

THE AGE OF INTELLIGENCE AND INFLUENCE:

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

August 31, 2025 – Combined GG/SS Hour – Pastor Ben Nistor

1 Corinthians 1:20–31 – The Foolish, The Wise, and God

Romans 12:1–2 – Renew Your Mind

Proverbs 1:7 – The Beginning of Knowledge

1) What is technology?

The word ‘technology’ comes from two Greek words: *techne* and *logos*

Techne means a skill, art or trade

Logos means a word, study, or concept

‘Technology is applied science and amplified power.’¹

Merriam-Webster: ‘The practical application of knowledge especially in a particular area.’

Brittanica: ‘the application of scientific knowledge to the practical aims of human life—or, as it is sometimes phrased, to the change and manipulation of the human environment.’

2) What is Artificial Intelligence, or AI?

- In 1956, John McCarthy, Marvin Minsky, Nathaniel Rochester and Claude Shannon coined the term **artificial intelligence**, defining it as “the science and engineering of making intelligent machines.”²
- There are three (maybe four) main **categories** of AI:³
 - **Narrow AI (aka ‘Weak’ AI)/Specific AI:** “refers to those systems that are designed to perform specific tasks or solve particular problems within a defined scope—they cannot think or make decisions beyond them.” For example: Siri, Alexa, and Cortana
 - **General AI:** “refers to machines that possess the ability to think, learn, and apply knowledge across different tasks, just like humans.” This currently a theoretical concept.
 - **Superintelligent AI:** “represents a level of artificial intelligence that surpasses human intelligence. Unlike General AI, which aims to match human intelligence, Superintelligent AI would be capable of thinking, innovating, and reasoning at a level beyond what humans can achieve.” This, like AGI, is theoretical still.
- AI can also be defined based on **function**:⁴

¹ from Tony Reinke, *God, Technology, and the Christian Life*, page 14.

² “A Proposal for the Dartmouth Summer Research Project on Artificial Intelligence”
(<http://jmc.stanford.edu/articles/dartmouth/dartmouth.pdf>)

³ <https://ischool.syracuse.edu/types-of-ai/>

⁴ <https://www.ibm.com/think/topics/artificial-intelligence-types>

- **Reactive Machines:** “These systems respond to specific inputs with predetermined outputs without the ability to store data or learn from past experiences. They are designed to react in real time, making them effective for straightforward tasks.” E.g. Netflix recommendations, Broward County Transportation⁵
- **Limited memory AI:** “refers to systems that can store and use past data to improve their predictions and performance over time.” E.g. self-driving cars, smart home devices, customer service chatbots, medical systems,⁶ FPL Smart Grid⁷
- **Theory of Mind AI:** “represents a future stage of artificial intelligence that aims to understand and respond to human thoughts and emotions. Current AI systems operate based on commands and data, but Theory of Mind AI has the ability to interpret emotional cues and adjust its responses accordingly.” E.g. Siri, Alexa, ChatGPT⁸, Grok
- **Self-Aware AI:** “exists only in science fiction and theoretical discussions. It represents a hypothetical stage of AI where machines would possess consciousness and self-awareness.” E.g. iRobot movie, HER movie, C-3PO
- Other key terms:
 - **Machine learning** is a core branch of AI that allows systems to learn from data without the need for specific programming each time.
 - **Deep learning** is a specialized subset of ML that mimics the structure of the human brain using artificial neural networks. These networks enable machines to recognize complex patterns and make sophisticated decisions.
 - **Natural language processing (NLP)** is a branch of AI dedicated to enabling machines to understand, interpret, and respond to human language.
 - **Large Language Models (LLMs)** are AIs that can understand and generate large swaths of human text.
 - **Artificial Neural Networks (ANNs)** are systems that “make decisions in a manner similar to the human brain, by using processes that mimic the way biological neurons work together to identify phenomena, weigh options and arrive at conclusions.”⁹

⁵ See Broward County Vision 2100: <https://www.browardmpo.org/vision-2100>

⁶ Many Healthcare Providers and Hospitals use AI for scheduling, billing, visit summaries, charting, and assisting with diagnoses. For instance, see Epic Systems, used by virtually all local area hospitals (<https://www.epic.com/software/ai/>)

⁷ “The FPL InETech Center, a first-of-its-kind artificial intelligence-enabled center, is designed to mimic FPL’s control center for smart grid – a complex power generation, transmission and distribution network – that uses leading-edge technology to predict and prevent future outages. FPL’s smart grid includes about six million smart meters and more than 217,000 other intelligent devices installed throughout its system. Through strategic investments, FPL has made the energy grid stronger, smarter and more storm-resilient while reducing outage times and restoration costs associated with severe weather events.” <https://www.fau.edu/engineering/news/2406-fpl-and-fau-engineering-unveil-new-ai-enabled-center/>

⁸ Stands for ‘Generative Pre-Trained Transformer’; ‘generative,’ meaning it can generate human-like output in real time; ‘pre-trained’ meaning that it was fed a significant amount of data (<https://help.openai.com/en/articles/7842364-how-chatgpt-and-our-foundation-models-are-developed>); and ‘transformer,’ meaning a type of neural network architecture that allows the model to understand the relationships between words in a text.

⁹ <https://www.ibm.com/think/topics/neural-networks>

3) A Timeline of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its Emergence¹⁰

1950 – Alan Turing asks “*Can machines think?*” and proposes the **Turing Test** to see if a machine can imitate human conversation.

1956 – The term **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** is introduced at the Dartmouth Conference, marking the official start of the field.

1958 – The **Perceptron**, an early brain-inspired computer model, is invented, and the programming language **LISP** is created for AI research.

1966 – **ELIZA**, the first chatbot, is created to mimic a therapist through simple text conversation.

1973 – Governments cut research funding after slow progress, leading to the first “**AI Winter**” (a period of setbacks and lost interest).

1985 – **Bayesian networks** are introduced, allowing computers to reason using probabilities rather than rigid logic.

1989 – **Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs)** are demonstrated, giving machines new ability to recognize patterns like handwriting.

1997 – IBM’s **Deep Blue** defeats chess world champion Garry Kasparov, showing machines can surpass humans in complex games.

2009 – **ImageNet**, a massive image database, is launched, giving AI the data needed for breakthroughs in visual recognition.

2012 – A CNN called **AlexNet** wins the ImageNet competition, sparking the modern deep learning revolution.

2014 – **Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs)** are introduced, enabling machines to create realistic images and media.

2017 – Google researchers invent **Transformers**, a new AI design that powers today’s large language models.

2018 – OpenAI releases the first **Generative Pretrained Transformer (GPT-1)**, capable of writing human-like text.

2020 – OpenAI’s **GPT-3** amazes the world with advanced text generation; **AlphaFold** solves a 50-year biology problem by predicting protein structures.

2022–2023 – **ChatGPT** (based on GPT-3.5 and GPT-4) brings AI into everyday use, leading to global excitement and debate about AI’s future.

¹⁰ From Ron Karjian, “The History of Artificial Intelligence: Complete AI Timeline,”
<https://www.techtarget.com/searchenterpriseai/tip/The-history-of-artificial-intelligence-Complete-AI-timeline>

4) What should Christians know about God and technology?¹¹

- 1) God is sovereign over all human ingenuities and technologies (Genesis 11; Luke 5:1–6)
- 2) God created humanity, not technology, to be His image-bearers (Gen. 1:26–28; Ps. 8:5–6).
- 3) Humanity chose to worship the creation, rather than that Creator (Romans 1:24-25).
- 4) The biggest problems humanity faces is sin, not technology or AI (Romans 3:23; 5:12; 6:23; Jer 17:9; 1 John 1:8).
 - a. God alone atones for our sin through Christ's death and resurrection.
 - b. Ironically, the Roman cross (†) is an example of ancient 'torture technology.'
 - c. God used a tool humans meant for evil for ultimate good.
- 5) Technology, and therefore AI, is created by human beings who are simultaneously image-bearers of God and sinful (Gen 1:26; Rom 3:23).
- 6) Technology, and therefore AI, can elicit temptation in humans (James 1:13–15; Jer 17:9).
 - a. Can humans worship their own creations? YES! (Jeremiahs 10:1–10).
 - b. Can humans be deceived? Yes! (see Genesis 3!)
 - c. Can we be motivated by selfish desires? YES! (James 4:1–4)
 - d. Does AI frighten you? Does it worry you?
- 7) Technology, and therefore AI, can and has been used to advance the gospel:
 - a. Ancient letter-writing, postal systems
 - b. Land and sea navigation
 - c. The printing press (15th-18th Century)
 - d. Industrialization (18th-19th Century)
 - e. Radio and film (20th Century)
 - f. Television and Satellite broadcast (20th century)
 - g. Internet and YouTube (20th-21st Century)
 - h. Digital and Social Media (21st Century)
- 8) The use of technology and AI will require biblical wisdom and discernment (James 1:5).
- 9) We should trust in God alone, and not technology (Psalm 20:7).
- 10) We should seek to use technology, and therefore AI, to God's glory (1 Corinthians 10:31).

5) What AI CANNOT Do for our souls:

- 1) No, AI CANNOT worship, pray, repent, or trust God like a human was designed to.¹²
- 2) No, AI CANNOT separate Christians from God's love (Romans 8:37–39).
- 3) No, AI CANNOT replace true knowledge of God and His Word (Proverbs 9:10; John 1:1–3).
- 4) No, AI, or its hypothetical iterations CANNOT surpass God's wisdom and knowledge (Romans 11:33–36).

¹¹ For a broad evangelical statement of Artificial Intelligence and principles see the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission's statement on Artificial Intelligence: "Artificial Intelligence: An Evangelical Statement of Principles" (<https://erlc.com/policy-content/artificial-intelligence-an-evangelical-statement-of-principles/>)

¹² John Piper asked ChatGPT to write a prayer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CIMZH7DEPPQ>

- 5) No, AI CANNOT be objectively truthful, unbiased, or even accurate.¹³
- 6) No, AI CANNOT pray for or counsel you like a brother or sister in Christ (James 5:13–16).
- 7) No, AI CANNOT replace intimate love in marriage (Ephesians 5:22–32).¹⁴
- 8) No, AI CANNOT confront your sin and snatch you from the fire (Jude 1:23; James 5:19–20).¹⁵
- 9) No, AI CANNOT bring about the end of the world.
 - a. History as we know it will not end by human inventions, technology, or ingenuity, but rather, by God’s sovereign and divine intervention through Christ. So, no, the advent of AI does not mean the end of the world (see 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18; The Book of Revelation).

6) A brief overview of various technologies the Bible records:

- City-building – Genesis 4:17
- Musical instruments – Genesis 4:21
- Metalworking (bronze & iron tools) – Genesis 4:22
- Ship-building (Noah’s Ark) – Genesis 6–9
- Tower-building (Tower of Babel) – Genesis 11:3–5
- Irrigation & agriculture – Genesis 26:18–22
- Breeding strong animals – Genesis 30:37–43
- Brickmaking – Exodus 5
- Writing (tablets, records, law codes) – Exodus 24:12; Deuteronomy 27:2–3
- Blueprints & craftsmanship for the Tabernacle – Exodus 25–31; 35–40
- Weapons & armor – 1 Samuel 17:38–40; 2 Samuel 21:16
- Fortified cities & walls – Joshua 6; Nehemiah 2:17–20
- Temple architecture & construction – 1 Kings 6–7
- Water systems (Hezekiah’s tunnel) – 2 Kings 20:20; 2 Chronicles 32:30
- Roads & chariots – 1 Kings 9:19; Isaiah 66:20
- Writing (scrolls, letters, codices) – Luke 4:17; 2 Timothy 4:13
- Fishing technology (nets, boats) – Luke 5:2–7; John 21:6
- Construction (buildings, foundations) – Matthew 24:1; Mark 13:1
- Roman roads & infrastructure (used for travel & mission) – Acts 9:11; Acts 28:14–15
- Ships (Paul’s missionary journeys & shipwreck) – Acts 27:6, 37–44
- Armor (as metaphor, but based on real tech) – Ephesians 6:11–17
- Chains, prisons, gates (security technology) – Acts 12:6–10; Acts 16:24–26

¹³ “Danger in the Machine: The Perils of Political and Demographic Biases Embedded in AI Systems” (<https://media4.manhattan-institute.org/sites/default/files/the-perils-of-political-and-demographic-biases-embedded-in-ai-systems.pdf>)

¹⁴ “Counterfeit Connections: The Rise of AI Romantic Companions” <https://ifstudies.org/blog/counterfeit-connections-the-rise-of-ai-romantic-companions->

¹⁵ <https://www.cnn.com/2025/08/26/tech/openai-chatgpt-teen-suicide-lawsuit>

RECOMMENDED READING

BOOKS

Dorothy Sayers, *The Mind of the Maker*

James Thacker, *The Age of AI: Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Humanity*

John Dyer, *From the Garden to the City*

John Jefferson Davis, *Evangelical Ethics: Issues Facing the Church Today: Fourth Edition*

Justin Welby, *The Robot Will See You Now: Artificial Intelligence and the Christian Faith*

Norman L. Geisler, *Christian Ethics: Contemporary Issues & Options: Second Edition*

Ray Kurzweil, *The Singularity is Near: When Humans Transcend Biology*

Sherry Turkle, *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other*

Sherry Turkle, *Reclaiming Conversation: The Power of Talk in a Digital Age*

Stephen Driscoll, *Made in Our Image: God, Artificial Intelligence, and You*

Tony Reinke, *God, Technology, and the Christian Life*

ARTICLES/PODCASTS

Al Mohler, The Briefing Podcast

The Art of Discernment Podcast (The Master's University): "AI and the Christian"

<https://youtu.be/NXFKYkNYkVk>

"Artificially Intelligent" by Vern Poythress

<https://frame-poythress.org/artificially-intelligent/>

"Artificial Intelligence: Tool, Image Bearer, or Temptation?" by Mike Kirby and Matthew Emadi

<https://christoverall.com/article/longform/artificial-intelligence-ai-tool-image-bearer-or-temptation/#post-14127-footnote-6>

"The FAQs: What Christians Should Know About Artificial Intelligence" by Joe Carter

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/the-faqs-what-christians-should-know-about-artificial-intelligence/>

"AI Makes Me Doubt Everything" by Tim Challies

<https://www.challies.com/articles/ai-makes-me-doubt-everything/>

"John Piper on ChatGPT" by John Piper

<https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/john-piper-on-chatgpt>

"Should I Use AI to Help Me Write Sermons?" by John Piper

<https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/should-i-use-ai-to-help-me-write-sermons>