of Acts!”

And the individual stories coming from Baptize California are truly incredible. Francey shared just one such story, telling CBN News how a Satanist accepted Jesus and “immediately got water baptized.”

“You could see the change immediately,” he said.

The preacher said 1,000 people accepted Jesus at Huntington Beach, with thousands coming to watch the event unfold.

“[The] crowd steadily swelled to — at one point — as much as 14,000,” Francey said. “Hundreds of churches linked arms to accomplish what happened.”

### It All Started With a Vision

Baptize California and its predecessor, [Baptize SoCal](#), all started with a vision from God, Francey said.

His church was just three years old when he embarked on the ambitious Baptize SoCal event, which unfolded last May, and, at the time, he wasn't looking to launch into such an endeavor.

“I'm originally from California, but [had] spent the last 17 years in a different state, so moving here, starting a brand new church, treading ... water after COVID — the last thing on our mind was uniting ... this global baptism initiative,” Francey said.

But after reading a book about one of the largest water baptisms in American history held at Pirate's Cove in California, he was surprised to learn the mass immersion took place in the 1990s.

Francey said he assumed it would have been much earlier. He was also intrigued by the fact it took place at the very same location where the late [Chuck Smith baptized masses of young people](#) 50 years ago during the Jesus movement. Pirate's Cove continues to profoundly impact people's lives today.

All of these themes and ideas coalesced into a vision that changed everything for Francey.

“I had almost like an open vision,” he said, noting the vivid experience from God included worship and very specific details. “I saw boats from guys I knew in our church parked along Pirate's Cove.”

Watch Francey explain the details:

Francey, who isn't prone to these sorts of images from God, said he told his church about it a few weeks later and people got excited. That's when he felt the Lord pushing him to organize and fund [Baptize SoCal](#).

At first, he was reluctant.

Trying to Talk God Out of It

“I tried to talk God out of it,” Francey said. “I'm like, ‘There's a lot of other guys here — fathers, mothers here that are doing great things. You know, I'm a nobody.’”

The preacher said God wasn't interested in his insecurity. Francey knew he was called to embark on the baptism mission, and he decided to listen.

Remarkably, this prompting happened before the Asbury University revival took form — and before Francey found out about “Jesus Revolution,” the feature film about Laurie's life and the Jesus movement. The movie, which made more than \$52 million at the box office, sparked mass intrigue and spiritual fervor in many across the nation.

All of this was confirmation for Francey that God was at work.

Just weeks after Baptize SoCal took place May 28, 2023, and broke baptism records, Laurie's own event inspired by “Jesus Revolution” — also held at Pirate's Cove — shattered the Baptize SoCal record, with over 4,500 baptisms. Ultimately, these events showed the power of spiritual resurgence in the air.

All of this brings us back to Francey's vision, which went well beyond his Baptize SoCal efforts. He said he also felt God call him to expand the efforts, which brings us to Baptize California, this year's endeavor.

What Comes Next

With the success of Baptize California, Francey is already planning to launch Baptize America next year, setting his sights beyond California.

“Now we are gearing up to do this and unite the church all over America,” he said. “Sign your church up nationwide today for next Pentecost Sunday, June 8th.”

Find out more about [Baptize America](#)