

Temporal Versus Eternal?

Living in a Woke World While Maintaining Our Kingdom Objectives

Messianic Teacher John McKee, M.A.

I know many sincere Believers who absolutely obsess over what is happening in the world. They spend a great deal of their free time focusing on the following matters: **C, E, V, and T**.¹ If you have at all been paying attention to the events of the past several years, then you know exactly what these are. We have seen many predictions and (prophetic) words come and go. We have seen some positive things take place, such as the reversal of *Roe v. Wade*. But C, E, V, and T ultimately concern temporal matters of this world. Far too many people are looking for answers in contemporary political figures like Mr. T or Mr. D or someone else. Perhaps some good will come, but it is also possible that things will not work out the way many anticipate. *American freedom is something worth fighting for*, but it is something which is ultimately temporal, and it will pass away. Our leaders, no matter who they are, are ultimately regarded by Scripture as being powers of this age (1 Corinthians 2:8).

Why are so many contemporary Believers looking to the present order to answer their pleas? Many rightfully want their freedom of speech to be preserved, so that they can continue to declare the good news unimpeded. **They want there to be one final “chance” to declare the gospel to the world, and think that such a freedom will allow for this.** This would be a good thing, but it is also idealistic. The First Century Believers in the Messiah of Israel were all technically “legal,” being a part of Second Temple Judaism and hence exempt from Caesar worship. But they were all still frequently harassed by religious and political authorities. Many in the West, because of the freedoms and religious liberties we have enjoyed—have often forgotten that the good news *thrives when it is under threat*, when people are forced to turn to a Higher Power for answers, and let the Holy Spirit move in unconventional ways.

Let us assume, though, that the things which many of our dear brothers and sisters are praying and working for, actually do come to pass. Victories of obvious good over obvious evil. **The last minute overtime, extra-innings win takes place.** Then what happens? Has anyone even thought that far out? You get what you have been praying and hoping for! What are you doing to do with it? You actually have the resolution you wanted to V, E, C, and T. You have a libertarian society, where your religious freedoms remain intact, provided you do not advocate violence against another group. You can say what you need to, in order to adequately declare the good news.

The long term social and religious challenges—which V, E, C, and T distracted many people from—**have still not gone away.** There are four much scarier and terrifying words, which each of us needs to pay severe attention to: **Woke, Deconstructing, Ex-vangelical, and Affirming:**

1. **Woke:** this largely represents people who have been awakened to the apparent, negative truth of conservative, Judeo-Protestant influences on Western culture, our work and education ethic, economic system, and gross (male) injustices. What labels itself “woke,” is a hyper-liberal and progressive movement, co-opting Biblical language of redeemed human beings coming out of sinful darkness and into God’s light (cf. Ephesians 5:14). People are being awakened to a Leftist world which conservative political and religious systems purposefully hid from them,

¹ COVID-19, Election 2020, Vaccine, Trump.

which treated the Bible as somehow being Divine, when it really is to be treated as a human book subject to significant error.

2. **Deconstructing:** largely advocates that all of the previous European-American influences have to be separated out and decompiled, taking into consideration a wider array of voices and perspectives which were purposefully silenced. The idea is that what has been presented as Messiah faith, is not something rooted in the example of Yeshua (His care for the poor and dismissed of society), but instead that the Western Jesus is a capitalist Jesus of empire/colonialism (perhaps with the State of Israel being a dangerous byproduct).
3. **Ex-vangelical:** has widely concluded that one of the most negative influences on the contemporary West has been conservative, evangelical Protestantism. Evangelicalism has been too rigid in its approaches to Biblical literalism and inerrancy. “Evangelicalism” is really perceived as just being code for “male control” and a dismissal of women and homosexuals in the community of faith. This further extends to how evangelicalism has conflated itself with the politics of the Republican party. Post-evangelicals or ex-vangelicals need to stress and embrace the perspective of theological progressives.
4. **Affirming:** stresses that God made people the way that they are, whether that is straight or LGBTQ+. Heterosexual evangelicalism has wrongly interpreted Bible passages describing same-sex intercourse, as general prohibitions, rather than specific contextual prohibitions against pederasty or homosexual rape (i.e., Leviticus 18:22). Committed same-sex relationships are not in view in Romans 1:26-27 or 1 Corinthians 6:9. The faith community has a responsibility to *affirm* whatever sexual or gender identities a person is believed to have been given to them by God, as love is love.²

Is evangelical Protestantism soon going to be an endangered species? As a Messianic community, evangelicalism constitutes a great deal of the spiritual and material support for Jewish ministry, as well as being a longstanding ally of the State of Israel. How will the coming social changes alter future matters? For our own purposes, without question, we need to recognize how much of the Jewish community we are to reach out toward, with the good news of Yeshua—is probably going to sit to the Left of those who are becoming ex-vangelical.

These short points are actually a great deal for many of us to consider and process, especially as we look at the various spheres of influences where God has placed us. We are looking at the very real possibility of tens of millions of people, in the not-too-distant future, throwing away their Bibles as a collection of myths and fairy tales. But we should not beat ourselves up, if all of this largely caught us by surprise. Many of us have been focused more on short term challenges, rather than long term matters. We were focused on temporary issues regarding the present state of the world, and those who are/were in power. **We have to refocus our attention onto the eternal matters regarding our fellow human beings, and where they stand before their Creator.** Let God give us the heart, and the reasoning capacity, to work through these challenges for the future!

² If necessary, consult the perspectives offered in David P. Gushee, *After Evangelicalism: The Path to a New Christianity* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2020).