

Let me tell you something that MIGHT startle you.

Even the scientists who built today's "artificial intelligence" ("AI") *do not understand how it works.* ... [P A U S E] ...

Are you as surprised to hear that... as I was... in reading it from a July 15, 2023 article in the American news and opinion website called "Vox"...?

News and concerns about Artificial Intelligence systems like ChatGPT... Google Gemini... and Bing AI Chat are all over the media. These systems are an unprecedented technological breakthrough and the consequences still unknown. But what completely floors me is that even the creators of these systems have no idea how they work.

NYU professor and AI scientist Sam Bowman has spent years building and assessing systems like ChatGPT. He admits he and other AI scientists are mystified:

If we open up ChatGPT or a system like it and look inside, you just see millions of numbers flipping around a few hundred times a second, and we just have no idea what any of it means. With only the tiniest of exceptions, we can't look inside these things and say, "Oh, here's what concepts it's using, here's what kind of rules of reasoning it's using. Here's what it does and doesn't know in any deep way." We just don't understand what's going on here. We built it, we trained it, but we don't know what it's doing.

Bowman is concerned about AI's unpredictability:

We've got something that's not really meaningfully regulated and that is more or less useful for a huge range of valuable tasks. We've got increasingly clear evidence that this technology is improving very quickly in directions that seem like they're aimed at some very, very important stuff and potentially destabilizing to a lot of important institutions. But we don't know how fast it's moving. We don't know why it's working when it's working.

Well... I happen to find the American news media quite unreliable today (and since I don't know a whole lot about Vox... I decided to go and get it "straight from the horses mouth.") ... I decided to interview the most well-known device of AI (ChatGPT-4). ... First... I typed in the question "*Do the developers of AI understand how it works?*" Here is an excerpt of its lightning quick... immediate reply:

There are some aspects of AI, especially in complex models like deep neural networks, where the behavior can be difficult to fully explain or predict. This is often referred to as the "black box" nature of AI, where the internal workings are not entirely transparent. Researchers and developers can observe the input and output, but the exact path taken within the model to reach a decision can be complex and not easily interpretable.

Efforts are ongoing in the field of explainable AI (XAI) to make AI systems more transparent and their decisions more understandable to humans. This involves developing methods and tools that can provide insights into how models make decisions and why they produce certain outputs.

My second (and last) question of my brief interview was: "What are the critics of AI saying about their concerns? Here are a few criticisms from its rapid response. It gave me 10... but I am only going to read six of them:

Critics of AI have raised several concerns about the development and deployment of artificial intelligence technologies. Here are some of the primary concerns:

1. "**Bias and Fairness:** AI systems can inherit and even amplify biases present in the training data, leading to unfair or discriminatory outcomes. This can affect various domains such as hiring, law enforcement, and lending..." (And I would add affecting information about Biblical truth and principles...)
2. "**Transparency and Accountability:** The "black box" nature of many AI models makes it difficult to understand how they make

decisions. This lack of transparency can lead to challenges in holding AI systems accountable for their actions.

3. **Privacy:** *AI systems often require large amounts of data, raising concerns about the privacy of individuals whose data is used. Unauthorized data collection and surveillance are major issues.*
4. **Security Risks:** *AI technologies can be exploited for malicious purposes, such as creating deepfakes, automating cyber-attacks, and developing autonomous weapons.*
5. **Societal Impact:** *The widespread use of AI can have broad societal implications, including changing social dynamics, increasing digital divide, and impacting human relationships and mental health.*
6. **Existential Risks:** *Some experts, like Nick Bostrom and Elon Musk, have raised concerns about the long-term existential risks associated with advanced AI, including the possibility of AI systems becoming uncontrollable and posing a threat to humanity.*

Wouldn't you like to see a glimpse into the future of where technology is taking us...? Do we need to be afraid of it...? Does artificial intelligence provide us with signs that should make ALL OF US afraid...?

Well... we don't know a lot about the future of technology and the influences that we are seeing right now... but the same cannot be said about the Kingdom of God. We have been given plenty to work with in getting ready for God's Kingdom here on earth. Today we continue our study of the Olivet Discourse... which we began last week in our study through Luke's Gospel. ... We are in chapter 21... which (all but the 1st 4 verses) is Jesus discussing end time events with His disciples... on the Mt. of Olives.

Jesus and His men had just come from the Temple in Jerusalem... where some of the disciples (being impressed by all of its glory) remarked about it. Jesus responded by saying that it was about to be destroyed without one stone remaining on another. His men were extremely distraught over

Jesus' claim. To them it meant the end of the world. They thought life was over – if the glorious Temple was destroyed. So they asked Jesus when it would happen (and they were most likely thinking... that they were also asking Jesus when the end of the world would come...) So Jesus gave an intriguing answer that addressed BOTH the soon-to-happen destruction of the Temple... and another judgment that will happen during the end times.

Jesus showed that these were two different judgments that were separated by many years. Jerusalem's destruction would happen in a little less than 40 years... (from the time Jesus spoke to His followers about it)... and it **did** in 70 A.D. (I took some time last week reading from Jewish historian Josephus' writings about it. – IT WAS ABSOLUTELY HORRIFYING!!! ... But the other event (concerning the end times and Jesus' return to earth) would not happen for quite a long time later... and the signs pointing to **IT** will be even MORE intense!

In last week's verses in Luke 21... I showed you that many of the signs for both events (the one near... and the one far) were the same. I mentioned that the nature of Bible prophecy... is that it often works that way. There is a near fulfillment (not long from the time that the prophecy is uttered)... and many times... another fulfillment will happen numerous years later. ... And it is the second event that is more spectacular (or intense.) I believe that is what we see (here)... as Jesus describes the destruction of Jerusalem and the events of the time just before Jesus returns.

Initially it looks (to us) confusing. It is clear that Jesus is discussing two different time periods. He wants His disciples to understand that the destruction of the Temple (during their lifetime)... and the end times are not

the same event. “*But which period of time does this (particular) sign and that one point to...?*” ... And the answer is – They all point to BOTH.

We read about the same signs... but see that they will increase with frequency and intensity... *as true signs of the end times when Jesus will return*. Last week I showed you some evidence from the Olivet Discourse that shows they will intensify. ... I (also) mentioned several Old Testament prophecies (and verses in Revelation 6)... which all indicate their increase in number and intensity. I (ominously) closed last week by acknowledging that such an increase of these signs **are** currently being seen in our world today... and causing widespread chaos... because of our better technology to detect - **and** report them.

Today we pick up with some signs that Jesus wanted His followers to see as happening DURING His original listener’s lifetime (in THEIR own “*here and now*.”) It is clear that these signs were to start immediately happening (as indicators) that the Temple was about to be destroyed (as it... indeed was... 40 years from that very moment.)

Luke 21:12

BEFORE the multiple false claims of people saying they are Jesus (having come back)... and social upheavals from wars and famine... and (also) before the cosmic signs in the heavens and tidal waves of the ocean... there was something Jesus’ listeners needed to know. ***They*** (themselves) would be persecuted by government and their own families.

The emphasis of this verse... and the next five... seems to refer primarily on the events leading to the fall of Jerusalem... in His disciples immediate future. He wanted His followers to be ready for it and to act pre-emptively

for it. ... HOWEVER – it will continue down through history... right up to the Lord's return... and in typical prophetic fashion... it will escalate in the end days... just as Revelation reveals... that during the Tribulation... Jewish and Christian persecution will be VERY intense!

Luke 21:12-17

This warning is important... because fear of familial rejection may cause some to hesitate to follow Jesus. “*Count the cost of following Me,*” Jesus warns them. Get ready for it. Don't let it take you by complete surprise.

Family members may turn the disciple in... First-century Jewish Christians were subject to persecution and excommunication from the synagogue. Roman persecutions created a similar environment. To confess Christ might mean being hated by friends... family... and society in general. The Followers of Christ HAD to be ready to face everyone's reaction... and to prepare for the hostile reaction to their confession of Christ. Being a disciple will have its price.

Of course this did all start happening RIGHT AWAY. The book of Acts chronicles the persecution of the early Christians – before the Temple was destroyed.

Jesus foretold that the court appearances would be an opportunity to witness to Christ before men in high places. ... Persecution would (initially) mean their forced dispersion all around the Roman Empire... which caused the gospel to be preached to the Gentiles. ... Persecuted disciples would dazzle their interrogators with their wisdom (just as Jesus said here) — for example... Peter and John before the Sanhedrin (Acts 4:13)... Stephen

before the Sanhedrin (Acts 6:10; 7:2–54)... and Paul before Agrippa (Acts 25:13–26:32.)

(And) ... these were only the *beginning* of sorrows... because (then) the Romans took over... and wave after wave of immeasurable suffering washed over the church from the days of Nero until the coming of Constantine.

The Lord did not promise that the inspired defense of the Christian prisoners would secure their release. But He did promise that even their most bitter and brilliant prosecutors would be unable to refute their testimony. ... Books of church history are full of such accounts that have happened. I have no doubt that it still happens today. Announce your conversion in a Muslim country or in a hard-line Communist country and Jesus' words take on a terrible reality. ... Jesus said on another occasion:

Matthew 10:34-36 (ESV)

³⁴ “Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. ³⁵ For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. ³⁶ And a person’s enemies will be those of his own household.

But none of what we have seen... and are seeing today – is as intense as what the Book of Revelation describes. We are probably seeing that its escalation has already started (in our own country... and around the whole world)... as we witness antisemitism (especially)... and Christian beliefs (in large part)... being labeled “hate speech” and “intolerant.”

Luke 21:18

Wait a minute! ... Hold on! Back the truck up! ... Which is true... verse 18 (here) or what we just read verse 16 to say...?

Luke 21:16 (ESV)

¹⁶ *You will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and some of you **they will put to death.***

What does it mean that some of you will be put to death... and verse 18 that says: "*But not a hair of your head will perish*"...? ... And doesn't Christian history (ever since Jesus said this) clearly show that there were MANY Christian martyrs who perished for their faith...? Two verses that are ALMOST side by side... seem to contradict each other. What's going on here...?

Here is what Dr. J Vernon McGee writes about it:

These verses apply directly to the 144,000 Jews who will be indestructible during the time of the Great Tribulation Period. The suffering of these Jews will be much greater during the Tribulation than it was under the German persecution with the ovens and concentration camps.

...I'm sorry Dr. McGee. I have benefited so much from your scholarly writings... and I may quote from you OFTEN... but I just can't see what you write (here) – AT ALL. There is no indication in these verses (or in any other prophecy or passage of the Bible) that gives us license to restrict these verses to one particular time period (the Tribulation) and only to the 144,000 that Revelations discusses. We have been seeing that all of these descriptions apply from when Christ spoke them through the end times. Why should we see this description to be different? That is not being consistent.

The key... I think is that Verses 18 and 19 must not be separated – as I just did. That is where the confusion exists. So... lets read them together now.

Luke 21:18-19

What Jesus seems to mean in verse 18 is that nothing (not even the hairs on our head) is excluded from God's tender care. With these words... He might be drawing His listeners minds back to what He said earlier.

Matthew 10:29-30 (ESV)

²⁹ Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. ³⁰ But even the hairs of your head are all numbered.

God will notice... He will care... and then (verses 18-19) – whatever loss we might suffer... God will MORE THAN compensate us. ... Verses 18 and 19 together say... God will protect us in times of being persecuted for our faith. But even if any of our hair perishes by our death... we gain a much better life. ... [P A U S E] ...

We have not covered enough end time material with such diverse understanding and controversy yet... so let's move on...

Luke 21:20-24

This doubtless refers to the invasion of Judea by the Roman armies in A.D. 70... when Jerusalem fell. But (as I have been saying)... it also has a fulfillment with the end times.

In 70 A.D. those who were in Jerusalem would have seen the endless columns of the Roman infantry and cavalry as they approached their doomed city. The banners... the golden eagles... and the standards held high bore witness to the discipline and order of the well-trained Roman force of power. ... Rank after rank they came — the engineers... and the supply wagons... filled with all of the implements of war... the siege equipment... the battering rams... the catapults... and the endless columns of marching men.

The Romans were experts at subduing even the most stubborn cities. When the beat of drums echoed across the valleys of Judah... the whole world knew that Jerusalem was doomed. Jesus warned:

Luke 21:21 (ESV)

²¹ Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are inside the city depart, and let not those who are out in the country enter it,

Jesus had in mind the drawing of the military barricade around the city. Once that dreaded circle was complete... flight would be too late.

This warning to flee is **not** just about what happened in 70 A.D. It also corresponds to the day when the Antichrist enters the Temple (mid-way through the coming Tribulation) and declares himself to be god. Matthew makes this direct link.

Matthew 24:15-17 (ESV)

*¹⁵ "So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand),
¹⁶ then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. ¹⁷ Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house,*

They were to do (in 70 A.D.) what they are warned to do (in the Great Tribulation Period.) - They are to get out of Jerusalem as quickly as possible. The Tribulation will affect the entire world... but the antichrist's wrath will focus (primarily) on the Jews.

(Now) let me bring-in some history... some geography... and some other passages from Revelation and Old Testament prophecies. ... There is quite a bit for us to see about this coming need to flee – and God's obvious gracious provision for His people. (May we all be impressed by how our

God is full of grace and mercy... as I show this to you!) ... This will be all that we have time for (today)... but it will be well worth it!

When the antichrist betrays the Jews and sets out to destroy them... about the only possibly place for them to go is southeast of Jerusalem. ... This is the only place in the area where the antichrist's army would be delayed. It is still a wilderness today. It is very possible the Jews will hide in a place called Petra. This would be an ideal refuge.

When David fled from Saul... he went to Petra. ... When Babylon invaded Judah... some of the Jews escaped to Edom and Petra. ... In 70 A.D. ... when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem... some heeded the warning of Jesus and fled to Petra. ... There are several clues given to us in Scripture that indicate the Jews (in the period of the Tribulation) will once again find refuge there... and be protected by God.

O.K. Stay with me. We are about to do some serious Bible-Tumping!

Clue #1.

Psalm 60:1, 9-12 (ESV)

¹ O God, you have rejected us, broken our defenses; you have been angry; oh, restore us. ⁹ Who will bring me to the fortified city? Who will lead me to Edom? ¹⁰ Have you not rejected us, O God? You do not go forth, O God, with our armies. ¹¹ Oh, grant us help against the foe, for vain is the salvation of man! ¹² With God we shall do valiantly; it is he who will tread down our foes.

Clue #2.

The Jews will not have time to pack. They will need to flee for their lives immediately. It needs to be some place close to Jerusalem. In Matthew 24:16 Jesus said flee to the mountains and pray that it will not be during

winter. Petra is 140 miles southeast of Jerusalem. It is in the mountains and in the winter it is cold and snowy.

The highest point in Israel is only 3963 feet. The mountains are high and rolling but offer no protection. ... In Petra... (however) the mountains are 5000 feet high and are the most rugged and inaccessible mountains in the world.

The Edomites lived here around 500 B.C. They carved temples... and dwelling places directly out of the rock face. It is still difficult to reach because of the narrow passage of 20–50 feet that serves as its only entrance. (However) a new wide road has been constructed right up to the entrance of Petra and a new bridge at the Allenby checkpoint. Millions of dollars are being spent on improvements in this area... making it more accessible.

Clue #3.

Antichrist will have world-domination – but Scripture says that there will be one area that he will **not** control. Any guesses where that will be...? Here is what Daniel saw... and wrote about antichrist.

Daniel 11:41 (ESV)

⁴¹ He shall come into the glorious land. And tens of thousands shall fall, but these shall be delivered out of his hand: Edom and Moab and the main part of the Ammonites.

Edom (where Petra is) will not come under antichrist's control.

Clue #4.

Isaiah said that the hiding place when the Lord returns will be a place of chambers or caves... which fits the description of Petra.

Isaiah 26:20-21 (ESV)

²⁰ Come, my people, enter your chambers, and shut your doors behind you; hide yourselves for a little while until the fury has passed by. ²¹ For behold, the LORD is coming out from his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity, and the earth will disclose the blood shed on it, and will no more cover its slain.

Clue #5.

Only a remnant of the Jewish population will escape antichrist. Zechariah says that 2/3 of the Jews will be killed.

Zechariah 13:8-9 (ESV)

⁸ In the whole land, declares the LORD, two thirds shall be cut off and perish, and one third shall be left alive. ⁹ And I will put this third into the fire, and refine them as one refines silver, and test them as gold is tested. They will call upon my name, and I will answer them. I will say, 'They are my people'; and they will say, 'The LORD is my God.'"

The Jewish population is about 6 million. That means the hiding place will need to hold at least two million people (which is 1/3.) ... In Petra... some caves hold 3000 people. Guides in Petra have stated that this area could hold five million people very easily.

Clue #6.

Bozrah is half way to Petra from the Valley known as Armageddon... where antichrist will be defeated. He will only get as far as Bozrah at it's Southern tip... and be stopped – unable to get to Petra (where I believe the Jews will be.) Who will stop antichrist? ... Jesus will return and defeat antichrist at Bozrah.

Isaiah 63:1-4 (ESV)

¹ *Who is this who comes from Edom, in crimsoned garments from Bozrah, he who is splendid in his apparel, marching in the greatness of his strength? "It is I, speaking in righteousness, mighty to save."*

² *Why is your apparel red, and your garments like his who treads in the winepress?* ³ *"I have trodden the winepress alone, and from the peoples no one was with me; I trod them in my anger and trampled them in my wrath; their lifeblood spattered on my garments, and stained all my apparel."* ⁴ *For the day of vengeance was in my heart, and my year of redemption had come.*

This will be Jesus defeating antichrist and his army. ... [**PAUSE**] ...

With all of this background... Revelation 12:14 makes perfect sense. (Let me paraphrase this verse for you.) The verse declares that the Jews will be given "*wings of eagles*" to "*flee to the mountains*" from Satan and his the antichrist. The verse also says that God will nourish and protect them for a time and times and a half a time (which is 3 /12 years... the exact time of second half of the Tribulation... after antichrist enters the Temple and declares himself to be god.)

Jesus warned to flee and Revelation say God will help them flee (giving them wings of eagles) and will provide them with food... shelter... and protection. This is our God bring His people to the realization that Jesus IS the Messiah!

Jesus' Olivet Discourse (His warning and signs) all fits perfectly with each of the other prophecies in Scripture. There is a lot we can know about what is about to happen.

These are exciting days that we live in. Jesus is coming soon! ... Are you ready? ... Do you know this God of tremendous grace and mercy? Give your life to Him today – and let Him rescue you from the coming wrath.