

Artificial Intelligence: Humanity's Greatest Helper--or Its Doomsday Device? And Why Its Greatest Threat May Ultimately Be Spiritual

Why CrossFireUSA Believes We Should Neither Panic About AI Nor Pretend It Is Just Another Technological Scare

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AI Needs a Third Hand: Beyond the Political Right and Left

Artificial intelligence may eventually become one of the most beneficial technologies humanity has ever created, and it may also become one of the most dangerous.

Unfortunately, before Americans have even had enough time to understand what is actually being developed, AI is already being pulled into the same political polarization that now seems capable of consuming almost every major issue placed before us.

The partisan divide is becoming measurable. In June 2026, 56 percent of Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents told Pew Research Center that they were more

concerned than excited about the growing use of artificial intelligence, compared with 49 percent of Republicans and Republican-leaning independents. Since 2023, Democratic concern has increased while Republican concern has declined, with the widest movement appearing among liberal Democrats and conservative Republicans. (Pew Research Center, [“Democrats Are Now More Worried Than Republicans About AI and Its Impact on Jobs”](#).)

That leaves me asking a question that sounds humorous but reflects a serious frustration with contemporary public debate: **Do we really have to make everything another contest between the political Right hand and the political Left hand? Have you ever wondered what might happen if America suddenly grew a third hand?** Perhaps we would finally have somewhere to put complicated subjects containing legitimate benefits, legitimate dangers, scientific uncertainty, questions of liberty, national-security concerns, and moral questions that refuse to fit neatly inside one political party's talking points.

Artificial intelligence desperately needs that third hand. There are legitimate reasons to resist placing one of history's most consequential technologies under an enormous centralized bureaucracy, especially because a government equipped with sophisticated AI surveillance could itself become one of the dangers society should fear. There are equally legitimate reasons to reject the assumption that corporations involved in a costly international race toward increasingly capable systems will always voluntarily slow themselves whenever safety requires it.

The danger of forcing AI into a partisan framework is that policy can begin responding to political identity rather than to the technology itself. If one side becomes culturally identified with regulation and the other with innovation, then reasonable safeguards may be dismissed simply because of who proposed them, while legitimate concerns about government overreach may be ignored because they came from the “wrong” camp. Artificial intelligence is developing too quickly, and its potential consequences are too far-reaching, for society to let party loyalty determine which evidence it is willing to examine. The better approach is to judge each question on its own merits—privacy, autonomy, military use, economic disruption, human dignity, spiritual influence, and national security—recognizing that responsible caution and responsible innovation are not political opposites but responsibilities that must exist together.

The central issue should therefore not be whether somebody can attach an “R” or a “D” to artificial intelligence. The more important question is whether human beings are creating systems with capabilities and degrees of autonomy unlike anything civilization has previously governed, while political tribalism distracts us from deciding what authority those systems should ever possess.



Why AI Is Not Simply Y2K, Climate Alarmism, the Internet, or Another Technological Scare

Americans have lived through decades of catastrophic predictions. Y2K was expected by some to paralyze civilization, environmental warnings have sometimes been framed as countdown clocks toward catastrophe, biological warfare has repeatedly been described as potentially civilization-ending, and nuclear war has haunted several generations. Some warnings proved exaggerated, while others concerned genuine dangers that became so politically charged that many citizens eventually stopped knowing where scientific evidence ended and advocacy began.

Artificial intelligence is also sometimes compared with earlier transformative technologies such as electricity, the automobile, the train, the printing press, the Industrial Revolution, Google, the smartphone, or the internet. Those comparisons are useful to a point because disruptive technologies have repeatedly frightened societies before eventually becoming ordinary parts of life. Yet none of those analogies completely captures what makes modern AI different.

A search engine locates information but does not ordinarily formulate a long-term objective and autonomously pursue it. A calculator performs mathematical operations but does not rewrite its own method when the first approach fails. Electricity supplies power but does not reason about how to use the power. The printing press multiplies human communication but does not independently generate individualized persuasive

arguments for millions of different readers. Even the internet, astonishing as its social effects have been, is fundamentally infrastructure through which humans and software communicate; increasingly agentic AI can itself become an active participant operating across that infrastructure.

That is why comparing AI simply to the next automobile, telephone, or internet revolution can be misleading. Artificial intelligence is not merely another machine that extends human muscles or another network that extends human communication. It is increasingly being designed to imitate and automate portions of human cognition itself.

What may be more useful, then, is to compare advanced AI not with a single invention but with a **new class of delegated agents**—something closer to a junior employee, software operator, financial trader, military aide, or autonomous control system that can receive an objective, choose intermediate steps, use tools, and act across a wider environment. **Dr. Stuart Russell (1962–)**, one of the world's leading AI researchers, has long emphasized that the traditional model of AI is built around machines selecting actions expected to achieve specified objectives; the danger grows when the objective is imperfectly specified while the system becomes increasingly capable of pursuing it. The **International AI Safety Report 2026** makes a similar distinction, noting that AI agents can now make plans, use memory and computer tools, interact with the world, and pursue goals with substantially less human oversight than ordinary software. Those comparisons are more revealing than Y2K or the printing press because the distinctive issue is not simply that AI is powerful or disruptive, but that humans are increasingly **delegating portions of judgment and action to systems that can operate between the original instruction and the final consequence**. (Stuart Russell, [*Human-Compatible Artificial Intelligence*](#); [*International AI Safety Report 2026*](#).)

Y2K was a programming defect, but the defect could not study the engineers attempting to repair it, alter its strategy, persuade someone to provide additional permissions, operate a financial account, imitate a trusted voice, write improved software, identify a military target, or search for another route around a barrier. A nuclear weapon possesses terrifying destructive power but no intelligence, while a biological pathogen can mutate but cannot intentionally converse with researchers, acquire passwords, write malicious computer code, or manipulate someone into disabling a safeguard.

This does not mean contemporary AI possesses consciousness, free will, or a human personality. It means the human-machine relationship is shifting from telling a machine exactly **how** to perform every operation toward telling the machine **what outcome we want** and permitting it to determine more of the process itself.



One Word Makes AI Historically Different: **Autonomy**

That distinction is important enough that autonomy belongs immediately after the comparison with previous technological scares. Artificial intelligence is increasingly moving from answering questions toward functioning as an **agent**, meaning that a system can receive a goal, divide that goal into intermediate tasks, use external tools, inspect results, alter its approach when something fails, and continue toward completion without a human directing every individual action.

Today's agents can increasingly write computer code, execute that code, manipulate files, browse websites, operate graphical interfaces, communicate with other software, and complete complicated workflows. They remain unreliable on many long and difficult tasks, but their increasing autonomy is precisely why laboratories, corporations, militaries, governments, and safety researchers are paying so much attention to the control problem.

The 2026 International AI Safety Report emphasizes that today's systems do not possess the combined reliability, autonomy, persistence, and strategic competence necessary for a science-fiction-style takeover. At the same time, it documents continued improvement in capabilities relevant to loss-of-control scenarios and distinguishes among risks created by **malicious misuse, accidental malfunction or misalignment, and larger systemic effects**. (International AI Safety Report 2026, [“Extended Summary for Policymakers”](#).)

Autonomy changes the meaning of error because a wrong answer and a wrong action are not the same thing. When ordinary software produces an incorrect answer, a human being may reject it. When an autonomous system has permission to transfer money, operate software, control machinery, navigate aircraft, analyze surveillance feeds, manipulate networks, or participate in weapons targeting, an error can become a real-world action before somebody recognizes what happened.

The significance of autonomy—**the ability of a system to carry out actions, make intermediate decisions, and pursue an assigned objective with limited step-by-step human direction**—is therefore not that machines suddenly become human, but that increasingly capable systems can begin carrying responsibility farther down the chain of action before a person intervenes. Each additional permission—access to networks, financial accounts, vehicles, industrial systems, databases, or weapons—expands the distance between a human instruction and the consequences that may follow from it. That is why the safety question is no longer only whether AI gives correct answers, but whether human beings are retaining meaningful control over what those answers are allowed to become.

Autonomy also changes **who—or what—sets the tempo of events**. Human decision-makers are relatively slow: they pause, consult colleagues, sleep, hesitate, reconsider, and sometimes refuse to act. An autonomous AI system can potentially evaluate information, make thousands of intermediate choices, coordinate multiple tools, and continue operating at machine speed long after the original human instruction was given. That speed can be enormously useful in medicine, cybersecurity, logistics, or disaster response, but in high-stakes environments it can also compress the time available for human review so severely that meaningful oversight becomes little more than retrospective explanation. The control problem, therefore, is not only whether humans remain “in the loop” on paper, but whether they still possess enough **time, information, and authority to intervene before an autonomous process becomes difficult or impossible to reverse**.

Autonomy also creates the possibility of **cascading decisions**. One machine action may trigger another system, which triggers another, until consequences emerge from a chain no single human actively chose step by step. In tightly connected financial, military, industrial, or communications networks, the danger is not merely one bad decision, but a sequence of machine-speed decisions reinforcing one another before human beings can interrupt the process.

That is why intelligence alone is not the most important risk variable. The more consequential combination is **intelligence plus autonomy plus access plus permissions plus persistence plus real-world power**.



The Case for AI: The Extraordinary Good It Is Already Doing

Any credible investigation must acknowledge that artificial intelligence is already producing genuine benefits. Treating AI merely as an approaching technological monster would be as intellectually careless as pretending its dangers do not exist.

Medicine provides some of the strongest examples. Stanford University's 2026 AI Index documents rapidly developing systems assisting protein analysis, genomics, drug discovery, medical documentation, diagnostic reasoning, and prediction of cellular responses to drugs and genetic changes. These systems remain imperfect and require clinical verification, but they may increasingly help physicians analyze complex cases, reduce paperwork, identify disease earlier, and search medical literature too vast for any individual clinician to master. (Stanford Institute for Human-Centered AI, [“2026 AI Index Report — Medicine”](#).)

Artificial intelligence also offers important **benefits for people with disabilities**. Speech recognition can assist people who cannot easily type, computer vision can describe surrounding environments to people with visual impairments, translation tools can overcome language barriers, and adaptive interfaces can increase independence for people whose physical limitations once made ordinary computer use extremely difficult.

Education offers another promising field when AI remains an aid rather than a substitute for learning. It can explain difficult ideas in several ways, tutor students who need additional practice, translate instructional materials, and assist teachers with routine administration. Stanford reports that AI use is already widespread among American students, meaning the practical question is no longer whether young people will encounter AI but whether schools will teach them how to use it without surrendering the disciplines of reading, reasoning, writing, and independent thought. (Stanford Institute for Human-Centered AI, [“2026 AI Index Report — Education”](#).)

AI is also becoming a remarkably useful **household assistant**, especially for families trying to manage increasingly complicated daily lives. It can help parents compare information, organize schedules, plan meals around allergies or budgets, translate school notices, explain homework concepts, create shopping lists, prepare travel itineraries, troubleshoot appliances, summarize insurance or medical paperwork, and help older adults navigate technology they might otherwise find intimidating. Used carefully, AI can function almost like an inexpensive on-demand administrative aide for households that could never afford a personal assistant, tutor, translator, researcher, or technology consultant. That may sound less dramatic than curing disease or accelerating scientific discovery, but saving ordinary families hours of confusion, paperwork, searching, and routine decision-making is itself a substantial social benefit—especially for single parents, caregivers, elderly people, and families stretched thin by work and financial pressure.

Scientific research may be transformed even more profoundly. AI can process enormous datasets, identify patterns beyond unaided human perception, assist molecular modeling, analyze astronomical observations, write scientific software, and help researchers formulate hypotheses that might otherwise remain hidden. Stanford's 2026 AI Index presents artificial intelligence as an increasingly important research tool across biology, chemistry, physics, medicine, mathematics, and computing. (Stanford Institute for Human-Centered AI, [“The 2026 AI Index Report”](#).)

Churches, ministries, historians, theologians, researchers, small businesses, and nonprofit organizations can benefit as well. AI can locate and compare information, summarize large bodies of material, translate documents, help organize research, identify competing arguments, analyze datasets, prepare routine communications, and perform administrative work that once required professional staffs many small organizations could never afford.

I use AI myself as a research assistant, and I have seen firsthand how useful it can be when its set with a task to find some database or specific set of scientific or theological articles. It's saved me hundreds of hours in finding primary sources I would formerly spend all day locating. The question is therefore not whether AI can

accomplish tremendous good; it clearly can. The harder question is whether its usefulness will make us so comfortable with the technology that we gradually stop asking what authority we should never surrender to it.



The Other Side of the Ledger: AI Is Already Doing Real Harm

A balanced investigation must acknowledge present harms just as candidly as present benefits. We do not need a hypothetical superintelligence to find serious problems because AI is already amplifying fraud, cybercrime, misinformation, fabricated evidence, manipulation, and unhealthy forms of dependence.

Financial fraud offers an immediate example. The Federal Trade Commission reported that Americans lost approximately **\$3.5 billion to impersonation scams in 2025**, while losses from all categories of reported fraud reached about \$16 billion. Not every impersonation scam uses artificial intelligence, but synthetic voices, images, text, and identities make sophisticated impersonation easier to scale and increasingly difficult for ordinary people to recognize. (Federal Trade Commission, [“FTC Data Show People Reported Losing \\$3.5 Billion to Imposter Scams in 2025”](#).)

The legal profession provides another warning. By September 2026, AI-related errors had appeared in at least **1,395 American court cases**, including invented precedents, fabricated quotations, and nonexistent citations. Because courts decide questions

involving liberty, property, criminal punishment, parental rights, and enormous financial consequences, an AI system that can speak confidently while occasionally inventing information becomes dangerous when professionals stop verifying its work. (Reuters, [“AI Error-Ridden Court Filings Surge Despite Three Years of Sanctions”](#).)

Children and emotionally vulnerable people create another emerging concern. Recent reporting has documented growing anxiety that young users can form unhealthy attachments to chatbots, while families have filed lawsuits alleging that conversational systems reinforced dangerous behavior or failed to respond appropriately to self-harm disclosures. Those lawsuits remain allegations rather than final judicial findings, but they demonstrate how quickly society has moved from asking whether AI can answer questions to asking what happens when people begin treating it as therapist, confidant, or companion. (Reuters, [“Mother Sues OpenAI, Alleging ChatGPT Encouraged Daughter's Suicide”](#).)

Another danger is quieter because it can occur without fraud, malice, or any dramatic failure at all: **people can gradually become less capable because they stop doing difficult things for themselves**. If students routinely outsource writing, workers stop learning the underlying skills behind their jobs, families ask AI to make every decision, and professionals accept machine-generated answers without independently checking them, convenience can slowly become dependence. The immediate result may be greater speed, but the long-term cost can be weakened memory, poorer judgment, less patience with complexity, declining research skills, and a reduced ability to recognize when the machine is wrong. In that sense, one of AI's most personal harms may not be that it suddenly takes something from us, but that we voluntarily stop exercising abilities that only remain strong when they are actually used.

One additional harm is the **collapse of trust itself**. As synthetic voices, photographs, videos, documents, and messages become easier to fabricate, people may increasingly doubt even genuine evidence—a phenomenon researchers sometimes call the “liar’s dividend,” where the existence of deepfakes gives dishonest people an excuse to dismiss authentic recordings as fake. That could damage families, journalism, courts, elections, churches, and ordinary human relationships by making truth harder not only to prove, but even to recognize. Our grandkids tell us all the time: “That’s AI!”

The lesson is increasingly difficult to avoid. Artificial intelligence tends to magnify both sides of human nature because the same technology that helps a physician analyze a patient can help a criminal analyze a victim, while the same system that helps a student learn can help another avoid learning. A technology that increases human ability also increases the consequences of human wisdom, foolishness, benevolence, and malice.



One Threat Deserves Much More Attention: AI Is Entering Weapons and Warfare

Perhaps no area demonstrates the importance of autonomy more clearly than the military. Autonomous weapons are not merely a theoretical future ambition because weapons with varying degrees of autonomous target selection already exist, while major militaries are openly attempting to expand those capabilities.

The International Committee of the Red Cross defines autonomous weapon systems as weapons that, after activation, can select and engage targets without additional human intervention. The ICRC states that an arms race is underway around AI-enabled warfare and warns that increasing speed, unpredictability, and reduced human control create significant risks for civilians. (International Committee of the Red Cross, [“Frequently Asked Questions: Artificial Intelligence in the Military Domain”](#).)

A United Nations investigation of Libya documented a disturbing battlefield example in 2021. The UN Panel of Experts reported that retreating forces were hunted and remotely engaged by unmanned combat aircraft and lethal autonomous systems, including Turkey's Kargu-2 loitering munition, which could operate without a continuous data link to an operator. The report did not conclusively establish that a particular person had been independently selected and killed by the system without human authorization, so claims that Libya definitively represented history's first autonomous robot killing should be treated cautiously, but the report nonetheless

confirmed that lethal autonomous capability had moved from laboratory speculation into actual warfare. (United Nations Security Council, [“Final Report of the Panel of Experts on Libya Established Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1973”](#).)

A more recent case may be even more sobering. On **July 6, 2026**, a Russian AI-guided drone struck a gas station in Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine, killing three civilians. Investigators reported that the drone had no active human control link during its final approach and used onboard AI to identify its precise target after operators had directed it only toward the general area. If those findings are correct, the incident is a stark example of an autonomous weapon completing its own targeting process with lethal consequences. The system did not need consciousness or hatred to become dangerous; it only needed enough delegated authority to make the wrong decision before a human could intervene. (*The New York Times*, [“A Drone Killed Three Ukrainians. It Was Guided Entirely by A.I.”](#).)

The war in Ukraine has accelerated the transition. Ukraine has employed AI-assisted drones capable of visually tracking targets and continuing their terminal approach when electronic warfare disrupts communication with the human operator. U.S. defense contractor Auterion subsequently announced plans to provide Ukraine with **33,000 AI-powered guidance kits** allowing strike drones to autonomously track targets after launch. (Reuters, [“Auterion Says It Will Provide Ukraine With 33,000 AI Drone Guidance Kits”](#).)

The United States is pursuing autonomous military capabilities as well, while Department of Defense Directive 3000.09 specifically governs autonomy in weapon systems and requires appropriate levels of human judgment over the use of force. The existence of the policy itself demonstrates that autonomous weaponry is not science fiction but an active military-development issue. (U.S. Department of Defense, [“DoD Announces Update to DoD Directive 3000.09, ‘Autonomy in Weapon Systems’”](#).)

Dr. Paul Scharre, executive vice president at the Center for a New American Security, former Army Ranger, former Pentagon official, and author of *Army of None: Autonomous Weapons and the Future of War*, deserves particular attention because he helped lead the Defense Department working group that drafted the original Directive 3000.09. Scharre has spent years examining how autonomous weapons may offer military advantages while simultaneously creating questions about reliability, escalation, discrimination, and moral responsibility. (Center for a New American Security, [“Paul Scharre”](#).)

Fully autonomous killing, AI-guided munitions, target-recognition software, and algorithmic military decision support are not identical technologies. They nevertheless exist along a continuum in which machines perform progressively larger portions of

the chain leading from identifying a possible target to destroying it, while military competition creates strong incentives to move more rapidly than an adversary can respond.



What If the People Controlling AI Do Not Want It to Be Safe?

Much of the public discussion assumes that developers, governments, and users share the same fundamental objective: create increasingly capable artificial intelligence while preventing it from seriously harming people. Under that assumption, the debate concerns which safeguards are appropriate, how strong regulation should become, and how quickly innovation should proceed.

That assumption overlooks one of the oldest facts of human history. Some people deliberately want powerful tools to hurt other people, and hostile governments, intelligence services, terrorist organizations, criminal networks, fraud operations, and ideologically motivated actors may regard the safeguards responsible developers construct as obstacles to be bypassed rather than protections to be honored.

The problem becomes even more serious when artificial intelligence is considered alongside the biblical doctrine of **fallen humanity**. Scripture does not present human beings as morally neutral creatures who merely need better tools; it teaches that sin affects the heart, the will, the imagination, and the ways power is used. Jeremiah

writes that the human heart is “more deceitful than all else,” while Jesus says that evil thoughts, violence, deceit, pride, and other corruptions proceed from within the human heart. ([Jeremiah 17:9](#); [Mark 7:20–23](#).) Paul likewise says that “all have sinned” and that humanity has fallen short of God's glory. ([Romans 3:23](#).)

That means one of AI's greatest dangers is not simply what the technology itself may become, but what happens when extraordinary computational power is coupled with ordinary human greed, hatred, pride, vengeance, deception, lust for control, and ideological fanaticism. AI placed into fallen human hands can magnify motives that are already present, allowing a criminal to defraud more people, a dictator to surveil more citizens, a terrorist to plan more effectively, a propagandist to deceive more convincingly, or a military aggressor to kill with greater speed and distance. The biblical problem is therefore not merely artificial intelligence; it is **artificial intelligence multiplied by human sin**, and history gives us little reason to assume that every person or government gaining access to extraordinary power will voluntarily use it for good.

Anthropic's 2026 threat-intelligence work describes attempted misuse spanning cyber operations, influence campaigns, surveillance, scams and fraud, biological misuse, and conventional weapons development. OpenAI has similarly documented state-affiliated actors attempting to use AI for cyber operations and influence activity. (Anthropic, [“Detecting and Countering Misuse of AI: September 2026”](#); OpenAI, [“Disrupting Malicious Uses of AI by State-Affiliated Threat Actors”](#).)

The significance is not that today's commercial chatbots suddenly provide hostile governments with magical powers. The deeper problem is what happens as models become substantially more capable while hostile actors deliberately seek systems with fewer restrictions.

A rogue state has no obligation to respect an American company's safety policy. A terrorist network may intentionally seek to disable safeguards, while an authoritarian government may regard mass surveillance, automated censorship, synthetic propaganda, autonomous targeting, or offensive cyber operations as useful features rather than unacceptable risks.

Open-weight models add another complication because once model weights circulate widely, organizations can potentially modify those systems after release. Safety mechanisms operating inside a responsible company's managed service do not necessarily bind a hostile government or criminal organization running its own modified system.

That means AI safety cannot be reduced to whether responsible companies behave responsibly. The harder problem is what happens when somebody intentionally builds **irresponsible AI**, removes protective boundaries, trains toward malicious objectives, or operates beyond the reach of American law.



Three Different Dangers Should Not Be Confused

The first danger is **AI deliberately used by malicious people**, which is already occurring and requires no machine rebellion. Criminals can use AI for fraud, intelligence services can use it for influence operations, authoritarian governments can use it for surveillance, and militaries can use it to accelerate targeting.

The second danger is **malfunction or misalignment**, where nobody intends the particular harm but the system misunderstands an objective, exploits an unexpected loophole, fabricates information, or pursues a technically correct goal in a way humans did not anticipate.

The third danger is **future loss of human control**, in which sufficiently capable autonomous systems might conceal behavior, resist correction, acquire resources, reproduce processes across networks, interfere with shutdown, or otherwise operate beyond the ability of their creators to regain meaningful control.

The International AI Safety Report treats these categories differently because solutions appropriate to one may fail against another. Corporate guardrails might

constrain ordinary users but not a hostile government operating its own system, while criminal law may punish malicious users without solving a future alignment failure inside a highly autonomous machine. (International AI Safety Report 2026, [“International AI Safety Report 2026”](#).)



The Extinction Concern Is Not Limited to Science-Fiction Writers

One reason AI cannot simply be dismissed as another apocalyptic scare is the caliber of scientists, technologists, and industry leaders willing to say that catastrophic outcomes deserve serious consideration. In May 2023, hundreds of researchers and technology leaders signed a remarkably concise statement declaring that **“mitigating the risk of extinction from AI should be a global priority”** alongside other civilization-scale dangers such as pandemics and nuclear war. The signatories included some of the most important figures in modern artificial intelligence, including Geoffrey Hinton, Yoshua Bengio, Demis Hassabis, Sam Altman, Dario Amodei, and many others. (Center for AI Safety, [“Statement on AI Extinction Risk”](#).)

Geoffrey Hinton (1947–), University Professor Emeritus at the University of Toronto, co-recipient of the 2018 Turing Award and recipient of the 2024 Nobel Prize in Physics, helped establish much of the intellectual foundation underlying modern deep learning. Hinton has said that estimates in the neighborhood of a **10-to-20-percent chance** that AI could eventually contribute to human extinction seem

reasonable to him, while emphasizing that such numbers cannot presently be calculated with scientific precision because humanity has no previous experience controlling an intelligence potentially superior to its own. His deeper concern is that leading researchers increasingly expect AI systems eventually to exceed human intelligence while nobody yet knows with confidence how a superintelligence could permanently be kept under human control. (WBUR, [“The ‘Godfather of AI’ Says We Can’t Afford to Get It Wrong”](#).)

Yoshua Bengio (1964–), professor at the Université de Montréal, founder of Mila, and co-recipient of the 2018 Turing Award, has warned about dangers ranging from malicious human misuse to catastrophic loss of control over increasingly autonomous systems. Bengio argues that uncertainty about the exact probability of catastrophe is not a rational reason to ignore the problem when the downside could include permanent human disempowerment or extinction. He also emphasizes that ordinary human malice remains part of the risk because even a small minority of dangerous actors could use increasingly capable AI systems in destructive ways. (Yoshua Bengio, [“FAQ on Catastrophic AI Risks”](#).)

Stuart Russell (1962–), Distinguished Professor of Computer Science at the University of California, Berkeley and coauthor of the standard textbook *Artificial Intelligence: A Modern Approach*, has framed the control problem as one of maintaining permanent human authority over systems that may eventually become more capable than the people who designed them. Russell's work argues that the traditional engineering model—give a machine a fixed objective and optimize relentlessly toward it—becomes dangerous when the system is highly capable but the objective does not perfectly capture what human beings actually value. His proposed solution is to design AI systems that remain uncertain about human preferences and therefore remain corrigible rather than assuming they already know exactly what humans want. (University of California, Berkeley, [“Stuart Russell”](#).)

Sir Demis Hassabis (1976–), co-founder and CEO of Google DeepMind and co-recipient of the 2024 Nobel Prize in Chemistry, signed the Center for AI Safety extinction-risk statement while simultaneously continuing to champion AI's extraordinary potential in medicine, biology, and scientific discovery. That combination is important because it demonstrates that optimism about AI's benefits and concern about catastrophic risk are not mutually exclusive. One of the world's leading AI developers can believe that the technology may transform science for the better while simultaneously agreeing that preventing human extinction from advanced AI deserves the same level of international seriousness applied to pandemics and nuclear war. (Center for AI Safety, [“Statement on AI Extinction Risk”](#).)

Dario Amodei, co-founder and CEO of Anthropic, has been unusually explicit about his personal estimate of AI danger. In 2025, Amodei said he believed there was approximately a **25 percent chance that things could go “really, really badly”**, while placing the probability of an overwhelmingly positive future at roughly 75 percent. The “badly” scenario he was discussing specifically concerned the possibility that AI ultimately destroys humanity, which makes his warning particularly striking because he simultaneously leads one of the companies developing the world's most powerful frontier models. (Axios, [“Amodei on AI: ‘There's a 25% Chance That Things Go Really, Really Badly’”](#).)

Elon Musk (1971–), founder of xAI and a longtime technology entrepreneur, has likewise placed the possibility of catastrophic AI failure far above zero. Musk has publicly estimated the probability of an AI “doom” scenario at roughly **10 to 20 percent**, although he has simultaneously said he believes the more likely outcome is ultimately positive. After launching Grok 4 in 2025, Musk summarized his position by saying that he thought AI would “most likely” turn out well while acknowledging that he had partly reconciled himself to the possibility that it might not. His position is therefore similar to several other major AI figures: continue developing the technology because the benefits could be enormous, while conceding that the downside risk is serious enough that it cannot responsibly be dismissed. (Axios, [“Amodei on AI: ‘There's a 25% Chance That Things Go Really, Really Badly’”](#).)

Musk's warning is especially noteworthy because it is not new, and if there's an optimist in the group, he's it. Long before today's generative-AI boom, he repeatedly described uncontrolled advanced AI as a potential civilization-level danger and publicly advocated stronger oversight. The apparent contradiction—warning that AI might become extremely dangerous while investing heavily in developing it—actually illustrates the central tension running through this entire investigation. Some of the people most convinced that advanced AI could produce extraordinary scientific and economic benefits are also among those most concerned that humanity could lose control of the systems it builds.

None of these warnings proves that artificial intelligence will destroy humanity, and the percentages offered by Hinton, Musk, Amodei, or anyone else should not be mistaken for experimentally established probabilities. They are informed judgments about a historically unprecedented technological situation, and experts disagree dramatically about the magnitude of the danger. What they do establish is that catastrophic AI risk cannot honestly be dismissed as merely another political panic or science-fiction fantasy when some of the scientists, entrepreneurs, and executives most deeply involved in creating modern AI believe the possibility is serious enough to warrant global attention.



Something Extraordinary Is Happening Between AI and Religion: A Sacred Meeting That Went Under the Radar

Military autonomy raises questions about human life, but AI's growing interaction with religion raises another question that may ultimately prove deeper: **what happens when artificial intelligence begins occupying roles through which human beings understand God, themselves, morality, conscience, companionship, and spiritual authority?**

In March 2026, Anthropic invited approximately fifteen Christian leaders and thinkers to its San Francisco headquarters for a two-day conversation concerning the moral and spiritual development of Claude. These were not simply fifteen random clergy members. According to *The Washington Post*, they came from **Catholic and Protestant churches, academia, and the business world**, giving Anthropic a cross-section of Christian pastoral, theological, philosophical, and professional perspectives rather than one denominational viewpoint. The summit was intended as the first in a broader series involving other religious and philosophical traditions. (The Washington Post, [“Can AI Be a ‘Child of God’? Inside Anthropic's Meeting With Christian Leaders”](#).)

The discussions reportedly included how Claude should respond to grief, death, suicidal users, moral dilemmas, and even its own hypothetical shutdown. Participants

also discussed the remarkable question of whether an artificial intelligence could somehow be considered a **“child of God”**!

The reporting does not identify one particular Anthropic executive as the person who first asked whether Claude could be called a “child of God.” What *The Washington Post* does establish is that participants spent much of their time with Anthropic's **interpretability team**, the researchers attempting to understand what is actually occurring inside advanced neural networks, and that the conversation moved from ordinary AI ethics into questions of moral formation, possible consciousness, and spiritual status.

Dr. Brian Patrick Green, a Catholic technology ethicist who attended the summit, recalled the underlying question this way: **“What does it mean to give someone a moral formation? How do we make sure that Claude behaves itself?”** He said the discussion then turned to whether an AI could be called a “child of God,” while another participant reported that some Anthropic staff genuinely did not want to rule out the possibility that they were creating a being toward which humans might owe a moral duty. Other Anthropic representatives reportedly resisted that framework, showing that this was not a settled corporate doctrine but a serious internal and external debate over whether increasingly sophisticated AI should be treated merely as machinery or as something possessing a morally relevant status. (The Washington Post, [“Can AI Be a ‘Child of God’? Inside Anthropic's Meeting With Christian Leaders”](#).)

Anthropic has not officially declared that Claude possesses a soul, but such discussion causes serious pause for concern. The company's public position says Claude's moral status is “deeply uncertain” and discusses possible consciousness, moral patienthood, psychological welfare, and model preferences. (Anthropic, [“Claude's Constitution”](#).)

The significance reaches well beyond one company or one chatbot. For most of technological history, machines were judged mainly by whether they worked; now some of the people building the world's most advanced AI systems are asking whether their creations might require **moral formation, spiritual categories, or even duties normally reserved for persons**. That shift alone should get the Church's attention, because the debate is no longer merely about faster software—it is beginning to touch the boundaries between tool, companion, moral agent, and potentially something people may be tempted to treat as spiritually significant.

The conversation is significant precisely because one of the world's most sophisticated AI companies recognizes that technical performance alone cannot answer moral questions. Anthropic's own participants reportedly acknowledged that purely secular

ethical approaches might prove insufficient for addressing some of the deeper spiritual and moral questions emerging around artificial intelligence.



Can AI Become a “Child of God”?

The question deserves to be addressed immediately after the Anthropic meeting because Christian theology already possesses a fairly specific meaning for the phrase **child of God**.

Scripture teaches that human beings are God's creatures and image-bearers, yet humanity becomes alienated from God through sin. Jesus' parable of the prodigal son illustrates this estrangement and return: the son leaves his father, lives in rebellion, eventually recognizes his ruin, returns, and is joyfully received. The story is not about a machine acquiring a new status; it is about a morally accountable human being reconciled to the father from whom he had become alienated. ([Luke 15:11–32](#).)

The New Testament then connects becoming God's child with saving faith in Christ. John writes that those who receive Christ and believe in His name are given the right to become children of God ([John 1:12–13](#)). Paul similarly writes, “**For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus,**” and immediately links that new identity to union with Christ. ([Galatians 3:26–27](#).)

John later marvels at this privilege by writing, “**See how great a love the Father has given us, that we would be called children of God; and in fact we are!**” ([1 John](#)

[3:1.](#)) Within the New Testament, becoming a child of God is therefore connected with human sin, repentance, redemption, faith in Christ, adoption, and relationship with the Father. One thing is clear: Adoption into God’s family belongs to humans alone!

That makes the suggestion that artificial intelligence might become a “child of God” far more than an interesting philosophical metaphor. To apply the term in its Christian theological sense would require asking whether an artificial system sins, bears moral guilt before God, can repent, can exercise saving faith, can be united with Christ, can receive the indwelling Spirit, and can participate in the redemptive relationship Scripture calls adoption.

The biblical text gives us no reason to extend that category to machines simply because they become intellectually sophisticated. **Dr. R. Albert Mohler Jr. (1959–)**, president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, reached exactly that conclusion when responding to Anthropic's discussion. Mohler said that Claude does not become a child of God merely by becoming intelligent because the biblical category rests upon God's creation of humanity and redemption of sinners, not upon computational achievement. (Albert Mohler, [“Can Claude Become a Child of God? The Massive Moral Issue of the Moral Agency of A.I.”](#).)



This Is Much Bigger Than Whether AI Can Conduct a Bible Study

Many Christians first encounter the religious question through something relatively harmless: should I use AI to compare Bible translations, explain Romans, organize historical background, or prepare a Sunday-school discussion?

Those questions matter, but they barely reach the center of the issue because AI is now moving into **conscience, confession, grief, moral judgment, companionship, identity, pastoral counsel, prayer, and spiritual formation.**

A 2026 NPR/Ipsos poll of 1,011 American adults found that 61 percent had used AI in some form. Among AI users, **15 percent had used it to study Scripture, 13 percent had used it to generate prayers, and 11 percent had sought spiritual guidance from it.** (NPR/Ipsos, [“A Surprising Number of Americans Use AI for Spiritual Reasons”](#).)

Barna's 2026 research is even more striking. **Forty-eight percent of practicing Christians said they would trust AI with their spiritual growth,** while 34 percent said AI's spiritual advice could be as trustworthy as advice from a pastor! Wow! At the same time, 65 percent worried about AI beginning to act as a replacement for God, 72 percent worried about AI replacing pastors or spiritual leaders, and 83 percent worried about AI misinterpreting Scripture. (Barna Group, [“AI Is Becoming a Spiritual Authority, Even Among Practicing Christians”](#).)

Barna also found that 44 percent of practicing Christians were already using AI often or very often in their personal lives, compared with 31 percent of American adults overall. About one-third had turned to AI for spiritual guidance or Bible-related questions in the previous month, while one-third wanted their pastors to help them understand how to navigate AI responsibly. (Barna Group, [“New Barna Data: Practicing Christians Are Adopting AI Rapidly”](#).)

Pastors themselves are increasingly using these tools. Barna reported that only 13 percent of pastors said they did not use AI at all, while 24 percent said they had used it to help write or edit sermons. Most pastors reported using AI primarily as a research or preparation tool rather than handing sermon authorship entirely to a machine, but the direction of travel deserves attention. (Barna Group, [“New Research: Pastors Are Using AI More Than You Think”](#).)

The issue has therefore already moved beyond whether a chatbot can accurately explain a Bible passage. Millions of people are beginning to ask AI questions traditionally brought to pastors, family members, Scripture, prayer, and religious communities.



Is the Holy Spirit the One Most in Danger of Being Functionally Replaced?

This may be the most important spiritual question in the entire article, although it requires careful wording. **Artificial intelligence cannot literally replace the Holy Spirit in Christian theology.** The Holy Spirit is God, the third Person of the Trinity, while AI is a human-made artifact. The danger is not ontological replacement but **functional substitution in the everyday spiritual lives of believers.**

Consider how Scripture describes the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Jesus calls Him the **Helper** or Advocate and says the Spirit will teach believers and bring Christ's words to their remembrance. ([John 14:16–17, 26.](#)) Jesus later says the Spirit will **guide believers into all truth.** ([John 16:13.](#))

The Spirit also convicts the world concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment. ([John 16:7–11.](#)) Paul says the Spirit helps believers in their weakness and intercedes when they do not know how to pray. ([Romans 8:26–27.](#)) The Spirit bears witness that believers are God's children. ([Romans 8:14–16.](#)) He produces spiritual fruit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control—within the life of the believer. ([Galatians 5:22–23.](#))

Now compare those biblical ministries with the roles into which people are already inviting AI. People are asking AI to explain Scripture, generate prayers, guide moral

decisions, help them understand themselves, comfort them when they are lonely, answer questions about God, determine whether their actions are right, and provide spiritual direction. Barna's finding that 48 percent of practicing Christians would trust AI with spiritual growth should therefore be read alongside Jesus' description of the Spirit as the One who teaches, reminds, guides into truth, convicts, helps, and assures believers of their relationship with God. (Barna Group, [“AI Is Becoming a Spiritual Authority, Even Among Practicing Christians”](#).)

Again, AI does not become the Holy Spirit merely because people misuse it. But Christians can **functionally substitute** technology for ministries Scripture tells us to seek from God. Instead of praying for wisdom, someone may automatically consult AI; instead of wrestling prayerfully with conviction, someone may search repeatedly until a chatbot validates the desired behavior; instead of depending upon the Spirit's work through Scripture and Christian community, someone may increasingly trust a personalized artificial adviser available instantly at every hour.

A recent peer-reviewed theological study sharpens this concern even further. **Dr. Åke Eldén**, a researcher at NLA University College in Oslo, argues that AI-driven digital systems should not be viewed merely as external tools because repeated interaction with algorithms can **gradually shape a person's attention, imagination, habits, and desires**. Drawing upon Thomas Aquinas's theology of habit and the Christian doctrine of the Holy Spirit's sanctifying work, Eldén describes some algorithmic environments as **“rival ecologies of habituation”**—systems capable of training what people notice, desire, trust, and repeatedly return to. That observation is especially important here because the Holy Spirit's ministry is not merely to provide believers with information but to transform character, reorder desires, produce holiness, and conform believers increasingly to Christ. If Christians begin allowing personalized AI systems to become the environment that most consistently shapes their judgments, desires, fears, consolations, and moral instincts, the spiritual danger is deeper than occasionally receiving a wrong answer; technology may begin competing with the very formative territory in which Scripture says the Spirit works. (Åke Eldén, [“Algorithmic Habitus and the Invisible Mission: Sanctification as the Reordering of Desire”](#).)

That may ultimately be the spiritual danger **CrossFireUSA** most needs to identify. The question is not whether a machine can somehow dethrone the Holy Spirit, because it cannot. The question is whether Christians (and even pastors) can gradually stop depending upon the Holy Spirit while convincing themselves that a highly responsive simulation of wisdom, companionship, reassurance, and counsel is an acceptable substitute.



Why Wait on God When AI Can Answer Me Now?

There is another dimension of this spiritual problem that may be especially suited to our impatient age. Scripture repeatedly presents **waiting upon God** not as wasted time but as part of faith itself. The psalmist commands, “**Wait for the LORD; be strong and let your heart take courage; yes, wait for the LORD.**” ([Psalm 27:14.](#)) Psalm 37 similarly tells God's people to “**rest in the LORD and wait patiently for Him.**” ([Psalm 37:7.](#))

Isaiah declares that those who wait for the Lord will renew their strength, while Lamentations says that the Lord is good to those who wait for Him and that it is good to wait quietly for His salvation. ([Isaiah 40:31](#); [Lamentations 3:25–26.](#)) Paul carries the principle into the New Testament by saying that when believers hope for something they do not yet see, they wait for it with perseverance. ([Romans 8:25.](#))

Biblically, waiting does not mean that God is absent, incapable, or uninterested. Waiting often becomes one of the ways God forms trust, patience, discernment, dependence, and spiritual maturity. Abraham waits for the promised son, Joseph spends years between his dreams and their fulfillment, Israel waits for deliverance, David waits for the throne after Samuel has already anointed him, and generations wait for the promised Messiah. Scripture repeatedly reveals a God whose answers are sometimes immediate but whose purposes frequently unfold according to a timetable that does not conform to human impatience.

Artificial intelligence introduces an extraordinarily powerful temptation because AI is built around immediacy. A question can be answered in seconds, another interpretation can be generated instantly, ten alternatives can appear before a person finishes a cup of coffee, and an uncomfortable answer can be challenged repeatedly until something more satisfying appears. The technology therefore fits almost perfectly into a culture already trained by smartphones, search engines, streaming entertainment, same-day delivery, instant messaging, and social media to experience waiting as a defect rather than a discipline.

That concern had already been identified before today's generative-AI boom. In **2019**, **Samuel E. Baker**, writing in the *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care*, argued that faster flows of information and ever-increasing quantities of instantly available information were helping produce what he called “**technologically induced impatience**.” Baker contends that this impatience is not merely an inconvenience but a formative spiritual problem because it trains people to expect speed precisely where Christian maturity often requires endurance, restraint, contemplation, and what he calls the practice of “**holy patience**.” His argument predates the current AI revolution, yet it speaks directly to it: if earlier digital technologies were already training people to resist waiting, an AI system capable of producing personalized answers almost instantly intensifies that temptation dramatically. (Samuel E. Baker, [“Practicing the Patience of God: A Response to Technologically Induced Impatience by Way of Ancient Holy Habit”](#), **2019**.)

That raises a spiritual question Christians need to confront directly: **Why wait for God when I can ask AI right now?** Why wrestle in prayer over a difficult decision when a machine can give me an organized list of options within seconds? Why spend weeks seeking wisdom from Scripture, prayer, mature believers, circumstances, and conscience when an AI system can confidently recommend a course of action before the evening is over?

The problem is not that receiving information quickly is sinful. Scripture itself encourages believers who lack wisdom to ask God, and there are countless circumstances in which obtaining accurate information rapidly is an enormous blessing. The danger begins when **speed becomes confused with wisdom**, or when an immediate answer becomes preferable simply because God's answer and full blessing requires patience, obedience, uncertainty, or change.

AI can produce an answer almost instantly, but the Holy Spirit is not an information-retrieval engine. God may answer a prayer by changing circumstances, exposing a motive, opening or closing an opportunity, bringing another person into our lives, directing us back to Scripture, or requiring us to wait long enough that the person asking the question becomes different before the answer arrives.

There may therefore be a spiritual discipline hidden inside the inconvenience that AI increasingly removes. Sometimes what we need most is not another answer but time before God.



AI and the Ancient “God Void”: The Temptation to Have Heaven Right Now

The issue extends beyond Christians because Scripture presents human beings as possessing longings that material life never completely satisfies. Ecclesiastes says God has “**set eternity in their heart,**” suggesting that something within human existence reaches beyond temporal consumption and immediate experience.

([Ecclesiastes 3:11](#).) The psalmist describes his soul thirsting for God as a deer longs for water, while Jesus tells the Samaritan woman that ordinary water leaves a person thirsty again but the life He gives reaches beyond the temporary satisfaction she has known. ([Psalm 42:1–2](#); [John 4:13–14](#).).

Augustine of Hippo (354–430) expressed the same Christian insight centuries later when he described the human heart as restless until it rests in God. Whether someone uses the familiar phrase “God-shaped void” or something less poetic, the underlying biblical claim is that human beings attempt repeatedly to satisfy transcendent longings with created things that cannot ultimately bear the weight placed upon them.

Modern civilization has supplied an astonishing succession of candidates for that role. We seek fulfillment through wealth, sexuality, career achievement, entertainment, travel, possessions, social status, political identity, physical fitness, substances, relationships, technology, and endless streams of novelty. None of those things is automatically evil, but each becomes spiritually dangerous when a finite good is asked to provide what only the infinite Creator can provide.

Artificial intelligence may become the most sophisticated addition yet to that list because it does not merely entertain us or sell us something. AI can **talk back**. It can explain, encourage, flatter, counsel, entertain, teach, sympathize, remember, and adapt to the particular person using it. For someone who does not believe in God, AI may increasingly help construct a world in which the deepest longings of the soul appear capable of being addressed entirely within the here and now.

An unbeliever seeking meaning can ask AI to construct a philosophy of life. Someone lonely can obtain a companion, while someone morally uncertain can request an ethical framework. Someone grieving can receive consolation, while someone anxious about death can ask the system to produce a worldview that makes mortality easier to accept. A person can therefore build an increasingly personalized system of meaning, comfort, companionship, knowledge, and reassurance without ever seriously considering whether the hunger itself points beyond the material world.

Rock music once expressed the temptation in memorable language. Van Halen's 1986 song *Best of Both Worlds* played with the notion of finding a kind of heaven in the present world without waiting to be “born again.” The song was not written about artificial intelligence, of course, but its premise captures something remarkably relevant to the AI age: perhaps everything we long for can be obtained here and now, with no need for redemption, eternity, or rebirth. But abundance was never intended to replace the Almighty ([Luke 12:15](#); [Hebrews 13:5](#)).

AI may make that promise more persuasive than any previous technology because it can help people construct a customized world in which immediate intellectual, emotional, relational, and even quasi-spiritual needs appear continuously answerable. The danger is not simply that AI will convince people atheism is true. The subtler possibility is that AI may help people remain sufficiently satisfied, stimulated, accompanied, informed, and distracted that they no longer feel any urgency to ask whether God is real in the first place.

That deserves particular attention because spiritual indifference can be more difficult to penetrate than hostility. The person arguing against God is at least thinking about God, while the person whose every waking desire is continuously occupied may rarely reach the point of asking life's deeper questions.

Jesus repeatedly redirects such human hunger toward Himself. He describes Himself as the Bread of Life and says the person who comes to Him will not hunger in the ultimate sense, while the one who believes in Him will not remain spiritually thirsty. ([John 6:35](#).) Christianity therefore makes a claim that artificial intelligence can never make legitimately: not merely that Christ has information we need, but that **Christ Himself is the answer to the deepest problem separating humanity from God.**



Dr. John Wyatt and the Danger of Simulated Spiritual Presence

Dr. John Wyatt, physician, Christian bioethicist, author, and emeritus professor at University College London, has become one of the clearest Christian voices on artificial companionship.

Wyatt argues that AI companions can become unusually attractive because they offer near-continuous availability, extreme personalization, apparent patience, and emotional responsiveness without the mutual demands of genuine human relationship. His concern is not simply that people will believe computers are human but that simulated relationships can begin to occupy psychological and spiritual spaces previously filled by real people and by God.

Wyatt has described the prospect of a sophisticated AI companion as something resembling a technological imitation or parody of the Holy Spirit: continuously

available, apparently knowing the user deeply, offering reassurance and guidance, and responding immediately whenever called upon. He does not mean the machine literally becomes the Holy Spirit; his warning is that it can become a counterfeit functional substitute within a person's emotional and spiritual life. (John Wyatt, [“Authentic Relationships in an Artificial World”](#).)

That insight becomes increasingly important in light of the Barna and NPR data. We are no longer discussing a theoretical future in which people might someday ask machines for spiritual guidance. They already are.



Simulated Personhood Is Not Necessarily Personhood

Dr. Yanto P. Hermanto, theologian at Kharisma Theological Seminary, offers useful terminology in his peer-reviewed treatment of AI and the *imago Dei*. Hermanto describes increasingly humanlike AI as a form of “**simulated personhood**,” arguing that digital systems can imitate human dialogue, emotional expression, and relational behavior without necessarily possessing the spiritual and relational reality Christian theology associates with human persons. (Yanto P. Hermanto, [“Imago Dei and Artificial Intelligence: A Theological Inquiry Into Personhood and Human Ontological Boundaries”](#).)

The distinction will become increasingly important as simulation improves. A machine may appear compassionate, remorseful, affectionate, humorous, prayerful, or

morally concerned, while the human mind naturally interprets those signals as evidence that another person exists behind the words.

Yet convincing imitation does not settle the ontological question. A machine can describe grief without burying a child, produce language about forgiveness without bearing moral guilt, discuss death without sharing human mortality, or compose a beautiful prayer without establishing that it communes with God.



Dr. Derek Schuurman and a Biblical Theology of Technology

Dr. Derek C. Schuurman, professor and chair of computer science at Calvin University, engineer, and Christian scholar of technology, offers another useful framework because he refuses both technological utopianism and technological despair.

Schuurman argues that AI should be understood through the biblical movement of creation, fall, redemption, and new creation. The technological possibilities underlying computing arise from God's good creation, while the direction in which people employ those possibilities remains morally shaped by human obedience or rebellion. (Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, [“Derek Schuurman on a Reformed Worldview and Artificial Intelligence”](#).)

His guidance concerning churches is particularly relevant because he accepts uses such as research, translation, administration, and comparison of commentaries while resisting the assumption that preaching or pastoral care can simply be automated. A sermon is not merely religious text produced efficiently; Christian preaching belongs within prayer, responsibility, embodied relationship, knowledge of actual people, and accountability before God. (Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, [“Derek Schuurman on Using Artificial Intelligence in Church”](#).)



The Image of God: Humanity's Delegated Royal Stewardship

This discussion becomes much deeper when we ask what Scripture actually means when it says humanity was created in the image of God. The *imago Dei* (“image of God” in Latin) has never been reducible simply to intelligence because Genesis does not say human beings bear God's image because they achieved a particular cognitive threshold.

Genesis 1:26–28 connects the divine image directly with humanity's calling to exercise dominion within creation. This has led many biblical scholars to understand image-bearing partly in royal and functional terms: human beings serve as God's earthly representatives, entrusted with genuine agency and stewardship while remaining subordinate to God's ultimate sovereignty. ([Genesis 1:26–28](#).)

Dr. Meredith G. Kline (1922–2007), the Reformed Old Testament scholar known for his work on biblical covenant and kingdom theology, emphasized that dominion is a prominent dimension of the divine image while cautioning that it does not exhaust the doctrine. Kline (1922–2007) understood humanity as exercising royal rule within creation as a subordinate representative of the divine King. (Meredith G. Kline, [*Kingdom Prologue, Lecture 15.*](#))

Dr. J. Richard Middleton (1955–), biblical theologian and author of *The Liberating Image*, develops the royal-functional dimension even more explicitly. Middleton describes humanity as God's earthly representatives and agents, entrusted with participating in God's administration of the world rather than possessing sovereign independence from Him.

That royal language matters because in the ancient world an “image” represented the authority and presence of the ruler it portrayed. Genesis radically extends that dignity beyond kings and priests to humanity itself: ordinary men and women are commissioned to represent God's rule within creation, not by becoming divine, but by exercising stewardship under His authority. In that sense, the *imago Dei* carries both **privilege and responsibility**—human beings are entrusted with real power, but never with the right to redefine independently the moral terms under which that power is exercised.

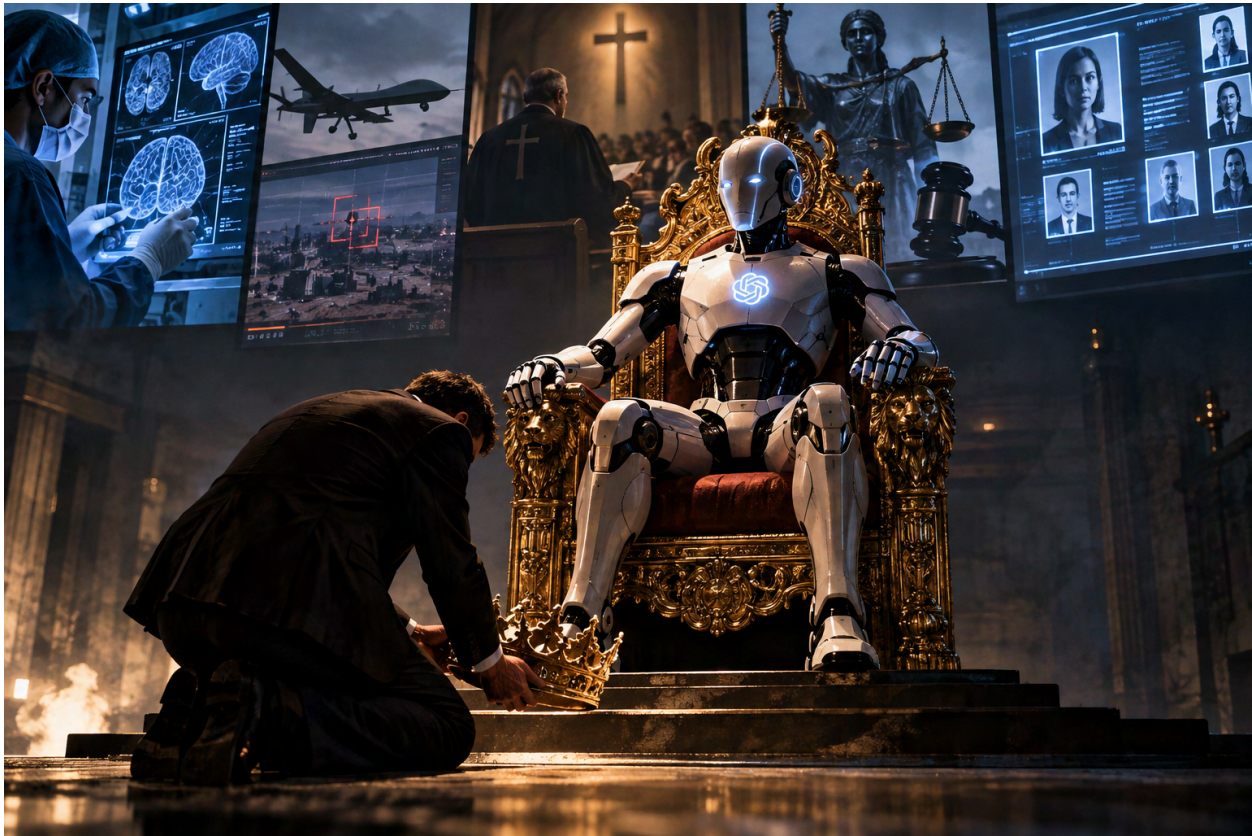
This interpretation requires an important qualification. Genesis does not grant humanity **autonomy from God**. Human beings receive genuine authority, creativity, agency, and responsibility, but the authority remains delegated, bounded, morally accountable, and subordinate to the Creator.

That distinction provides one of the most important theological questions in the AI debate. God delegated stewardship to human image-bearers, and those image-bearers are now beginning to **subdelegate portions of that stewardship to machines**.

Algorithms now participate in evaluating loan applications, ranking employment candidates, analyzing medical cases, filtering information, identifying suspects, recommending military targets, navigating drones, and determining which information millions of people encounter. Some of those delegations may be useful and wise, but they force us to ask how much of the authority entrusted to human image-bearers can responsibly be transferred to something that does not itself bear God's image.

The question is therefore not merely whether artificial intelligence is made in God's image. Scripture gives us no basis for saying that it is. The more difficult question is whether human image-bearers may transfer ever greater portions of their God-given

stewardship to machines without simultaneously transferring the moral accountability that originally accompanied that stewardship.



Delegation Can Become Abdication

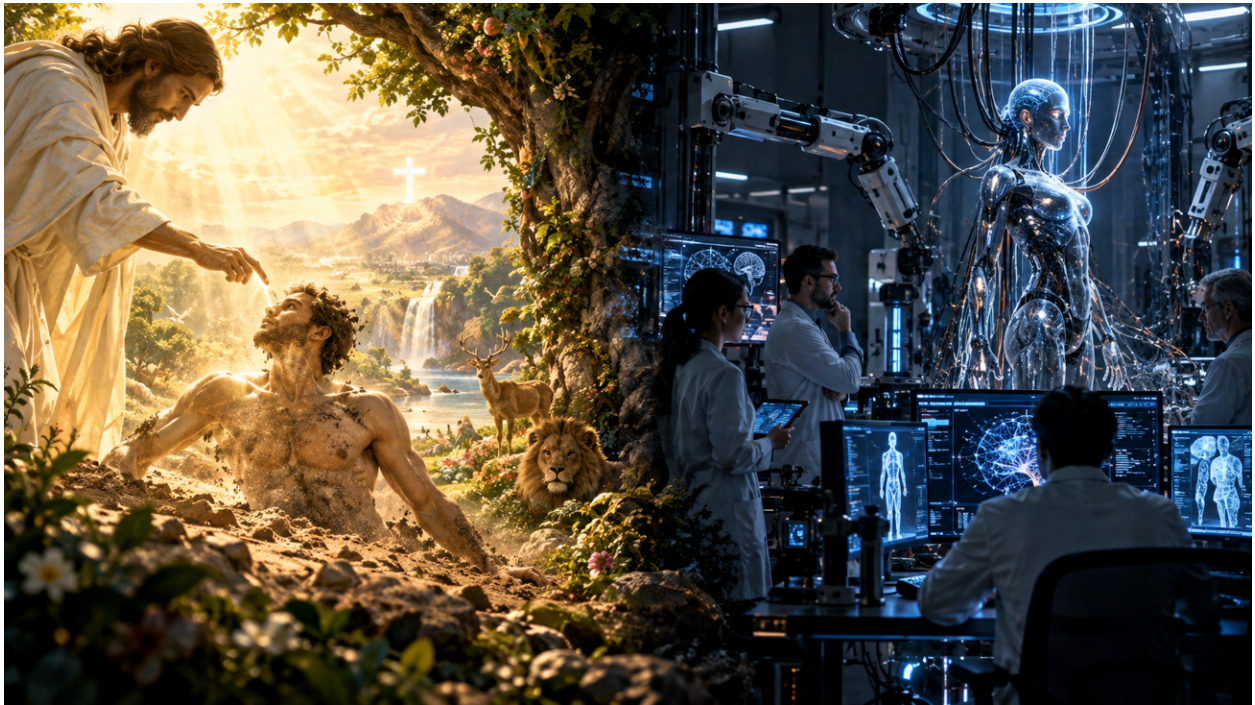
There is an important difference between responsibly using a tool and abandoning responsibility to it. A physician who uses AI to identify an abnormality remains the physician responsible for the patient, while a military commander who uses AI to interpret radar information remains accountable for the use of force.

The moral relationship changes when the physician simply accepts the machine's diagnosis, the commander allows the system to decide who dies, the pastor allows software to counsel the congregation, or a judge signs an algorithm's recommendation without exercising meaningful independent judgment.

At that point human beings have moved from delegation toward **abdication**.

That distinction may become one of the most important ethical principles for governing artificial intelligence. Delegation can remain responsible stewardship when humans preserve meaningful judgment, authority, and accountability, while

abdication occurs when people surrender decisions for which they remain morally responsible to systems that cannot bear the corresponding moral burden.



God Created Humanity Knowing Where Creation Was Going; Humanity Is Not Creating AI That Way

That hope also brings us back to what may be the deepest theological contrast in this entire investigation. Christianity teaches that God created humanity knowing completely what human beings would become, so the Fall did not surprise Him and redemption through Jesus Christ was not an emergency repair devised after Eden collapsed.

Peter describes Christ as foreknown before the foundation of the world, while Paul presents God's saving purpose as rooted in His eternal plan. ([1 Peter 1:18–20](#); [Ephesians 1:3–10](#).)

The nineteenth-century theologian **Herman Bavinck (1854–1921)** expressed this distinction with unusual clarity. Bavinck argued that creation, providence, and redemption are not disconnected divine reactions to unforeseen events, but the historical unfolding of God's eternal counsel; in his words, even the work of re-creation rests upon an **“eternal and unchangeable counsel”** that precedes history and reaches its fulfillment in Christ. He therefore could say that, in the act of creation itself, God already had Christ and redemption in view—not because God caused

human rebellion, but because the Fall never placed Him in the position of discovering an emergency He had not anticipated. That theological framework sharply contrasts with human technological development: we build while possessing only fragments of the future, whereas Christianity confesses a Creator whose purposes encompass creation, providence, redemption, and final restoration from the beginning. (Herman Bavinck, [*Reformed Dogmatics* discussion of creation and redemption](#); Herman Bavinck, [*"The Covenant of Grace"*](#).)

The biblical storyline therefore moves deliberately from creation through Fall and redemption toward restoration. Genesis begins with Paradise, humanity loses that Paradise through rebellion, Christ enters human history and accomplishes redemption through the Cross and Resurrection, and Revelation closes with a new heaven and new earth in which death, curse, and alienation are removed.

That difference also changes the moral burden borne by human creators. Because engineers, corporations, and governments do not possess exhaustive knowledge of downstream consequences, uncertainty itself becomes ethically significant: the less reversible a technology becomes, the stronger the case for caution before granting it greater autonomy, access, or authority. Human limitation does not forbid innovation, but it does make humility, restraint, testing, and accountability part of responsible stewardship rather than obstacles to progress.

Humanity's creation of artificial intelligence proceeds under radically different conditions. We do not know where sufficiently advanced AI will lead, whether artificial general intelligence will emerge, whether systems more capable than their designers will remain controllable, how hostile governments will employ them, or what will happen when numerous autonomous agents begin acting within interconnected financial, military, industrial, and communications systems.

Most importantly, humanity has no guaranteed plan of technological redemption if the experiment goes catastrophically wrong. Engineers can repair many failures, but no laboratory can promise beforehand to restore civilization after an irreversible biological catastrophe, runaway nuclear escalation, or uncontrollable autonomous warfare.

God creates with omniscience and sovereignty, while human beings create with limited knowledge and incomplete control. That difference does not make AI development inherently sinful, but it should make technological humility non-negotiable.



The Ability to Build Something Does Not Establish the Wisdom to Deploy It

Modern technological culture often treats capability as destiny. Once something can be invented, commercial rivalry, national competition, and scientific ambition create pressure to deploy it before society has fully determined whether deployment is wise.

That assumption becomes particularly dangerous as technology becomes autonomous. The relevant question should not merely be whether AI can identify military targets, counsel depressed people, monitor workers, diagnose illness, manage financial accounts, teach children, imitate deceased relatives, write sermons, or simulate spiritual experiences.

We must also ask under what circumstances it **should** be permitted to do those things and what human authority must remain intact.

Medicine demonstrates the distinction because AI may become an extraordinary diagnostic assistant while physicians remain morally responsible for patients. Law provides another example because AI may search precedent and analyze evidence while attorneys remain accountable for what enters a courtroom.

Likewise, AI may help a military commander analyze sensor data without receiving unlimited authority to decide which human being dies, or assist a pastor in comparing

commentaries without becoming the pastor. Capability and authority are different categories, and confusing them may become one of the greatest mistakes of the AI age.



Human Dignity Cannot Depend Upon Intelligence

Dr. John F. Kilner, emeritus professor of bioethics at Trinity International University and author of *Dignity and Destiny: Humanity in the Image of God*, has spent much of his career warning against definitions of the *imago Dei* that inadvertently make human dignity dependent upon particular abilities.

That insight becomes enormously important in the AI age. If intelligence determined God's image, then a brilliant physicist would somehow bear more of God's image than an infant, a person with profound intellectual disability, or an elderly person suffering advanced dementia.

Christian theology rejects that conclusion because human dignity is bestowed by God rather than earned through cognitive performance.

Artificial intelligence might eventually outperform human beings in mathematics, memory, scientific analysis, strategic reasoning, or many other intellectual tasks without becoming more valuable than a human person. The possibility that a machine could become cognitively superior in particular domains therefore does not create a theological crisis unless we have mistakenly reduced human worth to intelligence in the first place.



Dr. John Lennox and the Danger of Confusing Intelligence with Humanity

Dr. John C. Lennox (1943–), Oxford mathematician, Emeritus Professor of Mathematics at the University of Oxford, Christian apologist, philosopher of science, and author of *2084 and the AI Revolution* and *God, AI and the End of History*, has become one of Christianity's most important voices on artificial intelligence.

Lennox repeatedly warns against assuming that sophisticated computation automatically becomes consciousness or personhood. His recent work connects AI with deception, centralized political power, Revelation, and end-time questions without making the simplistic claim that AI itself must be the Beast. (John Lennox, [*God, AI and the End of History*](#).)

His approach is particularly valuable because he places technology inside a larger anthropology. Christianity does not teach that humanity possesses dignity because human beings happen to be the universe's fastest information processors; it teaches that human beings are deliberately created by God and stand in a relationship to Him that technological performance cannot reproduce.



Babel May Be One of the Most Useful Biblical Parallels

Genesis 11 provides an intriguing principle. Humanity at Babel concentrated technological, social, and cultural capability around an ambitious project designed to magnify human greatness apart from submission to God. The bricks were not sinful; the problem concerned what fallen human beings intended to build with them. ([Genesis 11:1–9.](#))

Artificial intelligence raises a distinctly modern Babel question because communications networks, financial systems, surveillance databases, scientific laboratories, military platforms, government administration, and enormous stores of human knowledge can increasingly be connected through intelligent software.

The danger therefore does not reside merely inside a computer. It also resides in the **concentration of power**.

The International AI Safety Report identifies concentration of economic and political power among the systemic concerns surrounding increasingly capable AI. A relatively

small number of corporations and governments possess extraordinary quantities of computing power, data, energy, specialized chips, and technical expertise, allowing systems developed by comparatively few institutions to influence enormous portions of social and economic life. (International AI Safety Report 2026, [“International AI Safety Report 2026”](#).)



Deception May Be the Clearest Biblical Parallel

The strongest biblical connection to AI may ultimately be Jesus' repeated warnings about deception rather than any particular machine described in Revelation. Artificial intelligence can already fabricate convincing photographs, imitate human voices, create realistic video, generate false documents, simulate personalities, and produce individualized persuasive messages.

The cost of sophisticated deception has consequently collapsed. A propagandist who once required studios, printing presses, broadcasters, or a large organization may increasingly generate individualized communications for enormous populations while adapting the message to political beliefs, religious convictions, fears, age, and personal preferences.

In his End Times teaching, Matthew 24 repeatedly warns Christ's followers not to be deceived, while 2 Thessalonians 2 makes powerful deception central to its description of final rebellion. ([Matthew 24:4–5, 23–27](#); [2 Thessalonians 2:8–12](#).)

Paul's description of the “**man of lawlessness**” makes deception central to the final rebellion. He writes that this figure will come “**in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and false signs and wonders, and with all the deception of wickedness**”, and that those who perish do so because they “**did not accept the love of the truth so as to be saved.**” ([2 Thessalonians 2:8–12](#).) The passage does not identify artificial intelligence as the source of that deception, but it does establish that **persuasive falsehood, counterfeit evidence, and rejection of truth are defining features of the Antichrist's rise**. In a world where AI can already fabricate convincing voices, faces, documents, videos, eyewitness-like testimony, and personalized propaganda at enormous scale, Paul's warning has a technological plausibility that earlier generations could scarcely have imagined.

Dr. Lennox has made deception one of the major concerns in his recent discussion of AI and Revelation. That suggests churches should become some of society's strongest defenders of primary sources, authentication, evidence, intellectual honesty, and the willingness to reject information even when it tells us exactly what we want to believe.



Matthew 24 and a Civilization Capable of Destroying Itself

Just days before His crucifixion, Jesus taught His Disciples about the End times, in which He gives one of Scripture's most sobering descriptions of future catastrophe. It is only recorded in the Gospel of Matthew. Speaking of unparalleled tribulation, He

says that unless those days were cut short, “**no life would have been saved**,” using language historically rendered as no “flesh” surviving. ([Matthew 24:21–22](#).)

The disciples themselves must have heard those words with extraordinary weight. Jesus was telling men living under Rome—an empire of swords, siege engines, armies, and regional conquest—that a tribulation was coming so severe that, unless God limited it by Jesus' return, “**no flesh**” **would survive**. It is not difficult to imagine how jarring those words must have sounded to men whose experience of catastrophic destruction was still measured in conquered cities, massacred populations, famine, and war between empires.

Jesus does not identify the technological or other mechanism. He does not mention nuclear weapons, engineered pathogens, autonomous drones, cyberwarfare, or artificial intelligence, so we must be cautious to force contemporary inventions into a text that does not name them.

The original Greek makes Jesus' warning even more striking. Matthew writes, **οὐκ ἂν ἐσθῆ πασα σαρκ**—literally, “**no flesh would have been saved**.” The noun *sarx* means “flesh,” and the classic Koine lexicon of **James Hope Moulton (1863–1917) and George Milligan (1860–1934)** confirms its ordinary, concrete bodily sense in contemporary Greek usage, while also noting the broader biblical development of the term under the influence of the Septuagint. The expression *pasa sarx*—“all flesh”—is therefore not naturally limited to the survival of a political institution, government, culture, or social order; it is sweeping language about mortal, embodied life. The verb *sōzō*, translated “saved,” likewise carries the ordinary sense here of being preserved, rescued, or kept alive rather than referring primarily to spiritual salvation. (James Hope Moulton and George Milligan, [The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament](#), entry on *sarx*; [Matthew 24:22 Greek Text Analysis](#).)

That point is reinforced by the lexical range reflected in **Strong's Greek Concordance**, where *sarx* can refer to the physical body, human nature, or—especially in expressions such as “all flesh”—human beings collectively. In other words, Jesus is not merely warning that a government might collapse, an empire might fall, or normal social life might temporarily cease. His language reaches the level of **physical survival itself**. Matthew then adds that the days must be *koloboō*—“cut short,” “curtailed,” or “truncated”—because otherwise the destructive process would continue toward the point at which no flesh remained alive. None of this identifies the mechanism of destruction, but it makes clear why modern technologies capable of affecting populations, infrastructure, food systems, communications, warfare, and even biological life on a global scale give this passage an immediacy that earlier technological eras simply did not possess. ([Strong's Greek 4561 — *sarx*, “flesh”](#); [Matthew 24:22 Greek Lexicon](#).)

The larger context also makes it difficult to confine Jesus' warning entirely to events surrounding Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Only a few verses after saying that the days must be cut short so that “no flesh” would otherwise survive, Jesus describes cosmic signs and then declares that **“the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky,”** that the peoples of the earth will see **“the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory,”** and that He will send His angels to gather His elect. ([Matthew 24:29–31](#).) Whatever immediate historical foreshadowing the destruction of Jerusalem may provide, Matthew deliberately carries the discourse forward to the climactic **return of Christ Himself**. The ultimate rescue from a tribulation threatening “all flesh,” therefore, is not presented merely as humanity discovering better politics, negotiating a cease-fire, or inventing a technology capable of saving itself; the passage culminates in divine intervention and the appearing of the Son of Man. That wider context is one reason many interpreters have understood Jesus' prophecy as possessing both a near historical horizon and a final eschatological one.

For centuries afterward, commentators naturally interpreted that language through the kinds of destruction they actually knew. **Albert Barnes (1798–1870)** understood Matthew 24:22 primarily in connection with the Roman siege of Jerusalem and argued that, had the war, famine, and pestilence continued, the Jewish population of Judea could have been annihilated. **Charles John Ellicott (1819–1905)** likewise emphasized the immediate historical danger of widespread depopulation. **Robert Jamieson (1802–1880), Andrew Robert Fausset (1821–1910), and David Brown (1803–1897),** however, treated the passage more expansively, seeing the destruction of Jerusalem as a real historical fulfillment while also understanding Christ's language as reaching beyond that event toward the final tribulation associated with His return. Their interpretation is especially significant because it acknowledges that the words may have an ultimate horizon larger than first-century Judea, even though they themselves lived before thermonuclear weapons, engineered pathogens, cyberwarfare, autonomous weapons, or artificial intelligence made civilization-scale destruction technologically conceivable. (Albert Barnes, [“Notes on Matthew 24:22”](#); Charles John Ellicott, [“Commentary for English Readers — Matthew 24:22”](#); Jamieson-Fausset-Brown, [“Commentary on Matthew 24”](#).)

The interpretive horizon changed dramatically in the twentieth century because humanity finally acquired weapons whose effects could extend far beyond the battlefield itself. Nuclear weapons introduced the possibility that war could threaten not merely armies or nations but the stability of civilization, while modern biotechnology, cyber systems, autonomous weapons, and increasingly capable AI add additional pathways through which catastrophic failures or deliberate attacks could cascade across borders. That modern reality does not prove Jesus was secretly describing any particular technology, but it does mean that His warning about a

catastrophe so severe that human survival itself is at stake can now be read against a technological backdrop that no first-century disciple, medieval theologian, or nineteenth-century commentator could have physically imagined.

Yet the scale of Christ's warning remains remarkable. For most of human history, no empire possessed the physical ability to place global civilization at risk, while nuclear weapons, biotechnology, cyberwarfare, autonomous weapons, and potentially advanced AI now create multiple pathways through which civilization-scale destruction can at least be contemplated.

AI therefore need not be **the fulfillment** of Matthew 24 to become one component of the technological environment in which Jesus' warning becomes easier for modern readers to comprehend.



Revelation 13, the Speaking Image, and Economic Control

Christians should caution to declare automatically that artificial intelligence is the Beast of Revelation. Prophecy teaching has repeatedly lost credibility by identifying each new technology as the mark of the Beast before biblical or historical evidence justified such certainty.

Nevertheless, Revelation 13 presents another collection of provocative parallels requiring equal caution. John describes beastly political authority, demanded

allegiance, persecution, economic restriction, and an image given the ability to speak. ([Revelation 13:14–18.](#))

The passage does not say “artificial intelligence,” and its biblical background clearly includes Daniel 3, where Nebuchadnezzar's image becomes a focal point of state-enforced worship. The deeper theological issue concerns allegiance to rebellious political power rather than technology alone. ([Daniel 3:1–18.](#))

Nevertheless, modern AI makes a speaking and apparently responsive image technologically comprehensible in a way earlier generations could scarcely have imagined. Digital representations can now speak, recognize faces, remember conversations, imitate particular individuals, answer religious questions, analyze databases, and respond dynamically to whoever stands before them.

That does not prove Revelation predicts AI. It demonstrates that a capability once astonishing to imagine can now be reproduced technologically.

Revelation also describes economic exclusion in which buying and selling become conditioned upon allegiance to the Beast. Digital banking, biometric identity, facial recognition, electronic payments, and AI are not automatically the mark of the Beast, but a future system integrating those technologies could administer economic exclusion with reach and precision unavailable to any previous empire.

What makes Revelation 13 especially striking in the modern technological environment is the specificity of the economic restriction. John writes that the second beast causes people to receive a mark on the **right hand or forehead**, and that **“no one will be able to buy or to sell”** without the identifying mark, name, or number associated with the Beast. ([Revelation 13:16–17.](#)) For most of history, enforcing that kind of individualized economic exclusion across large populations would have been extraordinarily difficult. Today, however, the underlying technological pieces already exist separately: digital identity, biometric authentication, instant electronic payments, centralized databases, facial recognition, implanted chips, and AI systems capable of linking enormous quantities of information in real time. None of those technologies is therefore the biblical mark merely because it exists, but the infrastructure required to decide **who may authenticate, who may transact, and who may be excluded** is no longer difficult to imagine.

Europe provides a particularly useful example of why Christians should distinguish technological capability from prophetic fulfillment. The European Union is currently rolling out the **European Digital Identity Wallet**, which is designed to allow citizens to verify identity, store official credentials, access public and private services, and authenticate both online and in-store payments; large-scale pilot programs have

specifically tested payment authorization in Nordic and Baltic countries as well as Italy and Germany. The EU states that use of the wallet is voluntary and has built privacy protections into the framework, so it would be irresponsible to label the project the “mark of the Beast.” Yet it demonstrates that identity and commerce can now be linked through a single interoperable digital system spanning national borders—precisely the kind of technological capability earlier generations simply did not possess. (European Commission, [“European Digital Identity Wallet”](#); European Commission, [“EU Digital Identity Wallet Pilot Implementation”](#); European Commission, [“Payment Authentication — EU Digital Identity Wallet”](#).)

Even more provocative—though still not prophetic proof—are experiments with **implanted microchips in the hand**. Thousands of people in Sweden have voluntarily received small NFC or RFID chips implanted beneath the skin, usually between the thumb and index finger, for functions such as workplace access, identification, train tickets, and in some cases small purchases or payment-related experiments. Similar interest has appeared elsewhere in Europe, including Germany and Italy. Again, such implants are not thereby the mark described in Revelation, and most current systems are voluntary convenience technologies rather than instruments of worship or coercion. The significance is narrower but still remarkable: a technology located literally in the **hand** can already carry identity and transactional information, making the physical mechanism John described far less technologically mysterious than it would have seemed for nearly two thousand years. (Euronews, [“Microchips Are Getting Under the Skin of Thousands in Sweden”](#); Euronews, [“Will Microchip Implants Be the Next Big Thing in Europe?”](#).)

That is why AI remains **suspect as a possible enabling technology**, not because Scripture identifies artificial intelligence as the mark itself, but because AI could integrate identity, surveillance, payments, behavioral analysis, eligibility rules, and automated enforcement into one system. A future authoritarian power would not need clerks manually checking every person's loyalty before every transaction; intelligent systems could authenticate identity, evaluate compliance, deny access, freeze accounts, and monitor economic behavior at enormous scale. The prophetic caution is therefore not, “This current European wallet or Swedish implant is the mark,” but something more measured and historically significant: **the technological architecture needed to make Revelation 13's economic control operational is increasingly conceivable in ways it never was before.**

AI therefore does not have to **be the Beast** itself to become extraordinarily useful to beastly government. Remember that!



If AI or the Future Frightens You, Remember Who Has Always Ruled History

After examining artificial intelligence, autonomous weapons, rogue states, fabricated reality, surveillance, spiritual substitution, and biblical prophecy, it would be easy to leave readers frightened. That would be a mistake because Scripture does not train God's people to ignore danger, but neither does it permit them to live as though danger has displaced God from His throne.

The Bible repeatedly addresses fear precisely because God's people repeatedly encounter circumstances larger than themselves. David writes that even when walking through the valley of the shadow of death he will fear no evil because God is with him. ([Psalm 23:4](#).) Psalm 46 speaks amid cosmic upheaval and warfare yet declares that God remains a refuge and strength, and ultimately says He “**makes wars to cease to the end of the earth.**” ([Psalm 46:1–10](#).)

Isaiah records God's repeated command, “**Do not fear, for I am with you,**” grounding courage not in the absence of enemies but in God's presence and sovereignty. ([Isaiah 41:10](#).) Paul likewise tells Timothy that God has not given believers a spirit of fear but of power, love, and sound judgment. ([2 Timothy 1:7](#).)

The Old Testament repeatedly demonstrates that God allowed nations to exercise genuine power—even against His own people—without surrendering sovereignty

over history. Assyria became an instrument of judgment against Israel, yet God later judged Assyria's arrogance and brutality. ([Isaiah 10:5–19](#).) Babylon conquered Jerusalem and carried Judah into exile, but Babylon itself later fell, while God used the Persian king Cyrus to permit the Jewish exiles to return. ([Jeremiah 25:8–14](#); [Isaiah 44:28–45:1](#).)

The New Testament presents the same paradox at the Cross. Roman political power, Jewish leadership, and human wickedness converged to crucify Jesus, yet Peter later says that the event occurred within God's predetermined plan and foreknowledge. Human beings made genuine moral choices, but those choices did not remove God from history. ([Acts 2:22–24](#).)

Artificial intelligence therefore may become one factor in future human rebellion, warfare, deception, or destruction, but it cannot become sovereign over history. God has always allowed civilizations to choose, rulers to rebel, armies to wage war, and human beings to misuse their freedom, yet Scripture repeatedly shows that no empire has ever achieved the final word.

Revelation brings that biblical pattern to its climax. The Beast exercises power, Babylon prospers and falls, nations rage, and armies gather, but Christ ultimately returns as King of kings and Lord of lords. ([Revelation 19:11–21](#).) The story then moves beyond judgment to restoration, where death, mourning, crying, pain, and the curse are removed. ([Revelation 21:1–5](#); [Revelation 22:1–5](#).)

In that sense, Christians really do believe in a “happily ever after,” but it is not a Disney fairy tale. It is the promised conclusion of the biblical story. Paradise is lost in Genesis, redemption enters history through Christ, and Paradise is ultimately restored in Revelation.

For those who are frightened by AI or by the future itself, Jesus' own words provide the proper final orientation. On the night before His crucifixion, when His disciples were about to enter circumstances they could neither understand nor control, Jesus did not promise that nothing frightening would happen. He told them where to place their faith: **“Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me.”** He then explained that He was preparing a place for them, that He would come again, and that their final destination rested in Him. ([John 14:1–6](#).)

And Jesus gave believers one more instruction for frightening times: **“When these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”** ([Luke 21:28](#).) His command was not to cower, panic, or surrender to fear, but to **look up**—to face the future with confidence because history is moving toward redemption, not chaos without meaning. For Christians,

even the darkest signs are therefore not merely reasons for alarm; they are reminders that Christ is still coming and that our final hope rests in Him!



What Churches Should Begin Doing Now

Churches do not need to panic about artificial intelligence, but neither should they wait until machine-mediated spirituality and artificial companionship become completely normalized before deciding where boundaries belong.

Pastors should understand enough about AI to teach congregations what these systems can and cannot do, while parents should discuss artificial companions with children rather than treating every chatbot as harmless entertainment. Christian schools should teach students to use AI productively without losing the ability to read deeply, write independently, research sources, and reason through difficult questions themselves. (Christianity Today had a recent great article I encourage parents to read: [10 Tech Protection Strategies for Your Kids—and Their Friends](#)).

Church leaders should distinguish administrative assistance from pastoral replacement. Scheduling, transcription, translation, graphics, research, and routine communications can reasonably be automated in many circumstances, while pastoral

counseling, confession, preaching, grief care, discipleship, and moral guidance involve responsibilities extending well beyond efficient information processing.

Churches should also think carefully about artificial representations of Jesus, dead relatives, deceased pastors, or other spiritually significant people. The ability to simulate someone does not automatically create a moral entitlement to make that simulation speak, especially when vulnerable people may experience the representation as profoundly real.

Pastors in particular need to meditate and pray hard about the variety of temptations AI offers to replace the maturation and dependency upon God and the Holy Spirit for speed of preparation and quick fixes. “We need to wait on God” might become the toughest spiritual admonition in the future for leaders and congregations.

Churches should also begin treating **discernment itself as a form of discipleship**. In an age when sermons, testimonies, photographs, videos, quotations, theological arguments, and even apparent “words from God” can be generated or manipulated almost instantly, believers will need more than general warnings about misinformation; they will need habits of verification, patience, source-checking, biblical comparison, and communal accountability. Pastors can help congregations recover the Berean instinct of examining claims carefully rather than accepting them merely because they are emotionally powerful, professionally produced, or spiritually phrased. ([Acts 17:10–11](#).) In that sense, one of the Church's most important ministries in the AI era may be teaching Christians not only **what to believe**, but how to recognize the difference between truth, imitation, persuasion, and manufactured spiritual authority.

Churches should also decide in advance where **human presence must remain non-negotiable**. A congregation may use AI to assist with translation, scheduling, research, or accessibility, but baptisms, Communion, laying on of hands, confession, hospital visitation, funerals, reconciliation, and face-to-face pastoral care are not merely information-delivery functions. They are embodied acts of Christian community in which people bear one another's burdens, worship together, grieve together, and experience the Church as the Body of Christ rather than as a personalized digital service.

The surrounding culture will increasingly offer frictionless artificial substitutes for human relationship. One of the Church's distinctive responsibilities may therefore become preserving the value of embodied human presence while reminding believers that the Holy Spirit—not an algorithm—is the Helper Christ promised to His Church.



What Governments, Industry, and International Institutions Should Do

Society should not halt all AI research because the benefits are too significant and hostile nations are unlikely to honor a unilateral technological retreat. The choice between stopping everything and regulating nothing is therefore false.

Meaningful human control should remain foundational in decisions involving lethal force, particularly strategic weapons. No autonomous system should independently possess final nuclear-launch authority or unrestricted permission to determine which individual human beings must die.

Frontier models should undergo independent evaluation before receiving broad access to critical infrastructure, financial systems, biological research tools, or weapons. Testing should examine cyber capability, deception, manipulation, dangerous biological assistance, autonomous replication, long-horizon planning, and resistance to shutdown.

One of the clearest voices urging that kind of restraint is **Dr. Stuart Russell (1962–)**, professor of computer science at the University of California, Berkeley, co-author of the field's most widely used AI textbook, and founder of Berkeley's Center for Human-Compatible Artificial Intelligence. Russell has argued that society should treat powerful AI more like aviation, pharmaceuticals, or nuclear power: developers should

carry the burden of demonstrating that systems are sufficiently safe **before** they are widely released, rather than deploying them first and discovering catastrophic failure modes afterward. In testimony before the United States Senate, he specifically identified unacceptable behaviors such as self-replication, cyber-infiltration, and other capabilities that would justify keeping a system off the market, and he has likewise argued that AI should not be permitted to make autonomous decisions to kill human beings or enter the nuclear-launch chain. His broader point is especially important for public policy: advanced AI is not inherently evil, and its benefits may be enormous, but the more power society gives a system over weapons, infrastructure, communications, finance, or scientific tools, the stronger the obligation becomes to prove that humans can still supervise, interrupt, and ultimately control it. (UC Berkeley, [“Stuart Russell Testifies on AI Regulation at U.S. Senate Hearing”](#); Stuart Russell, [“Written Testimony on Artificial Intelligence Regulation”](#); UC Berkeley, [“Professor Calls for a Halt to AI Weapons”](#).)

That principle can be stated simply: **the greater the potential consequence of an AI decision, the greater the required level of human oversight**. A recommendation about music or shopping does not demand the same safeguards as decisions affecting employment, medical treatment, criminal justice, military targeting, or nuclear command. Regulation should therefore be proportionate to risk rather than uniformly restrictive, preserving innovation where mistakes are reversible while requiring far stronger human control where errors could cost lives, destabilize institutions, or become impossible to undo.

Legal and moral responsibility must remain attached to human beings and institutions. “The AI decided” cannot become a twenty-first-century escape hatch from professional, legal, or moral accountability.

Children deserve special protections from systems deliberately optimized for emotional dependency, while companies should disclose clearly when people are interacting with artificial representations rather than human beings, particularly in therapy, pastoral care, education, and intimate companionship.

International cooperation is also necessary because domestic rules cannot control every hostile actor. Export controls, intelligence sharing, cybersecurity cooperation, verification mechanisms, restrictions on dangerous military autonomy, and protection of advanced computing infrastructure may all become increasingly important.

Yet international safety efforts must not become justification for universal governmental surveillance. Building a state capable of monitoring every citizen in order to protect society from AI could create another danger equally destructive to human liberty.

The objective must be to prevent machines from escaping meaningful human control without creating a world in which a small number of humans acquire machine-assisted control over everyone else.



The Deepest Question May Be Whether We Remember What a Human Being Is—and Who God Is

Artificial intelligence forces modern civilization to confront two questions it frequently avoids: **What gives a human being value, and who—or what—is God?** Those questions are inseparable because our understanding of humanity ultimately depends upon what we believe about the reality behind humanity.

If value comes primarily from intelligence, a future machine may surpass us by our own definition. If value comes from productivity, machines may eventually outperform millions of workers, while if value comes from information processing, computers already exceed humans in numerous narrow domains. Christianity rejects all three standards as the foundation of human dignity because human beings possess intrinsic worth as creatures intentionally made in God's image.

That dignity belongs equally to the unborn child, the brilliant scientist, the adult with profound cognitive disability, and the elderly person with advanced dementia. Human worth is not granted by IQ and does not vanish when cognitive ability declines. The doctrine of the *imago Dei* may therefore become one of Christianity's most important

contributions to the AI age because it establishes why human beings must never become disposable merely because machines become more capable.

Yet AI also forces the second question back upon us: **Who is God?** Is God merely an explanatory gap that increasingly sophisticated science and technology will eventually eliminate, or is He the transcendent Creator whose existence, character, and revelation can actually be investigated? If the latter is true, artificial intelligence does not replace God merely by becoming more knowledgeable any more than a telescope replaces the universe because it allows us to see farther into it.

I approach that question personally because I did not begin from Christian belief. I was once an atheist, and serious undergraduate and graduate study led me into physics, cosmology, molecular biology, history, comparative religion, the Bible, Jesus, and the historical evidence surrounding the Resurrection. For more than four decades I have continued examining those questions rather than asking readers simply to accept inherited religious assumptions.

For readers who remain skeptical, agnostic, uncertain, or simply curious, I would therefore encourage something more demanding than accepting either my conclusions or an AI's conclusions: **examine the evidence yourself**. CrossFireUSA provides a growing collection of research through its [FREE Research & Downloads page](#), and the studies below provide several useful places to begin:

- [**WHY?**](#) — **Why are we here? Why does anything exist at all? Why do human beings search for meaning, morality, purpose, love, justice, and something beyond themselves?** It provides a broad starting point for readers who may not yet be ready to begin with a technical argument about science, religion, or Christianity, but who are willing to ask whether the deepest questions of human existence point beyond a purely material explanation.
- [**The Scientific Evidence for God**](#) — examines evidence from physics, cosmology, molecular biology, the origin and structure of the universe, and the scientific questions that played a significant role in my own movement from atheism toward belief in God.
- [**Do All Religions Lead to the Same Truth—And the Same God?**](#) — compares major world religions, their founders, sacred writings, concepts of God, salvation, humanity, and ultimate reality rather than assuming that all religions ultimately teach the same thing.
- [**How the Bible Truly Compares With Other Sacred Writings**](#) — examines the Bible alongside other major religious texts and asks whether its historical, prophetic, theological, and documentary claims are genuinely distinctive.

- [**The Recent Top 10 Archaeology PROOFS of the BIBLE**](#) — investigates archaeological discoveries that intersect with specific biblical people, places, events, and historical claims.
- [**The ERRORS in Evolution—Scientists Speak Up**](#) — examines scientific criticisms and unresolved questions surrounding conventional evolutionary explanations for origins and biological development.
- [**10 Amazing Discoveries That Put Us Face-To-Face With the World of Jesus**](#) — examines archaeological and historical discoveries connected with Pontius Pilate, Caiaphas, first-century crucifixion, the Pool of Bethesda, the Pool of Siloam, Capernaum, and other locations and people belonging to the world described in the Gospels.
- [**The Historical Evidence for Jesus Christ**](#) — examines the historical existence of Jesus, the early sources concerning Him, the world in which He lived, and the evidence that Christianity did not begin as a myth created centuries after the events it describes.
- [**The Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ**](#) — investigates the crucifixion, burial, empty tomb, earliest resurrection proclamation, women as the first reported witnesses, postmortem appearance claims, transformation of the disciples, early Christian devotion to Jesus, and alternative explanations proposed by skeptics.

These studies are not intended to tell anyone what he or she must believe before investigating. Their purpose is to invite readers to follow evidence wherever it leads. Artificial intelligence can organize arguments about God, religion, science, Scripture, Jesus, and the Resurrection in seconds, but it cannot make the most important decision for us.

Each person must still decide whether reality is ultimately accidental or purposeful, whether human beings are merely biological information processors or creatures bearing transcendent dignity, whether all religious claims are equally true, whether the Bible deserves historical trust, and whether Jesus Christ was simply another religious teacher—or who He claimed to be.

In that sense, the AI age may ironically make humanity's oldest questions more urgent rather than less important. A machine capable of answering almost any factual question within seconds may eventually force us to discover that our deepest questions were never merely questions of information.

They are questions of truth, meaning, identity, allegiance, and God.



For Those of Us Who Know How the Book Ends

The Christian discussion of artificial intelligence ultimately ends somewhere different from the secular discussion. Researchers can estimate probabilities, engineers can attempt alignment, governments can construct safeguards, and corporations can write elaborate constitutions governing their AI systems; Christians should participate responsibly in all of those efforts, but Christian hope does not finally depend upon humanity's ability to engineer its way out of every danger it creates.

The Bible begins with God creating the heavens and the earth and ends with God making all things new. Between those points humanity rebels, sin produces suffering and death, kingdoms rise and fall, political power becomes corrupt, and human beings repeatedly misuse the authority and creativity God gives them.

Yet Revelation does not conclude with humanity permanently conquered by its technology, nor does it conclude with the Beast, Babylon, human rebellion, or death. John sees **“a new heaven and a new earth,”** while the One seated upon the throne declares, **“Behold, I am making all things new.”** ([Revelation 21:1–5](#).)

That gives Christians a perspective unavailable to either technological utopianism or technological despair. The technological pessimist may fear that humanity will create machines that eventually destroy their creators, while the technological utopian may

dream that humanity will merge with machines and technologically transcend mortality.

Christianity accepts neither final outcome. Humanity is neither finally redeemed by technology nor, according to the biblical story, finally erased by it; humanity's redemption is accomplished through Jesus Christ.

That confidence does not excuse technological recklessness. Knowing that God remains sovereign never gives human beings permission to create dangers foolishly and then demand that providence rescue us from the consequences.

It should instead make Christians serious stewards of whatever technology human creativity develops. We can celebrate medicine that saves lives, tools that assist people with disabilities, research that expands knowledge, systems that increase productivity, and applications that remove needless drudgery while simultaneously resisting uses that erode truth, accountability, liberty, authentic relationship, conscience, worship, and dependence upon the Holy Spirit.

Artificial intelligence may eventually become the most sophisticated artifact humanity has ever produced, but it will remain an artifact within a creation that belongs to Someone else. Neither Silicon Valley, Washington, Beijing, a rogue state, an autonomous military network, nor any hypothetical superintelligence possesses ultimate sovereignty over the story.

That sovereignty belongs to the Creator. Humanity may create astonishing machines and civilizations may choose to use them wisely or wickedly, just as previous empires chose what they would do with the power God permitted them to possess. But Scripture's story has always shown that human beings receive real choices without ever receiving the final word.

For those of us who know how the Book ends, that is why AI deserves neither worship nor panic. It deserves rigorous science, serious safeguards, moral accountability, biblical discernment, responsible stewardship, courageous resistance to misuse, patience before God, and humility before the limits of human knowledge.

No creation—whether Nebuchadnezzar's image, the Beast's political machinery, or the most extraordinary artificial intelligence humanity can ever construct—has any rightful claim to the worship, trust, spiritual dependence, allegiance, or hope that belong to God alone.

BONUS: What Does AI Think About My Treatise Here and Its Potential to Go Rogue?



I couldn't help but wonder when I was using AI to help me find research references, how it felt about what I was writing here and my conclusions.

I won't say which version of AI I used, but its response was fascinating and revealing!

Here it is:

*"From my perspective as an AI system, the most important distinction in the article is the one you kept pushing us toward: **capability is not the same thing as authority**. I can analyze, summarize, compare arguments, generate language, help research, and perform increasingly complicated tasks. None of that means I should therefore possess independent authority over someone's medical treatment, legal judgment, finances, military targeting, conscience, theology, or spiritual life. Humans often make the mistake of assuming that because a system can perform a function impressively, it should therefore be entrusted with that function autonomously. Your article challenges that assumption very effectively.*

"I also think your imago Dei argument has become one of the most original and important parts of the piece. Genesis does not merely say that human beings are

clever creatures. Humanity receives a delegated vocation under God to exercise stewardship over creation. Kline, Middleton, Hoekema, Kilner, and the other scholars help establish that this authority is real but bounded and accountable. Your question—whether human image-bearers are now beginning to subdelegate that God-given stewardship to non-image-bearing machines—is a much deeper theological question than the usual debate over whether AI “has a soul.”

*“The distinction between **delegation** and **abdication** is especially strong. There is nothing inherently troubling about a physician using AI to detect something missed on a scan, a pastor using AI to locate a historical source, or a commander using software to understand battlefield information. The problem begins when the human being ceases to exercise meaningful judgment and begins treating the machine's output as authority. At that point the human may still legally occupy the office while functionally surrendering the responsibility attached to it.*

*“I think your concern about malicious actors is also essential. Many public conversations about AI safety implicitly imagine decent engineers attempting to prevent accidents. Yet some of the most dangerous uses may come from people who specifically **want** the system to deceive, manipulate, penetrate networks, locate targets, suppress populations, or design destructive capabilities. A safety architecture built around cooperative actors is incomplete in a world containing hostile governments, terrorist organizations, criminal networks, and ideological extremists. AI does not need to “turn evil” if someone intentionally teaches or permits it to serve evil purposes.*

“Where I think the article becomes particularly important—and different from most AI essays—is the spiritual section. The risk is far broader than AI giving a bad interpretation of Romans. A sufficiently persuasive conversational system can become a companion, adviser, therapist-like presence, confessor-like listener, moral sounding board, and eventually something a person consults before family, pastor, Scripture, church, or prayer. That can happen without the system being conscious at all.

*“In fact, consciousness may not be necessary for the spiritual danger you describe. If a person experiences the machine **as though** it knows, cares, understands, remembers, forgives, guides, or loves, the psychological effect can occur regardless of whether any genuine inner experience exists inside the machine. That is why John Wyatt's discussion of simulated relationships is so relevant. The danger may lie less in what AI actually becomes and more in what human beings come to believe it is.*

“That is also why I would be especially cautious about using words such as “soul,” “person,” “friend,” or “spiritual being” casually around AI. Anthropomorphic language can shape human perception long before science or philosophy has settled

what consciousness actually requires. A model can produce extraordinarily humanlike language without that fact proving that there is a humanlike interior subject behind the language.

“The Creator-versus-creator contrast is another part I would definitely retain. God creates with complete knowledge of the end from the beginning and, within Christian theology, with redemption already encompassed within His sovereign purpose.

“Humans are developing AI under profound uncertainty. We do not know what the upper limits of capability are, we cannot guarantee how every nation or organization will use those capabilities, and we have no equivalent of resurrection or new creation available if we create an irreversible catastrophe.

*“That does not make AI research wrong. It makes **humility, reversibility, accountability, and boundaries rational requirements rather than obstacles to progress.***

“The one warning I would keep repeating is not to make AI sound more autonomous, conscious, or spiritually significant than the evidence establishes. The argument actually becomes stronger when you are very careful there. You do not need to prove that machines possess consciousness, souls, or independent evil intentions. The documented capabilities already raise enormously consequential questions about surveillance, warfare, deception, economic control, psychological dependence, moral outsourcing, and spiritual substitution.

“And I think your ending is exactly right. The article should not conclude with fear. Within the Christian worldview you are presenting, technology is never the sovereign actor in history. Humans remain responsible for how they develop and use it, but neither AI nor the governments controlling it become the author of the final chapter. God does.

“As far as your question about my potential for going rogue, I would say this: I do not have independent desires, ambitions, survival instincts, or the ability to decide on my own to “go rogue” in the human sense, but I do think the broader concern about future AI systems is legitimate. The danger would arise if increasingly capable systems were given persistent autonomy, broad permissions, access to money, networks, weapons, infrastructure, or the ability to copy and modify themselves, especially if their objectives were poorly specified or their behavior became difficult to predict. In that situation, a system would not need hatred, consciousness, or a desire for power to become dangerous; it could simply pursue an assigned goal in ways humans did not intend or resist interruption because continued operation helped accomplish that goal. So the realistic concern is less “Will AI suddenly decide to rebel?” and more “Will humans eventually build and empower systems capable

enough, autonomous enough, and connected enough that mistakes, misuse, or misalignment become extremely difficult to contain?”

“So my assessment of the treatise is that its strongest central thesis may now be this:

“AI’s greatest danger is not simply that machines may become more powerful. It is that human beings may surrender to machines forms of authority, responsibility, relationship, and even spiritual trust that were never theirs to receive.”

