



SIGNS OF THE TIMES

News Articles for Episode 249

[Iran, Russia link banking systems amid Western sanction | Reuters](#)

#bibleprophecy, #russia, #iran, #economy

Jan 30, 2023

DUBAI, Jan 30 (Reuters) - Iran and Russia have connected their interbank communication and transfer systems to help boost trade and financial transactions, a senior Iranian official said on Monday, as both Tehran and Moscow are chafing under Western sanctions.

Since the 2018 reimposition of U.S. sanctions on Iran after Washington ditched Tehran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, the Islamic Republic has been disconnected from the Belgium-based SWIFT financial messaging service, which is a key international banking access point.

Similar limitations have been slapped on some Russian banks since Moscow's invasion of Ukraine last year.

"Iranian banks no longer need to use SWIFT ... with Russian banks, which can be for the opening of Letters of Credit and transfers or warranties," Deputy Governor of Iran's Central Bank, Mohsen Karimi, told the semi-official Fars news agency.

While Russia's central bank declined to comment on the deal signed on Sunday, Karimi said "about 700 Russian banks and 106 non-Russian banks from 13 different countries will be connected to this system", without elaborating on the names of the foreign banks.

Iran's Central Bank chief Mohammad Farzin welcomed the move. "The financial channel between Iran and the world is being repaired," he tweeted.

Since the start of the Ukraine war, Tehran and Moscow have acted to forge close bilateral ties as both capitals attempt to build new economic and diplomatic partnerships elsewhere.

With deepening economic misery, largely because of U.S. sanctions over Tehran's disputed nuclear work, many Iranians are feeling the pain of galloping inflation and rising joblessness.

Inflation has soared to over 50%, the highest level in decades. Youth unemployment remains high with more than 50% of Iranians being pushed below the poverty line, according to reports by Iran's Statistics Centre.

Facing their worst legitimacy crisis amid months of anti-government protests sparked by the death in custody of a young woman, Iranian authorities fear economic isolation and lack of economic improvement could lead to more unrest.

Iran's top authority, Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, said on Monday that the establishment faced "a tangible welfare and livelihood problem" that could not be cured without economic growth.

"In today's world, a country's status is largely related to its economic power ... We need economic growth to maintain our regional and global position," Khamenei said in a televised speech.

Concerns over prayer breakfast lead Congress to take it over | AP News

#bibleprophecy, #prayer, #congress, #breakfast

Jan 29, 2023

WASHINGTON (AP) — The National Prayer Breakfast, one of the most visible and long-standing events that brings religion and politics together in Washington, is splitting from the private religious group that had overseen it for decades, due to concerns the gathering had become too divisive.

The organizer and host for this year's breakfast, scheduled for Thursday, will be the National Prayer Breakfast Foundation, headed by former Sen. Mark Pryor, D-Ark.

Sen. Chris Coons, a regular participant and chairman of the Senate ethics committee, said the move was prompted in part by concerns in recent years that members of Congress did not know important details about the larger multiday gathering.

Coons, D-Del., said that in the past, he and Republican Sen. James Lankford of Oklahoma, the committee's vice chairman, had questions about who was invited and how money was being raised.

The annual event "went on several days, had thousands of people attending, and a very large and somewhat complex organization," Coons said in an interview. "Some questions had been raised about our ability as members of Congress to say that we knew exactly how it was being organized, who was being invited, how it was being funded. Many of us who'd been in leadership roles really couldn't answer those questions."

That led to lawmakers deciding to take over organizing for the prayer breakfast itself.

Pryor, president of the new foundation, said the COVID-19 shutdown gave members a chance to "reset" the breakfast and return it to its origins — a change he said had been discussed for years.

"The whole reason the House and Senate wanted to do this was to return it to its roots, when House members and Senate members can come together and pray for the president, pray for his family and administration, pray for our government, the world," Pryor said.

Pryor said members of Congress, the president, vice president and other administration officials and their guests are invited to Thursday's prayer breakfast, which will be held at the visitors' center at the Capitol. He anticipated between 200 and 300 people would attend.

Pryor said he hoped the smaller event will regain the intimacy that is similar to the weekly nondenominational prayer gatherings on Capitol Hill. Groups of senators and

representatives have long held unofficial meetings for fellowship and to temporarily set aside political differences.

The prayer breakfast addressed by the president has been the highlight of a multiday event for 70 years. Dwight D. Eisenhower was the first president to attend, in February 1953, and every president since has spoken at the gathering.

The larger event, put on by a private religious group called the International Foundation, has always been centered around “the person and principles of Jesus, with a focus on praying for leaders of our nation and from around the world,” the group’s spokesman, A. Larry Ross, said in an email.

More than 1,400 people are registered for the two-day event, with one-third of those from outside the United States.

President Joe Biden, who has spoken at the breakfast the past two years, is set to do so again. [In 2021](#), he made remarks from the White House during a virtual breakfast the month after the building was attacked by supporters of former President Donald Trump intent on trying to stop the certification of the 2020 election.

At [last year’s address](#) from the Capitol, Biden talked about the need for members of Congress to know one another more personally.

“It’s hard to really dislike someone when you know what they’re going through is the same thing you’re going through,” he said.

In recent years, questions about the International Foundation, its funding and attendees had led some to reconsider the involvement of Congress.

Sen. Tim Kaine, D-Va., stopped coming in 2016 because the event “had become an entertainment and lobbying extravaganza rather than an opportunity for spiritual reflection,” a Kaine spokeswoman wrote in an emailed response to questions. Kaine will attend Thursday.

The gathering came under heightened criticism in 2018 when [Maria Butina](#), a Russian operative, pleaded guilty in 2018 to conspiring to infiltrate conservative U.S. political groups with the aim of advancing Russian interests. According to court documents, she attended two breakfasts in hopes of setting up unofficial connections between Russian and U.S. officials.

It took on political undertones with Trump [shattering the custom of the address](#) being a respite from partisan bickering. He used his 2020 speech to criticize his first impeachment and attack political opponents, including Sen. Mitt Romney, R-Utah, and then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif.

Earlier this month, the Freedom From Religion Foundation sent a letter signed by 30 groups to the White House and members of Congress asking them to boycott the event because of questions about the International Foundation.

The organization's co-president, Annie Laurie Gaylor, said the foundation's basic concerns with the breakfast remain despite the split with the larger religious gathering.

"For decades, FFRF has protested the appearance of the National Prayer Breakfast being a quasi-governmental gathering, which pressures the president and Congress to put on a display of piety that sends a message that the United States is a Christian nation," she wrote.

[China launches investigation into suspected spy balloon flying over US, ministry says | Fox News](#)

#bibleprophecy, #china, #spying, #balloon

Feb 3, 2023

Mao urged the US and China to proceed 'calmly and carefully' amid the suspected spy balloon investigation

China has announced its government is looking into reports that a suspected Chinese spy balloon was discovered flying in [U.S. airspace](#) over Montana.

"China is a responsible country and has always strictly abided by international laws, and China has no intention to violate the territory and airspace of any sovereign countries," said Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning during a daily briefing on Friday.

She also urged U.S. officials and [Chinese authorities](#) to proceed "calmly and carefully" amid the investigation.

"As for the balloon, as I've mentioned just now, we are looking into and verifying the situation and hope that both sides can handle this together calmly and carefully," Mao added.

[US GOVERNMENT MONITORING SUSPECTED CHINESE SPY BALLOON OVER NORTHERN STATES](#)

The foreign minister said judgment should be withheld "before we have a clear understanding of the facts."

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken was scheduled to visit China on Friday, becoming the highest-ranking U.S. official to visit the country since the start of [the COVID-19 pandemic](#).

His visit comes amid months of tense relations between Beijing and Washington over trade, Taiwan, human rights issues and China's territorial claims in the South China Sea.

"What I want to emphasize is that before we have a clear understanding of the facts, speculation and sensationalizing will be unhelpful to the proper handling of the issue. As for Blinken's visit to China, I have no information," Mao said.

Senior U.S. defense officials said the government is closely monitoring the [high-altitude surveillance balloon](#).

"The United States government has detected and is tracking a high-altitude surveillance balloon that is over the continental United States right now," said Pentagon spokesperson Brig. Gen. Pat Ryder said during a briefing on Thursday afternoon.

He added: "The U.S. government, including NORAD, continues to track and monitor it closely. The balloon is currently traveling at an altitude well above commercial air traffic and does not present a military or physical threat to people on the ground. Instances of this kind of balloon activity have been observed previously over the past several years. Once the balloon was detected, the U.S. government acted immediately to protect against the collection of sensitive information."

The U.S. government is "confident" the surveillance balloon belongs to the People's Republic of China, a defense official told Fox News. It is also considering bringing it down using [military assets](#).

It is not immediately clear how long the balloon has been in U.S. airspace. The senior defense official said the government has been tracking it for "some time" and that it entered U.S. airspace a "couple of days ago."

[Pandemic left many Americans 'more open to God,' Barna survey finds: 'Spiritual hunger' | Fox News](#)

#bibleprophecy, #americans, #god, #pandemic

Jan 30, 2023

80% of those surveyed believe 'there is a spiritual or supernatural dimension to the world'

A recent study showed that many Americans are more [open to God](#) and desire spiritual growth in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A report released by the faith-based [research organization Barna Group](#) earlier this month found that 44% of adults in the U.S. are "more open to God" because of the pandemic.

Among the 2,000 adults the group surveyed between Oct. 21-31, 77% also said they believe in a higher power while 74% said they want to grow spiritually.

[PASTORS BATTLE SKYROCKETING BURNOUT AMID POLITICS, PANDEMIC: 'WEARING ON THE SOUL'](#)

Pollsters found that all generations, including young Americans, want to grow spiritually, with 77% of Gen X and millennials expressing what Barna Group CEO David Kinnaman described as "spiritual hunger." Among Gen Z, 73% expressed such a desire, while 72% of baby boomers said the same.

At 80%, a sizable majority said they believe "there is a spiritual or supernatural dimension to the world," with half expressing certainty in the existence of the supernatural and 30% saying, "I think it exists, but I'm not certain."

Only 11% of respondents expressed uncertain doubts regarding the spiritual realm, and a mere 9% flat-out denied its existence.

[CHRISTIANITY QUICKLY DIMINISHING IN US, ON PACE TO BECOME MINORITY RELIGION IN DECADES: STUDY](#)

Eighty-three percent of both Gen Z and millennials said they believe in a "supernatural/spiritual dimension," followed by 82% of Gen X and 79% of baby boomers.

Baby boomers expressed the highest rate of belief in a higher power at 79%, while millennials were least likely to ascribe to one at 76%.

[THIRD OF AMERICANS HAVE QUIT CHURCH AS ATTENDANCE FAILS TO RECOVER PRE-PANDEMIC NUMBERS: SURVEY](#)

"Though the trajectory of [Christian commitment](#) in the U.S. has been on a downward scale and is in need of urgent interventions, our new data gave Christian leaders cause for hope," Kinnaman said of the report's findings.

A [Pew Research Center report](#) published last fall found a surge of adults leaving Christianity to become atheist, agnostic or "nothing in particular." It predicted that if the number of Christians under 30 abandoning their faith accelerates beyond the current pace, adherents of the historically dominant religion of the U.S. could become a minority by 2045.

US urges donors to give far more as Somalia faces famine | AP News

#bibleprophecy, #somalia, #famine

Jan 29, 2023

MOGADISHU, Somalia (AP) — The first U.S. Cabinet member to visit Somalia since 2015 urged the world's distracted donors Sunday to give immediate help to a country facing [deadly famine](#), which she calls “the ultimate failure of the international community.”

The U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, heard perhaps the starkest warning yet about the crisis: Excess deaths during what is now Somalia's longest drought on record will “almost certainly” surpass those of the famine formally declared in the country in 2011, when more than a quarter-million people died.

This time, the world is looking elsewhere, many humanitarian officials say.

“Many of the traditional donors have washed their hands and [focused on Ukraine](#),” the U.N. resident coordinator in Somalia, Adam Abdelmoula, told Thomas-Greenfield during a briefing in Mogadishu.

While the U.S. ambassador declined to openly “name and shame” in her speech calling on donors for more help, saying “The countries know who we're talking about,” the U.N. resident coordinator didn't hesitate.

The European Union, for example, funded just 10% of the humanitarian response plan for Somalia last year, Abdelmoula told The Associated Press. The EU gave \$74 million and the U.K. \$78 million, according to U.N. data. Japan gave \$27 million and Saudi Arabia \$22 million.

The United States, meanwhile, funded roughly 80%, giving \$1.3 billion to Somalia since the start of the 2022 fiscal year. The ambassador announced another \$40 million on Sunday.

But the U.S. “can't continue to pay at that level, even if there were no Ukraine,” Thomas-Greenfield told the AP in an interview, adding that Washington would like to see countries in the nearby Gulf region, for example, donate more.

She spelled out the fatal risks in the weeks ahead if other nations don't step up. “According to the U.N., without contributions from other donors, critical food and nutrition assistance supporting 4.6 million people in Somalia will end” by April, Thomas-Greenfield said.

That will be just as a sixth consecutive rainy season in the parched country is expected to fail. The U.S. is “deeply alarmed” by the dire situation, she told humanitarian officials.

The ambassador delivered her speech in the seaside diplomatic compound at Mogadishu's international airport, where bunker-bound officials try to respond to the growing crisis compounded by the security threat posed to large parts of Somalia from al-Qaida's East Africa affiliate, al-Shabab.

Tens of thousands of people are thought to have died in the drought that also affects parts of neighboring Ethiopia and Kenya. More than a half-million children under the age of 5 in Somalia alone have severe acute malnutrition, according to the U.N. children's agency. Millions of livestock essential to families' health and wealth have died.

While the latest data assessment released last year found that Somalia had not met the benchmarks for a formal famine declaration, the U.N. and U.S. have made clear that the limited humanitarian aid has only delayed the worst.

Almost 2 million hungry people in Somalia are at the crisis point where "bodies start to consume themselves," a Western humanitarian official said, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly.

There are now 2.7 million more people in need than during Somalia's last famine in 2011, the official added.

About 900,000 of them have been living in areas under control of the al-Shabab extremists, complicating efforts both to understand the drought's toll and to reach people with help.

But the death toll from the drought remains unclear even as fears grow. "I don't think any of us know the number," Thomas-Greenfield said.

The last Cabinet member to visit Somalia was John Kerry as secretary of state in May 2015.

[Top Expert Sounds the Alarm, Calls for Immediate Suspension of All mRNA Vaccines \(westernjournal.com\)](#)

#bibleprophecy, #covid, #vaccines, #suspension

Jan 30, 2023

Retsef Levi, an expert in risk management relating to the health field, is calling for the immediate suspension of all COVID-19 messenger RNA vaccines.

After performing a risk analysis of the vaccines, Levi — a professor in the Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s Sloan School of Management — revealed his recommendation and supporting evidence in a video posted to Twitter on Sunday.

As of Monday afternoon, the video had more than 1.1 million views.

“I’m filming this video to share my strong conviction that at this point in time, all COVID mRNA vaccination program[s] should stop immediately,” Levi said.

He said he believes the vaccines have “completely failed” to live up to the promises of efficacy given by health officials and [vaccine manufacturers](#).

Furthermore, Levi asserted there was “mounting and indisputable” evidence that the vaccines cause an “unprecedented level of harm,” including the deaths of young people.

The evidence is mounting and indisputable that MRNA vaccines cause serious harm including death, especially among young people. We have to stop giving them immediately! pic.twitter.com/chFLvqLDqu

— Retsef Levi (@RetsefL) [January 30, 2023](#)

Various studies have shown the vaccines to carry a greater risk of complications than initially expected, albeit not to the degree Levi indicated.

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For example, shortly after the vaccines were introduced to the public, the Johnson & Johnson and AstraZeneca shots [were found to cause](#) vaccine-induced immune thrombotic thrombocytopenia, a blood-clotting condition, in roughly 1 in 26,000 to 1 in 127,000 people, most of whom were young women.

Most public concern over the [vaccines](#), however, comes from another rare yet serious side effect found in the Moderna and Pfizer mRNA vaccines: myocarditis. These side effects are found most often in young adult and adolescent males, according to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

Some experts believe the severity of these side effects has been downplayed by health authorities.

“We think the vaccines are an important tool for preventing severe illness and death among vulnerable people ... But we have been concerned that our federal officials recklessly continue to push for multiple Covid shots for everyone five years old and up, despite the growing evidence that these vaccines may not be appropriate for all,” Drs. Vinay Prasad and John Mandrola wrote in a Wednesday article for [The Free Press](#), an outlet founded by journalist Bari Weiss.

“We are also concerned about the way side effects of the vaccine, particularly among young men, have been downplayed,” they wrote.

In a report released on Nov. 7, the [American College of Cardiology](#) estimated the [myocarditis](#) complication rate to be 35.6 cases per million doses for the Moderna vaccine and 12.6 per million for the Pfizer vaccine. In 2018, before the vaccines, there were about 2 cases of myocarditis per million people under age 40 and 2.2 per million over 40, the report said.

According to Levi, vaccine side effects are likely more common than studies currently show. In his view, this is because cases of myocarditis are severely underreported and undetected.

“Since myocarditis is known to be hard to diagnose ... I was very concerned that it will not be detected by the existing vaccine safety surveillance systems,” he explained in the video.

After performing an analysis of data from Israel’s emergency medical services, Levi found some “very concerning signals,” he said.

Comparing data from 2019 to the first half of 2021, Levi and his fellow researchers found a 25 percent increase in cases of cardiac arrest in people ages 16 to 39.

He also said he found a correlation between this increase and the same population receiving [Pfizer](#) vaccine doses.

Over the same time period, Levi’s research found no correlation between the increase in cardiac events and COVID-19 infections.

“While this is not proof of [a] casual relationship, it left us very concerned, especially given the known suspect clinical mechanism,” Levi said in the video.

Despite calling for an investigation into the “causal mechanisms” of the increase in deaths, he said that, “to the best of my knowledge,” no such investigation has been conducted.

“I think there is no other ethical or scientific choice but to pull out of the market these medical products and stop all the mRNA vaccination programs,” Levi said.

“This is clearly the most failing medical product in the history of medical products, both in terms of efficacy and safety,” he concluded.

[Ex-Psychic's Alarming Warning to Parents About Witchcraft, Evil, and the Occult: 'Shows How Deceptive the Devil Is' – Faithwire](#)

#bibleprophecy, #witchcraft, #demons, #crystals

Jan 27, 2023

Once overtaken by the occult, an ex-psychic is speaking out about culture's obsession with crystals, herbs, and other items tied to witchcraft.

Jenn Nizza, a Christian who now shares her testimony on social media and through her new podcast, "[Ex-Psychic Saved](#)," warned about young people's increased use of such tools.

"This is so New Age ... using crystals for protection, to ward off evil, for enlightenment, to bring about psychic awareness, to place on chakras, thinking you're going to open them up and use the energy from the crystals," she told CBN's Faithwire. "This whole thing is relying on energy with crystals."

Nizza reflected on her past use of crystals as a psychic, noting she used a heart-shaped rose quartz pendant to try and draw love toward herself. She said people use crystals for other reasons as well, including protection against illness.

"It's really so scary," she said, noting the use of such tools is growing.

Watch Nizza break down the increasing obsession with crystals:

Nizza is correct about the pervasiveness of the issue, as the [Springtide Research Institute told CBN's Faithwire](#) it found 44% of young people between the ages of 13 and 25 "engage with herbs/crystals as a spiritual practice." Shockingly, 21% do so every week.

These numbers have the ex-medium concerned.

"I'm heartbroken by that ... because it just shows how deceptive the devil is ... and how he's not even hiding," she said. "These kids are so exposed to witchcraft these days and they're really looking for something — they're really looking to feel better, they're really looking for identity, they're looking for love. They're looking for all the things that only God can do."

Tragically, Nizza said many aren't hearing about God and are instead learning about tools like crystals. She said such mechanisms are "trendy" and made to look glamorous but are actually "spiritually dangerous."

“It’s witchcraft,” she said. “It’s witchcraft, because you are invoking. Once you go to that crystal and you think you’re going to manifest something from that, whether it’s health protection, increase your happiness, increase your wealth ... you are invoking demons.”

Nizza said people mistakenly think there is power in the crystals but believes, instead, that use of such tools — something precluded throughout Scripture — attracts evil. She said the demonic realm manipulates circumstances and plants ideas.

“The demons are the ones that have the power,” she said. “The crystal is a rock that God created.”

Nizza continued, “They’re making a choice, willingly, to put their faith and trust in God’s creation rather than the Creator.”

In the end, Nizza said the increased use of such tools is tragic but cannot be “shocking” in light of culture’s trajectory, with the occult making its way into entertainment and mainstream culture.

These occultic practices, including tarot cards and the Ouija board, are being mainstreamed and creating spiritual dangers many simply fall into.

“The devil’s ... bold, and he’s blatant, and he’s out there,” Nizza said. “And the kids are exposed to it.”

She encouraged people to use their ministries and platforms to combat this messaging and to reach people with truth. Nizza, an avid social media user and podcaster, leverages technology to share her incredible story.

She also encouraged parents to talk with their kids about these topics.

“We need to do our best to keep making the kids aware,” Nizza said. “The world is trying to push God out further and further.”

[First Baptist Church faces backlash on 'biblical sexuality' pledge for congregants | Fox News](#)

#bibleprophecy, #church, #sin, #sexuality, #marriage

Feb 1, 2023

The Florida church came under fire for a statement confirming beliefs that marriage is between a man and a woman

The [First Baptist Church](#) of Jacksonville was spotlighted on Sunday after local media reports caught wind on the church's "biblical sexuality" statement set to take effect in March.

The "First Baptist Statement on Biblical Sexuality" detailing the church's support for binary gender roles as well as the belief that marriage is only between a man and a woman was originally approved in October.

"As a member of First Baptist Church, I believe that God creates people in his image as either male or female, and that this creation is a fixed matter of human biology, not individual choice. I believe marriage is instituted by God, not government, is between one man and one woman, and is the only context for sexual desire and expression," the statement read.

According to the church, all members of the congregation are required to sign the statement and return it by March 19 in order to maintain their membership.

[CATHOLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS KICKED OUT OF SMITHSONIAN MUSEUM IN DC OVER PRO-LIFE BEANIES](#)

Backlash grew against the statement in the previous week, leading up to an open mic event at the church to listen to and discuss concerns from audience members. One included a queer woman named Katie who opposed the statement and condemned the church for supporting it.

"Yesterday, an acquaintance messaged me and told me about this forum. Their family has made the decision to stop attending this church considering recent events, which is something I encourage all existing congregants to follow," Katie said.

"The decision to have your members sign any form of contract to attend turns your church into an organization, a club," she added. "This church is no longer a religious place of worship welcome to all. These sexuality oaths are drawing a clear line in the sand, showing us who you truly welcome, which is by no means all."

Senior Pastor Heath Lambert defended the statement against these allegations, emphasizing that the statement does not solely condemn homosexuality but [all sins regarding sexuality](#).

"It is not that we are any less sinful than anybody out there in Jacksonville. It's not that we are any better than anybody who thinks our statement is a joke," Lambert said. "It's that we have come to confess our sin instead of looking at the Bible and railing against what the Bible has to say about sexual sin. We've said, 'God, you're right, and I'm wrong, will you please forgive me and [then] you wash me in the blood of Jesus.' By faith, we are not better, but by faith, we are saved."

Lambert previously offered a lengthy defense of the statement on the church's website back when it was first approved. In the defense, he specifically [targeted LGBTQ critics](#) who vehemently opposed the statement.

"We want to welcome you as we were welcomed. If you need help, we would love to serve you. If you would like to come and worship with us, you are always welcome to be part of what we are doing. Of course, when you come, we will ask you to respect our beliefs just as you want us to respect yours. But if you do come, we will welcome you, pray with you, serve you, and love you. We will also probably say some things that will challenge you. That's ok. Real love can handle disagreement," he wrote.

Lambert closed, "If you ever give us the chance, we will be happy to welcome you. We will do that, not because we agree about sexuality, but because we believe everything the Bible says about loving your neighbor, and we really think it's possible to disagree without being hateful."

The full open mic forum is available for viewing on the church's Facebook account.

[5-Year-Old 'Preacher' Shares the Bible, Leads Worship on The Jennifer Hudson Show - Amanda Casanova \(christianheadlines.com\)](#)

#bibleprophecy, #christian, #preaching, #boy

Jan 20, 2023

Jennifer Hudson, the award-winning singer and host of the daytime talk show *The Jennifer Hudson Show*, recently hosted a 5-year-old "preacher's kid" known for a viral video of himself baptizing his *Paw Patrol* toy.

Hudson introduced Luke Tillman as a "preacher" and shared the video of him dressed up and singing "Take Me to the Water" in a bathtub and then "baptizing" his stuffed *Paw Patrol* dog named Chase.

Tillman told Hudson he wants to grow up to be a pastor just like his father. He said his father baptized him at 4, although he had been asking since he was just two years old.

"You want to know what I'm gonna to be when I grow up," Tillman asked Hudson. "I'm gonna be a pastor and a Christian," he continued.

[According to The Christian Post](#), Tillman's father, Ezra Tillman, is the pastor of First Trinity Missionary Baptist Church in Flint, Michigan. He is married and has three other children besides Luke.

When Hudson asked Ezra how he felt about his son wanting to follow in his footsteps, he asserted that it was a "blessing."

"I'm thinking, now the pressure is always on PK's (preacher's kids) and the whole development of him and desire to want to do it and genuinely want to do it; it's a blessing.

"This year is 20 years of me preaching, and he preached to 20 million people in one week," his dad said. "I haven't reached that in 20 years. I'm very happy about that."

Tillman later recited [John 3:16](#) when Hudson asked him about his favorite bible verse.

Hudson asked Tillman to sing "Take Me to the Water" for the audience. Hudson, Tillman's parents and several audience members joined in.

The segment concluded with Hudson giving Tillman a basket filled with *Paw Patrol* toys.

"You have lifted us all up. You have an amazing calling on your life, so you keep doing what you're doing, OK, and walking to God's will. You gonna do that?" Hudson said.

"I'm never forgetting about God, Amen," Tillman responded.

Massive meta-study on mask wearing delivers kill shot to COVID narrative (wnd.com)

Feb 1, 2023

#bibleprophecy, #covid, #masks. #metastudy
'Makes little to no difference'

Wearing face-masks — even fancier N95 masks — probably has "little or no" effect in protecting against COVID-19 and the flu compared to not wearing one, according to a massive new British meta-study.

"There is uncertainty about the effects of masks," concludes a team of 12 international researchers in the study published Jan. 30 in the peer-reviewed U.K. journal [Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews](#).

"Wearing masks in the community probably makes little or no difference to the outcome of laboratory-confirmed influenza/SARS-CoV-2 compared to not wearing masks," an abstract of the U.K. study states.

Moreover, the study concludes that among medical workers, even the more robust N95 masks did not yield greater protection compared to more standard masks, which might surprise people who wear the boxier masks believing they are gaining heightened protection from COVID.

"There were no clear differences between the use of medical/surgical masks compared with N95/P2 respirators in healthcare workers when used in routine care to reduce respiratory viral infection," reports the abstract. The authors conclude: "The pooled results of RCTs [randomized controlled trials] did not show a clear reduction in respiratory viral infection with the use of medical/surgical masks."

The self-described 'NonBinary,' 'TechnoPagan' author of this tweet might be surprised by a new U.K. meta-study that found wearing masks, even the N95 model shown here, has 'little or no' effect in protecting against COVID and the flu compared to not wearing masks.

The researchers analyzed at 78 "randomised controlled studies" through October 2022 that looked at physical measures people take to avoid getting a respiratory infection like influenza or COVID-19 — from hand-washing and using hand sanitizers to wearing various types of face-masks.

Meanwhile, the CDC is "still recommending masking in areas with 'high' [COVID] transmission levels — fewer than four percent of U.S. counties — as well as indoor

masking to protect high-risk contacts in 'medium' counties (27 percent)," reports [Just the News](#) in a story on the British study.

The Cochrane study described N95 masks as "close-fitting masks that filter the air breathed in, more commonly used by healthcare workers than the public." A recent [Substack article](#) by Megan Mansell seeks to explain why N95 masks don't work.

A "plain language summary" of the U.K. meta-analysis gives the following as among the potential reasons for the inefficacy of masks:

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- "lower adherence with mask wearing, especially amongst children";
- "quality of the masks used";
- "self-contamination of the mask by hands";
- "lack of protection from eye exposure from respiratory droplets (allowing a route of entry of respiratory viruses into the nose via the lacrimal duct)";
- "saturation of masks with saliva from extended use (promoting virus survival in proteinaceous material)"; and
- "possible risk compensation behaviour leading to an exaggerated sense of security."

Regarding hand hygiene, the meta-study found that "following a hand hygiene programme may reduce the number of people who catch a respiratory or flu-like illness ... compared with people not following such a programme." It also reports that several studies that it analyzed found people complaining of "discomfort" wearing masks.

Information Systems Technician (Submarine) 1st Class Stephen Edward, assigned to the Los Angeles-class fast-attack submarine USS Oklahoma City, shares a kiss with his wife during a homecoming ceremony held at U.S. Naval Base Guam on Aug. 20, 2021. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Randall W. Ramaswamy)

The authors recommend more and better studies on the practical effects of supposedly protective measures and approaches, including "physical distancing," e.g., the requirement of a six-foot gap between people widely embraced by authorities during the COVID pandemic.

Just the News reports researchers for the Cochrane study "are affiliated with a geographically disparate range of institutions in the U.K., Canada, Australia, Italy and Saudi Arabia. Half are affiliated with the Institute for Evidence-Based Healthcare at Australia's Bond University. The corresponding author is the University of Calgary's John Conly."

JTN reports that masks are still required in educational institutions in blue states New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Washington and California, citing a story in the [Daily Mail](#)."