



SIGNS OF THE TIMES

News Articles for Episode 258

[Temple Mount activist detained for plan to sacrifice Paschal lamb - Israel News - The Jerusalem Post \(jpost.com\)](#)

#bibleprophecy, #israel, #lamb, #temple mount

Apr 3, 2023

The Jerusalem District of Israel Police have completed their preparations for the Passover and Easter holidays.

The head of the [Returning to the Mount](#) movement, Rafael Morris, was detained on Monday on suspicion that he was going to try and sacrifice the Paschal sacrifice on the Temple Mount, as police completed their preparations ahead of the Passover holiday, which will begin on Wednesday evening.

The police officers who detained Morris informed him that they were going to search his home as well.

As it does every year, the Returning to the Mount movement announced last week that [it was offering rewards](#) of tens of thousands of shekels for anyone who attempts or succeeds to sacrifice a Paschal lamb on the Temple Mount.

Last week, 15 rabbis sent a letter to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir calling on them to allow the Paschal sacrifice this year.

Two activists from the movement were arrested last month after putting up notices in Arabic in the Old City of Jerusalem offering payment to anyone willing to store lambs near the Temple Mount for the Paschal sacrifice.

Additionally on Monday, Otzma Yehudit MK Limor Son Har-Melech called on the government to allow Jews to conduct the Paschal sacrifice on the Temple Mount this year.

The Honenu legal-aid organization announced on Monday that three Temple Mount activists filed a lawsuit for NIS 133,000 against the police and the Israel Prison Service for their [conduct against Temple Mount activists](#) who tried to bring the Paschal sacrifice.

The activists claimed that they were subjected to invasive searches, including strip searches, and were handcuffed for long periods.

"This is offensive and outrageous conduct that is taken against Temple Mount activists year after year and without any legal justification," said Honenu attorney Eladi Wiesel. "This is serious humiliation and a trampling of rights whose sole purpose is to break the spirit of the Temple Mount activists, a purpose which, in the eyes of the police and

the prison service, sanctifies all means and justifies the trampling of the provisions of the law and the rulings."

Police complete preparations for Passover

The Jerusalem District of Israel Police have completed their preparations for the Passover and Easter holidays and will work to ensure the [freedom of worship and safety](#) of citizens in the city, the police announced on Monday.

Thousands of police officers from the Jerusalem District will work with Border Police officers, volunteers and reinforcements throughout the city.

This year, Passover, Easter and Ramadan overlap. Police will work to help direct vehicle and pedestrian traffic.

The Priestly Blessing which takes place during the intermediate days of Passover will take place on the morning of April 9. Police will intensify their operations in the Old City and nearby areas.

"We call on the public to respect the holidays and others, to celebrate, pray, travel and observe the sanctity and joy of the holidays according to the law and obey the police officers' instructions. Anyone who takes advantage of the holidays to behave violently or incite violence will be dealt with by all the tools at our disposal," said police.

"Together we can ensure that the holidays will be held in a normal, safe manner while maintaining the unique fabric of life in the city of Jerusalem."

[Massive rocket barrage fired from Lebanon into Israel on Passover - The Jerusalem Post \(jpost.com\)](#)

#bibleprophecy, #israel, #attacks, #lebanon

Apr 6, 2023

One Israeli injured by shrapnel, another while seeking shelter • Netanyahu to convene security cabinet this evening with top IDF officials

Rocket sirens sounded across northern Israel on Thursday afternoon, during the Passover holiday, amid a barrage of rocket attacks launched across the northern border with Lebanon, the IDF confirmed.

Sirens sounded in dozens of northern Israeli towns and villages, especially in western Galilee, amid a barrage of rockets from Israel's northern border.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office sent out a statement on Thursday afternoon, saying the prime minister will hold a situational assessment with his security cabinet later on Thursday, including Israel Police chief Kobi Shabtai. The security cabinet is expected to meet at 9:15 p.m.

[Defense Minister Yoav Gallant](#) also said he was familiar with the details of the security situation in Israel's North, adding that initial orders were given to the IDF for a response. IDF Chief of Staff Herzi Halevi later convened a meeting with the IDF General staff, with Shin Bet chief Ronen Bar attending as well.

ראש המטה הכללי, רב-אלוף הרצי הלוי, וראש השב"כ, רונן בר, מקיימים כעת הערכת מצב משותפת עם פורום המטה הכללי בבסיס הקריה בתל אביב pic.twitter.com/WDqA1Id4VE

— צבא ההגנה לישראל (@idfonline) [April 6, 2023](#)

Defense Minister Gallant instructed the defense establishment to advance all options for an Israeli response, in preparation for the security cabinet meeting.

Gallant conducted a meeting with the heads of the security organizations, concerning the rocket fire on the last day from Lebanon and the Gaza Strip. In addition, Gallant received an intelligence update on the latest developments in all theaters.

The barrage included 34 rocket launches from Lebanese territory into Israeli territory, the IDF confirmed in a statement.

Of the 34 rockets, 25 were intercepted in the air, while five landed on Israeli territory. The location of four of the rockets is still under investigation.

Local residents reported hearing loud blasts echo across northern Israel, as red alerts sounded out in towns near the Lebanese border, including Matsuva, Shlomi, Hanita, Admit, Eylon, Hila, Rosh Hanikra and Arab al-Aramashe.

The rocket barrage from Lebanon comes amid increased tensions between Palestinians and Israeli security forces on [Temple Mount](#), with clashes reported between armed Palestinians and Israeli police in al-Aqsa.

The Israeli Air Force also [struck in Gaza](#) on Wednesday in response to rockets fired from the Strip targeting southern Israel earlier this week.

One Israeli injured by shrapnel

One Israeli was reported lightly injured following the rocket barrage. Magen David Adom said the Israeli was hit by shrapnel, while another Israeli was injured on her way to a shelter and another [suffering from PTSD](#).

Galilee Medical Center confirmed that one Israeli, a resident of the Druze village of Yanuh-Jat, was injured while riding a two-wheeler in an open field in the North.

As a result of the rockets that landed on Israeli territory, a number of fires broke out and are currently being extinguished, according to the Israel Fire and Rescue services.

The northern Israeli city of Kiryat Shmona issued a statement to its resident, urging caution amid the rocket barrage while reassuring them that the city's operations will be continued as planned.

The municipalities of Nahariya and Karmiel announced that they would open the public bunkers in the city, in preparation for possible events.

Following a situation assessment conducted in the municipality, the mayor of Ashkelon, directed the opening of shelters and bunkers throughout the city on Thursday evening, emphasizing that the move was intended to increase the sense of security among the residents and that there were no special instructions at this time.

UNIFIL responded to the rocket attack in a statement on Twitter: "Head of Mission and Force Commander Major General Aroldo Lázaro is in contact with authorities on both sides of the Blue Line. The current situation is extremely serious. UNIFIL urges restraint and to avoid further escalation."

[Gaza terrorists fire 16 rockets at Israeli civilians; IDF hits back at Hamas targets - JNS.org](#)

#bibleprophecy, #israel, #attacks, #gaza

Apr 4, 2023

Sirens went off in Israel on Tuesday night—the night before Passover—as terrorists based in the Gaza Strip launched a total of 16 rockets towards Israel.

Ten rockets were launched overnight and six in two separate barrages in the early morning hours on Wednesday.

One of the rockets hit a [factory](#) in the Sderot industrial area, causing damage. No casualties were reported.

Seven rockets fell in open areas while eight more were intercepted by Israel's Iron Dome air-defense system.

Videos on social media showed Israel's Iron Dome shooting them down.

Overnight, [#Gaza](#)-based terrorist organizations targeted Israeli civilians with 16 missiles.

One of these landed in a factory in [#Israel](#)'s Southern town of Sderot, forcing workers to run for their lives.

Thankfully, no injuries have been reported at this time. pic.twitter.com/hXakmxb3XX

— CIJA (@CIJAinfo) [April 5, 2023](#)

Israel's security establishment estimates that Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) is responsible for the attack. Since the beginning of the year, about 60 rockets have been launched from Gaza towards Israel.

In response to the attack, the IDF struck a weapon manufacturing site and an additional weapon manufacturing and storage site belonging to the terror group Hamas in the center of the Gaza Strip, the IDF reported.

“The IDF holds the Hamas terrorist organization responsible for all terror activity emanating from the Gaza Strip and it will face the consequences of the security violations against Israel,” the army said in a statement.

כמו כן, תיעוד תקיפת עמדות צבאיות של ארגון הטרור חמאס על ידי טנקים של צה"ל: pic.twitter.com/txH70WZeYa

— [צבא ההגנה לישראל](#) (@idfonline) [April 5, 2023](#)

The attacks came as many critics of Israel—notably, Rep. Rashida Tlaib (D-Mich.)—posted video of Israeli police clearing people out of Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem’s Old City and accusing police of targeting Muslim worshippers during Ramadan.

“This is the violent apartheid government of Israel. This is horrific,” [tweeted](#) Tlaib, who has a history of antisemitic and anti-Israel statements.

Aviva Klompas, former head speechwriter for the Israeli mission to the United Nations, responded to Tlaib’s charges.

“Once again the congresswoman vilifies Israel and offers no context. Armed Palestinians barricaded themselves in the mosque and threatened violence. The police spent hours trying to convince them to exit peacefully, but they refused,” [tweeted](#) Klompas.

“If armed rioters barricaded themselves in the Vatican or Great Mosque of Mecca, we’d expect the police to similarly restore peace,” she said.

[Al-Aqsa mosque: Violence as Israeli police raid Jerusalem holy site - BBC News](#)

#bibleprophecy, #israel, #jerusalem, #holysite

Apr 5, 2023

There have been violent scenes as Israeli police raided the al-Aqsa mosque in occupied East Jerusalem, saying "agitators" had barricaded themselves and worshippers inside.

Palestinians said stun grenades and rubber bullets were used in the pre-dawn raid and that 50 people were hurt.

Police said stones were thrown and fireworks fired at them in the mosque.

Militants in the Gaza Strip later fired rockets at Israel and its military carried out air strikes in response.

The latest violence comes just ahead of an overlap between the Islamic holy month of Ramadan and the Jewish Passover holiday.

The al-Aqsa mosque, the third holiest site in Islam, is located on a hilltop complex known by Muslims as al-Haram al-Sharif (the Noble Sanctuary) and by Jews as the Temple Mount. Jews revere it as the location of two Biblical Temples and it is the holiest site in Judaism.

On Tuesday, Palestinians barricaded themselves in the mosque after the evening Ramadan prayer, amid reports that Jewish extremists wanted to try to sacrifice a goat at the site for Passover - as Jews did in Biblical times before the Romans destroyed their temple there. Israeli police and religious authorities have said they would not allow such an act to take place.

Israeli police said in a statement that "several law-breaking youths and masked agitators" fortified the mosque "in order to disrupt public order and desecrate the mosque".

"After many and prolonged attempts to get them out by talking to no avail, police forces were forced to enter the compound in order to get them out with the intentions to allow the Fajr [dawn] prayer and to prevent a violent disturbance," it added.

"When the police entered, stones were thrown at them and fireworks were fired from inside the mosque by a large group of agitators."

One officer was injured in the leg by a stone during the clashes, it said.

Video released by the police showed fireworks exploding and lighting up the prayer hall as heavily armed officers in riot gear moved in.

Other footage posted on social media appeared to show an officer using a rifle butt and others using sticks to beat Palestinians on the floor amid shouts and screams.

Pictures of the aftermath showed overturned furniture and prayer mats scattered across the carpet.

The Palestinian presidency warned Israel that its actions could have "dire consequences"

The Palestinian Red Crescent reported that 50 Palestinians were injured. It also said Israeli forces prevented its medics from reaching the mosque, though this has not been confirmed.

Some of the Palestinians still in Israeli custody are in a critical condition, according to their lawyer.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu insisted that the police "had to act to restore order".

"Israel is committed to maintaining freedom of worship, free access to all religions and the status quo on the Temple Mount, and will not allow violent extremists to change this," he said.

But the Islamic Waqf, which administers the site, described the police's actions as a "a flagrant violation of the identity and function of the mosque as a place of worship for Muslims alone".

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas's spokesman also condemned the raid, describing it as an attack on Muslim worshippers.

"We warn the Occupation [Israel] not to cross the red lines in the holy places, which will lead to the big explosion," Nabil Abu Rudeineh said.

The leader of the Palestinian Islamist militant group Hamas, which controls the Gaza Strip, called the incident "an unprecedented crime" and warned Israel that there would be "consequences".

UN Middle East envoy Tor Wennesland said he was "appalled by the images of violence" inside the al-Aqsa mosque and urged political, religious and community leaders on all sides to "reject incitement, inflammatory rhetoric, and provocative actions".

Following the clashes, Israeli media reported that militants fired 16 rockets from Gaza, triggering sirens in communities in southern Israel.

One rocket hit a factory near the city of Sderot and the rest were intercepted by Israel's Iron Dome missile defence system or landed in open areas, they said.

No group has so far said it was behind the rocket fire, but it is believed that Hamas approved the launches.

The Israeli military said its aircraft struck weapon manufacturing sites and a storage site belonging to Hamas in response, as well as a military compound used for training.

Israeli tanks also struck military posts along the Israel-Gaza border fence.

There were no reports of casualties on either side.

Israel's far-right National Security Minister, Itamar Ben-Gvir, tweeted that the rocket fire required a "response beyond bombing dunes and unmanned sites".

Mr Wennesland, the UN envoy, said the indiscriminate firing of rockets from Gaza was unacceptable and must stop.

Tensions between Israel and Palestinians which escalated into violence at the al-Aqsa mosque compound in May 2021 prompted Hamas to fire rockets towards Jerusalem, triggering an 11-day conflict with Israel.

Nation's declining values could signal 'the end of the American empire,' think tank president says | Fox News

#bibleprophecy, #america, #values, #decline

Apr 2, 2023

The pandemic response 'shattered' Americans' trust in the country's public institutions, Tucker said

Americans abandoning their country's traditional values could mark the beginning of the end for one of the world's greatest empires, a libertarian think tank founder warned.

"If the present trends continue, I think we'll look back at the last few years as a real turning point in American history," Brownstone Institute President Jeffrey Tucker told Fox News. "The end of the American empire."

The importance of long-held values like patriotism, religion and having children are declining across America, according to a recent [Wall Street Journal/NORC survey](#) released Monday. Within the last 25 years, the share of Americans who said patriotism is very important dropped from 70% to 38% while the value of religion dipped from 62% to 39%.

SHIFTING VALUES COULD MEAN END OF THE AMERICAN EMPIRE:

While he finds the results "stunning," Tucker said the declines made sense and blamed the government's COVID-19 lockdowns for the "cultural crisis." Although the survey results largely showed a slow, steady decrease in the importance of these values since 1998, [the sharpest declines](#) occurred after 2019.

"The decline of religion, of the importance of religion and patriotism is understandable," Tucker told Fox News. "We lost a lot of affection for our lives and our routines and trust over the course of the pandemic response that has not been replaced."

Tucker pointed to the mutli-faceted definition of patriotism.

"It can mean a love of a country, a love of homeland, a pride in its history," he said. "But there's also an element of trust that comes with patriotism."

He added that growing anti-American sentiments across the country, combined with the failure of the country's public institutions to uphold Americans' expectations amid COVID-19, devastated trust.

STUCKEY: POLL SHOWING DROP IN PATRIOTISM, RELIGION AMONG YOUNG AMERICANS IS 'DISAPPOINTING' BUT NOT SURPRISING

"The lockdown period was a real shattering of all the things we had taken for granted," Tucker said. "Childcare was closed, the schools that we could always rely on, that we pay our taxes to, were shut to us. The politicians didn't stand up for us. The courts didn't really work."

"The Bill of Rights seemed to be a dead letter," he added. "And at the same time that all the things you once believed in were taken away from you, the spokespeople for woke ideology were screaming at you that this country is corrupt, that it's never been a good place, that it's always been rooted in evil."

[Raising kids](#), which was deemed important by 59% of respondents two decades ago, is only a priority for 30% of Americans the Wall Street Journal/NORC poll found. Those who value community involvement plummeted from 62% to 27% in just the past four years.

CALLS FOR HUMANS TO STOP HAVING CHILDREN, GO EXTINCT GROW IN MEDIA CIRCLES: 'TO BREED OR NOT TO BREED?'

"Human separation and isolation were the very first values of the pandemic response," Tucker told Fox News. "Once people's networks of social associations are shattered, it's very difficult to put back together."

By confining people to their homes, [shutting down access](#) to trusted institutions and limiting the ability to worship, Americans were robbed of their faith in the U.S., Tucker said.

"If you look at all the American patriotic hymns, they all refer to freedom and rights and self-government and pride and our institutions," he said. "When those values are not upheld by most of the civic institutions and backed by the media or are otherwise taught in our schooling, when those values are trashed and put down ... what are we supposed to think?"

"It makes them just irrelevant songs rather than true hymns to a natural life," he added.

If this shift in values continues, Tucker predicted the country may never return to its former glory.

"Empires come and empires go, and this might be the period in which the empire goes," he said.

"This can be turned around," Tucker added. "But it can only be turned around through a renewed appreciation of the genius of this country and its institutions and its history."

To watch the full interview with Tucker, [click here](#).

Satan is Getting Hot as Hell in American Pop Culture (newsweek.com)

#bibleprophecy, #america, #satan, #popculture

Mar 28, 2023

"I am your nightmare," a possessed child tells Russell Crowe. "My nightmare is France winning the World Cup," the actor fires back in the April 14 release, *The Pope's Exorcist*. Opening the same day is *Nefarious*, a movie about a psychiatrist who must determine whether a man on death row who claims to be possessed by the devil is mentally fit enough to be executed.

In November, 2021, Pew Research reported that 62 percent of American adults believe in Hell, up from 58 percent in 2014, and pop culture appears to be taking full advantage of the curiosity that surrounds Hell and its inhabitants.

The Devil is front and center in movies, TV shows, podcasts and even children's books. There are Satan After School Clubs, while the proliferating Satanist groups have their own political divisions.

There's *The Exorcist Files*, in which Father Carlos Martins recreates exorcisms, and the podcast routinely tops the list of the most popular in the "spirituality" categories. On [Netflix](#) alone there are dozens of titles dealing with hellish demons, including *Warrior Nun*, *Devil in Ohio*, *The Bastard Son & the Devil Himself* and *Lucifer*, in which the ruler of Hell runs a piano bar in California. Comedy is also fair game, thus Ted Danson plays a torturous demon who is prone to mistakes in the Netflix series, *The Good Place*.

Not since 1973, when *The Exorcist* was a cultural phenomenon on its way to becoming the first horror film to earn an Oscar nomination for Best Picture has Satan been such a popular topic. There's even a *Children's Book of Demons*; sample passage: "Summoning demons has never been so fun!" A used copy of the controversial book published in 2019 sells for \$253 on [Amazon.com](#).

While there's no polling data suggesting a rise in Satanism, Martins, host of *The Exorcist Files*, sees anecdotal evidence that more Americans are opening the door for Satan to enter their lives. Exorcisms are way up, he says, and so is interest in them, hence his podcast hit 1 million downloads by the eighth episode.

Humans crave spirituality, says Martins, but a Gallup poll in 2021 noted that for the first time in U.S. history less than half of all Americans were members of a church, synagogue or mosque. To fill the void, many are embracing "a rejection of received social customs and expected behavioral norms in favor of embracing 'me-first' pleasure, pursuing intense feelings and experiences," Martins told *Newsweek*. "The adoption of Satan as a figurehead is merely another 'shock' ceiling through which the movement has broken through."

There's even an organization that sponsors "After School Satan Clubs" and a rivalry is brewing between two of the most prominent Satanist organizations in the nation. And let's not forget that at the most recent Grammy Awards singers Sam Smith and Kim Petras performed a Hell-themed version of the song, *Unholy*, with Smith dressed as the Devil and Petras chained in a cage surrounded by flames, much to the chagrin of some Republican lawmakers.

"This ... Is ... Evil," tweeted Senator [Ted Cruz](#) after the performance. "The Grammy's featured Sam Smith's demonic performance and was sponsored by [Pfizer](#)," tweeted Georgia Congresswoman [Marjorie Taylor Greene](#). Neither Smith or Petras responded to *Newsweek's* request for comment.

"New-age, the occult, witches, warlocks, Satan — people are intrigued, and Hollywood feeds it to them," says Pastor Greg Locke of Global Vision Bible Church in Mt. Juliet, Tennessee. The controversial pastor — he kept his church open through COVID lockdowns, criticized transgender bathrooms and challenged the integrity of the 2020 presidential election — conducts mass "deliverance" events where he says congregants shed their demons.

Three years ago, he was preaching to about 300 people in a wedding chapel; today, his Sunday night deliverance events attract as many as 3,000 under a massive tent. On March 13, Locke was featured in *Come out In Jesus Name*, a documentary about his church of alleged demon slayers. The one-night release earned \$974,000 nationwide and ruled the box office on a per-screen basis that day, thus the \$400,000 movie will re-release a few days ahead of *The Pope's Exorcist* and *Nefarious*.

"Hollywood is pushing demonic activity; we're pushing freedom from demonic activity," Locke told *Newsweek*. "We believe in demonic affliction and oppression. Not everything is a demon, but there's a reason some people can't get over an addiction or depression. You can't medicate your way out of spiritual heaviness. You cast it out."

In the film, Locke speaks of knowing that "voodoo and witchcraft and evil were real," but for 30 years he suffered from "the disease to please," which kept him from preaching about it because he didn't want to be dismissed as a "charismaniac."

Chuck Konzelman, who co-wrote and co-directed *Nefarious* with Cary Solomon told *Newsweek* that "curiosity with respect to demons is dangerous, and meddling with the occult is flat-out crazy." Thus, the movie serves as a warning as to what can happen when one invites Satan into their life, be it through evil deeds or the embrace of a mere Ouija board. "When you pick one up, you're saying 'yes-yes' to a willing spiritual possession. Your intention is almost certainly temporary, but demons play for keeps," he said.

In *Nefarious*, there are long scenes where a doctor debates an alleged demon — or perhaps an extraordinarily cerebral man who suffers from a dual-personality disorder — that are reminiscent of the opening scene from Quentin Tarantino's *Inglourious Basterds*, where a smooth-talking Nazi convinces a man to give up Jews hidden

beneath his house. Except in *Nefarious*, it's the Devil trying to convince an atheist of his existence.

Agony

Nefarious also reflects the Christian values of the filmmakers, with "Satan" weighing in on hot-button issues like abortion. "Can you imagine the agony the Carpenter feels when we rip a child to pieces inside his own mother's womb?" says the alleged demon, referring to Jesus Christ.

The character, played by Sean Patrick Flanery, also claims to "know more theology than any human being who has ever lived."

"He made you in his image. But we remade you in ours," the alleged demon tells the doctor, and in doing so sums up the premise of the film: that the flaws of human beings have become so prevalent that they're celebrated in public policy, media and culture.

"So that's it? That's your entire plan? Not to make something of your own; just destroy us?" asks the doctor, played by Jordan Belfi. "No. Our plan is to hurt Him. To punish Him. And we do that by destroying what he loves. Which is you," the possessed man explains.

The role that politics plays in *Nefarious* is underscored by the appearance of conservative commentator Glenn Beck playing a rare role as a fictional character in a narrative film. The movie is based on the book, *A Nefarious Plot*, written by Steve Deace, who hosts a show on Blaze Media, co-founded by Beck.

Konzelman and Solomon are the pair behind faith-based films like *God's Not Dead*, only this time they say they have made a horror film for the masses, but with a twist: a distinct lack of the blood and gore that usually accompany the genre.

"There's no 'spectacle' in the film. Nobody's puking up strange substances, or climbing walls, or levitating," said Konzelman.

That's not the case in the bigger-budgeted *The Pope's Exorcist*, where Crowe plays Father Gabriele Amorth, the real-life chief exorcist of the Vatican for 36 years until his death in 2016. Trailers for the film feature graphic portrayals of a demon-possessed child akin to the character, Regan, played by Linda Blair in *The Exorcist*, where her head spinned, she vomited green goo and murdered a priest.

"It's a very dark pursuit," Crowe says of Amorth's job in a featurette that Sony Pictures released to promote *The Pope's Exorcist*. Sony Pictures did not respond to *Newsweek's* request for comment.

Beyond movies, TV shows, books and a bunch of video games featuring the devil, there is The Satanic Temple, which boasts of being the only religious organization recognized as a church by the IRS and the Federal Court System, given other church's hadn't the need to fight court battles in order to be recognized as such.

Its annual convention, dubbed SatanCon is set for April 28-30 in Boston and was sold out at least six weeks in advance. Unlike some high-profile Christian churches that shunned COVID-19 protocols, both masks and vaccines are still mandatory to attend SatanCon. Example presentations include, "Sins of the Flesh: Satanism and Self Pleasure" and "Hellbillies: Visible Satanism in Rural America."

The group awards "Devil's Advocate Scholarships" in the amount of \$666 (traditionally, 666 is the mark of the devil). One of this year's recipients was an elementary school child who wrote the best essay on the topic, "What do you hate most about school?"

The Satanic Temple, founded in 2012, also raises money for abortions and has introduced "The Satanic Abortion Ritual" in order to claim religious freedom in states that restrict the procedure now that Roe v. Wade has been overturned.

It's headquartered in Salem, Massachusetts, famous for the Salem Witch Trials in the 17th century, where it also runs the Salem Art Gallery. It also operates an online gift shop (a T-shirt with "Hail Satan" scrolled on the front sells for \$30) and it boasts 54 congregations nationwide. Perhaps most controversially: it helps children open After School Satan Clubs. In one district in Pennsylvania, parents packed a school board meeting to complain about a proposed Satan After School Club, and the board voted against the idea 8-1, [ABC News](#) reported last year.

Empathy

Founder Douglas Mesner, who goes by Lucien Greaves, declined *Newsweek's* request for an interview, but The Satanic Temple's website espouses such non-controversial tenets as forgiveness, empathy toward all creatures and freedom — including "the freedom to offend." Its website boasts more than 700,000 registered members.

Its website also states that it will only open an After School Satan Club at schools where other religious groups are already operating. "We're not interested in converting children to Satanism," they claim, offering that their focus is on "rationalism" and "an appreciation of the natural wonders" rather than "a fear of everlasting other-worldly horrors."

There's no indication of how many chapters the After School Satan Club have successfully launched, but the website also sells "The Satanic Book of Children's Activities" for \$7.50. "Color Anabel's study filled with Satanic literature and philosophy," reads one page.

The Church of Satan, on the other hand, predates The Satanic Temple by 47 years, and preaches that Satanists are their "own Gods." One of its "Nine Satanic Statements" reads: "Satan represents all of the so-called sins, as they all lead to physical, mental or emotional gratification!"

Dave Harris, the Church of Satan "magister," a registered Libertarian, doesn't have much respect for The Satanic Temple, dubbing them "left-wing political folks masquerading as Satanists who use inflammatory language for headlines."

Neither The Satanic Temple nor Church of Satan promote the worship of a literal devil because that would amount to acknowledging that there are deities, and both groups preach that there are not. "A literal Satan is Christian bullshit," adding that the word, translated from Hebrew, means "adversary — one who stands in opposition. That's who we are," explained Harris.

In fact, in 1975 when a high-ranking member of the Church of Satan named Michael Angelo Aquino claimed that a literal Satan revealed his true identity to him, calling himself "Set," he was ejected from the organization, thus he started The Temple of Set.

The Temple of Set did not respond to *Newsweek's* request for comment, though its website describes Set as the "oldest known form of the Prince of Darkness," and the site speaks of the "Left-Hand Path" of being your own god rather than praying to an "imaginary" one. The site promotes "Black Magic" but warns that one cannot learn the craft unless he or she fully rejects being "governed by animal emotions such as shame, fear, or the desire for social acceptance."

Satan, says Martins, the priest, "is a real, living, rational being endowed with intelligence and power," and he notes that groups like the Temple of Set "are not friendly and work very hard to keep their presence secret." Ominously, he posits, "Its members are integrated at all levels of society."

As for The Church of Satan, it even has a list of dozens of recommended movies that includes *Blue Velvet*, because it features "lust" and "fetishism," and [Disney's](#) 1940 animated classic, *Fantasia*, because it stresses "science and nature over spirituality and faith." Absent on the list are Devil-themed horror blockbusters like *The Exorcist* and *The Omen* because, as Harris puts it: "They're just Catholic torture-porn."

While Satanism has been around for hundreds of years, no one codified it as a religion, according to Harris, until Church of Satan founder Anton LaVey did so in 1966. "Prior to that, 'Satanism' was used as a pejorative by Christians," he said.

In the Middle ages, the Catholic Church accused the Knights Templar and Cathars of Satanism. In the 1600s it was the Salem Witch Trials. In the 1890s there was the Taxil Hoax, where a writer knowingly, falsely accused Freemasonry organizations of being Satan worshippers.

In the 1980's a "Satanic Panic" began with the publication of *Michelle Remembers* by psychiatrist Lawrence Pazder and his patient (and future wife) Michelle Smith. The book claimed that Smith recalled being horribly abused by Satanists after she underwent "recovered-memory therapy," leading to thousands of ultimately discredited reports of the abuse and murder of children by Satan worshippers. The panic reached its zenith with the arrests of several members and employees of the McM Martin family

after they were accused of Satanic ritual abuse of children at a preschool they ran in Manhattan Beach, California.

The Satanic Panic of the 1980s, in fact, is explored in a documentary called, *Satan Wants You* (from 666 Films, no less), which debuted in mid-March at the SXSW Film Festival.

Harris said that a renewed interest in Satanism is a sort of Satanic Panic 2.0, spurred by discussions among conspiracy theorists at 4Chan, [Qanon](#) and similar online destinations.

"So much of the Christian mythology has seeped into the American consciousness, and glorifying the bad guy is attractive," he said.

Sean Horlor and Steve Adams, the two filmmakers behind *Satan Wants You*, told *Newsweek* they settled onto the topic of the Satanic Panic of the 1980s while researching the role that 4Chan and Qanon had in spreading the debunked "Pizzagate" conspiracy theory.

Satan Wants You features audio from taped sessions where Pazder extracts repressed memories from Smith during his sessions with her circa 1976, though after the Satanic Panic subsided in the 1990s, Pazder's techniques were widely criticized and dismissed. The filmmakers note that Smith declined to participate, but it features Pazder's daughter and first wife, and Smith's sister scorning the notion that she was a victim of Satanic ritual abuse.

Pazder died in 2004 and *Newsweek* was unable to reach Smith for comment.

During their heyday, the media was very susceptible to the idea that dangerous Satanists were running amok, and [Oprah Winfrey](#) is shown saying, "You know, there are thousands of men and women who are secretly worshipping the Devil. The Devil!" Also, Geraldo Rivera is shown promoting a three-hour TV special on the topic, while Larry King appears confused when a woman confesses to murder on national television, telling the TV host she gave birth at age 11 so that she could stab her baby to death as part of a Satanic ritual.

The movie shows footage of a cop in the era claiming that, at 40 percent of the Satanic crime scenes he investigates, there are heavy metal records from bands like Black Sabbath and Iron Maiden present. *Michelle Remembers* was backed by several officials from the Catholic Church, notes the film, and Pazder's first wife says: "I can't understand why anybody would believe it. I don't know why these people would follow such a stupid book."

By the mid 1990s, reporters, law enforcement and the psychiatric community finally expressed skepticism about repressed memories of Satanic ritual abuse, and the film notes that Dana Carvey helped put an end to the panic by making fun of it on *Saturday Night Live* with his portrayal of "The Church Lady" — a recurring character who loudly blamed Satan for all transgressions, big or small.

While Satanism appears to come from nowhere, "There's this weird cyclical nature to it with each new generation," said Horlor.

"When we started the movie five years ago there was Pizzagate, but Satan wasn't as deeply entrenched in pop culture as it is today," adds Adams. "Satan is the ultimate scapegoat. People who are slightly out of the mainstream are accused of Satanism. People were saying Sam Smith was Satanic, so he ate it up and played the part at the Grammys."

India's new trade policy aims to promote rupee trade | Reuters

#bibleprophecy, #india, #dollars, #trade

Mar 31, 2023

NEW DELHI, March 31 (Reuters) - India's new foreign trade policy, to be adopted from April 1, will take steps to support international trade using the rupee currency, the government said on Friday, as it looks to boost exports amid slowing global trade.

The South Asian nation is prepared to trade in rupees with nations facing a shortage of dollars so as to "disaster-proof" them and effectively boost its exports, Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal told a news conference in the capital, New Delhi.

The measures include industry-specific targets to reach a goal of \$2 trillion in exports of merchandise and services by 2030, said Santosh Kumar Sarangi, head of the directorate-general of foreign trade (DGFT).

That represents a nearly three-fold jump from expected exports of \$770 billion in financial year 2022/23, he added, despite global uncertainties that make the export scenario slightly challenging.

India is also launching a new amnesty scheme for one-time settlement of defaults on export obligations, Sarangi said.

The scheme, which aims for faster resolution of trade disputes, will run until September 2023, but will not apply to cases involving fraud investigations.

India's new policy will also automate some trade approvals and cut charges for medium-sized and small businesses to secure some government-backed benefits.

[Dennis Prager Is Wrong About Porn | Catholic Answers](#)

#bibleprophecy, #porn, #prager, #corruption

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Recently Dennis Prager caused a stir over comments on pornography he shared on an episode of Jordan Peterson's [roundtable discussion of the book of Exodus](#).

Prager first claimed that the Old Testament never condemns lusting after another man's wife and says this is a strictly Christian rule of morality (he says the command to not "covet" your neighbor's wife only prohibits making active plans to sleep with her). Even more shocking, he said that when women tell him their husbands look at porn, he asks them if the porn is a replacement for intimacy with them (which would be wrong) or merely a way to "assist" the intimacy in their marriage (which would be allowed). He also told a story about a man who couldn't be intimate with his wife because she had Alzheimer's, and Prager wondered why it would be so wrong for that man to find sexual gratification through "a picture."

But what Prager is saying with the Alzheimer's story is no different than what pro-choicers say about abortion in the case of rape. You pick a very difficult situation and then use that situation as a wedge to justify all kinds of behaviors. Why can't a guy pleasure himself if his wife simply won't sleep with him because they had a big fight? Where do you draw the line? The answer is: you can't.

The problem with Prager's argument is that it assumes a man's ejaculation is primarily for his benefit, to relieve sexual tension. But that's gross and objectifies your spouse who should be the recipient of self-giving love, not self-relieving urges.

Now, there's nothing wrong with appreciating that marriage does usually entail a decrease in sexual urges, just as marriage reduces loneliness; but the *primary* end of marriage should not be either of those ends because such a mentality uses one's spouse. Sometimes in marriage we experience loneliness or sexual frustration, such as after pregnancy when a wife can't have intercourse for six to eight weeks.

But seeing sex as an expression of marital love helps us better love our spouse during this period instead of fleeing to someone else—in person or virtually—to satisfy our urges. In the past Prager has insisted people need to be virtuous and take the hard path in life. In his book [Happiness is a Serious Problem](#), he writes "Everything worthwhile in life is attained through hard work. Happiness is not an exception."

But it seems like the hard work to have a faithful marriage is an exception in this case.

Here's an analogy to show why Prager's view of porn contradicts his commitment to cultivating virtue. Imagine if someone liked to beat up a dummy dressed as Dennis Prager. I'm sure Prager would say this is bad for that person even if it's meant to

control his violent urges, because this self-centered behavior doesn't actually help him become a better person. However, the same is true of pornography and how it deforms our moral character.

But not only does porn harm the viewer, it also makes him a contributor to an industry that brutalizes men and women physically, emotionally, and spiritually and is often connected to rape and sex trafficking, including of children. Some of the descriptions of what happens to porn star's bodies from Matt Fradd's book [*The Porn Myth*](#) made me almost throw up, but if you watch porn you are partly responsible for these evils.

Finally, Prager says that adultery only happens with "another organ" than your eyes, namely, your genitals. But what about a man who pays a girl on a pornographic webcam site to strip for him? Is that adultery, or is it merely a substitute for adultery that Prager would endorse because it's on a screen? Maybe it's not adultery under Prager's view, but the Church would say that behavior, or looking at porn, or even just masturbating, are all condemned under the sixth commandment (CCC 2351-2354)

The problem is that people can always say *Well, this or that doesn't fall under the sixth commandment*, which is why God's revelation is perfected in the incarnation and the establishment of Christ's one, holy, Catholic, and apostolic church to give us the definitive interpretation of the laws God gave in his revelation.