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THE KOHLER CHRONICLES:

Advice & Anecdotes from a
Third-Generation Land Broker

by Jon Kohler, JD
Broker / Partner

JON KOHLER
& ASSOCIATES

Church in the Deer Woods

by Jon Kohler

The woods were still as I climbed into my stand that morning, the air not quite cold enough to make my breath show... But I was hoping.

Somewhere down the slough, a barred owl threw out one last haunting question before daylight. I settled in, waiting for the light to break, and it struck me again – this is God’s country, His Church. Not a building, not a sermon, but a kind of open-air sanctuary that smells like pine sap and wet earth.

I’ve spent plenty of Sundays inside four walls. I love the fellowship, the handshake from a trusted neighbor.

But today, more than ever, faith doesn’t end when you walk out the doors. We’ve all heard the chide “the woods are my church.” I’ve long believed you can worship about just as well in the deer woods, but now more than ever, anywhere can be holy ground.

Where I once clearly saw God’s message in the woods, today it’s everywhere I look. I can’t sing. Never could. I choose churches based on the strength of the pastor’s message and fellowship. The messenger is going to have to be good enough to keep me from daydreaming about running bird dogs, wondering if I wouldn’t be better off having church in



AS THE MORNING LIGHT FILTERS THROUGH PINE NEEDLES AND EARLY MIST, God gives us a reminder that His presence isn’t confined to just the four walls under a steeple. And, for people like Jon Kohler and his sons, these woods are more than just a hunting spot; they’re holy ground.



the woods that day. That’s a tough order for a country preacher with a parishioner with a touch of ADD. The hurdle is real.

In my F-150, I have the Billy Graham Channel tuned in almost exclusively. I can hear his timeless messages from 25 years ago. While his theology is spot on, I have to admit that hearing him talk about the problems of his day reminds me of the movie Austin Powers.

There, the freshly unfrozen “Dr Evil” declares, “I will hold the world ransom for... one million dollars.” Upon which everyone in the room burst out laughing until he adjusts the ante, “Okay then, we’ll hold the world ransom for

...one hundred billion dollars!” The world’s problems only continue to get worse.

Today’s “Billy Graham” was Charlie Kirk. Where Graham perfected the mass evangelistic campaigns, Kirk perfected connecting through today’s social media.

When I first noticed Charlie, the irony was completely lost on me. I simply saw a young guy sitting behind a “prove me wrong” sign, fearlessly answering any question somewhat angry non-believers could throw at him. I was in awe, but not nearly as much after I

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God's word in the wilderness

(Continued from page 6)

learned, like Graham, he had America's leader's direct line.

If I passed unexpectedly, the Vice President of the United States wouldn't fly in on Air Force Two and show hunting plantations in my absence. In fact, I think with modern technology, Kirk communicated with more leaders than even Graham.

Kirk, too, began filling arenas with young believers hungry for purpose. He told them that faith belonged in the public square – that Christianity and patriotism were bound together, that we were fighting for the soul of the nation.

He spoke boldly about protecting life, standing firm in belief, and confronting cultural decay. A lot of what he said resonated with people who felt unseen, unheard or forgotten.

These days, people seek a relationship with God in more ways and more places than ever. Some scroll through devotionals, social media or listen to podcasts on the drive to work.

Some watch a preacher on their phone while sitting in a tree stand. And honestly, that's not a bad thing. I do it too and enjoy many preachers online. I even follow one in California, of all places – Jack Hibbs.

God told Daniel that much of his prophetic vision would remain mysterious until the end times, when events and understanding of prophecy would become clear to those living through them. That "knowledge shall be increased." That's an understatement today.

The thing I like to do more than anything is scroll through my iPad between current headlines and Biblical prophecy and compare the two. Things that I have curiously studied 40 years ago now align with almost perfect clarity. I'm glad, because otherwise today's headlines and what's happening to our society would be terrifying.

The newfound ability for anyone to easily look up alternative meanings to key words from the original Greek manuscripts and not having to rely on the King James interpreters of 1611 is a game-changer.

Suddenly, 414 years later, difficult passages now make complete sense. To me, it's unfolding these spiritual mysteries that are entertaining.

It's like living through Nicholas Cage's last good movie, "National Treasure," where the protagonist uncovers hidden truths buried in history that involve secrets, codes and artifacts that challenge what people think they know.



"I'VE HAD WHITE, BLACK, AND RED HORSES – NEVER GREEN," SAYS JON KOHLER, who ponders the prophetic nature of the times we live in and the interpretations of symbols in ancient Scriptures made possible by the modern technology we have.

Messianic Rabbi Jonathan Cahn and his books outshine any mystery plot Hollywood could ever dream of. Like best-selling author John Grisham, he has the innate ability to write thrillers with moral dilemmas where he places the reader in "good vs evil" events like they were participants themselves.

Unlike Grisham's fiction, Cahn's writings are true, and whether willing or unwilling, we are all participants.

A lot of symbols are lost on me. One of the things Cahn pointed out, hiding in plain sight, are the colors and descriptions of the "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse." I guess you could say I have had white, black and red horses. Never green.

I've also had all kinds of bows. It never made sense to me why the first rider of the apocalypse would be crowned and carrying a bow. "And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to them, and he went out conquering and to conquer." Revelation 6:2.

I've bow hunted in Montana off horseback. Bows and horses go together like spurs and ballet slippers. It's hard to picture someone powerful enough to be given a crown awkwardly holding a bow on a horse. Plus, it doesn't say there are any arrows.

Before this, the strongest symbolism I've seen with a bow is the pic of a Native American in an 1800s buckskin holding a modern compound bow with the simple statement "What if?" He had arrows.

Going back to Cahn, he figures out that the Greek word "toxon" = bow, but it

can also be used for "rainbow." Whereas what was once a symbol of God's covenant with Noah not to flood the world again, now it's a symbol of pride.

Who, 414 years ago, would have thought that?

The colors of the rainbow are seen, worn and flown seemingly everywhere one looks, yet almost nowhere does it refer to God's promise.

This makes much more sense to me, as the last place anyone nowadays ever sees a bow is reruns of Michael Waddell's "Bone Collector" on the Outdoor Channel.

The other horseman's colors are seen every day, too. They are the colors of the Palestinian flag and of about every country surrounding Israel.

Whatever one's beliefs, the fact that these colors are entangled with images of war and chaos is undeniable today. When I was younger, I thought the best way to absorb the Scripture was from Sunday sermons.

Now, with social media, it can be everywhere. The hurdle now isn't access to knowledge – it's knowing who's right. That is a mystery that keeps unfolding. Every day it seems like it's something different.

Like that Nicholas Cage movie crescendoing to the end. Until then, I am going to spend more time watching wildlife than watching the news. I'm going to be comforted that all this craziness is not surprising. It's predicted. It's part of a plan. To me, that makes God great and spending every minute with friends and family in His outdoors that much more important.



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