Church of God

The Biblical Grandview

Artificial Intelligence | Character Test

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The steam-powered cable car in downtown San Francisco began serving the public sometime in 1873. These cars move by gripping an underground cable that ran beneath the street. On the single-ended Powell lines, when a car reached the end of the route, the gripman released the cable and coasted the car onto a mechanical turntable. The gripman and conductor then stepped off, set the brakes, and turned the car by hand so it could face back uphill for the return trip. This was downtown transportation at its best.

Today, in 2026, driverless robotaxis traverse those same hilly San Francisco streets. No gripman. No conductor. No cable. In their place are sensors, mapping, autonomous driving systems, and artificial intelligence. Now San Francisco has become the ground zero of AI, and Anthropic, an AI upstart company, operates downtown at First Street. This group is a prime example of generative pre-trained transformer, GPT, innovators.

My purpose is not to promote AI hype nor to indulge AI fear. Brethren, two thoughtful essays were published by Dario Amodei, Anthropic CEO. The essays are entitled "*Machines of Loving Grace*" and "*The Adolescence of Technology*." Dario Amodei is at the forefront of advanced AI development. His essays explore both the enormous promise and the serious risks of modern artificial intelligence. They are sober, technical, and raise questions affecting all of society.

My goal is to clarify artificial intelligence. I can assure you that machine intelligence is not the issue. The issue is about human responsibility. Machines that can think are not the question here. Here is the real question we need to answer: Will humanity have the mindset to think wisely? Will humanity practice character when building and deploying these complex, revolutionary tools?

Let us consider something that, at first glance, does not look impressive at all or can even be useful. Notice closely what is projected in the background. This image depicts the 1949 first edition book of Claude Shannon's *The Mathematical Theory of*

Communication. Shannon's core ideas first appeared in 1948 in the internally published *Bell System Technical Journal*, which was later expanded into this book in 1949.

When this book first appeared, it did not look revolutionary. The pages in this thin textbook looked like plain, unassuming mathematical notations: pages upon pages of symbols, logarithms, and statistical probability. Claude Shannon was not trying to build a mind. He was asking a basic question: What is information? He answered this way: information can be measured. It can be reduced to uncertainty. Information can be turned into bits.

Bits are zeroes and ones for binary counting. Binary counting means counting using only two digits: zero and one. What is digital? Just zeroes and ones. It is a simple counting system. That is how computers make everything digital. Furthermore, introducing the element of extreme speed, making the ones and zeroes cycle back and forth at gigahertz frequencies, enables the computer's extraordinary data-processing power.

This single insight, that information is essentially digital, reshaped our modern world. From that insight came digital communication. From digital communication came computer networks. From computer networks came massive data processing. From massive data processing came statistical language systems, and those systems are what we now call artificial intelligence.

In 1956, at a summer school workshop at Dartmouth, the term "artificial intelligence" entered the world, coined in a proposal led by John McCarthy, with collaborators including Claude Shannon. Dartmouth College is a private research university located in Hanover, New Hampshire, U.S.A., established in 1769 by Eleazar Wheelock. Dartmouth is one of the nine colonial colleges chartered before the American Revolution of 1776.

The name they coined, "artificial intelligence," was bold—perhaps too bold. But beneath the ambition of the name, the machinery was still about math, symbols, statistical probability, and mathematical computation. We also need to consider that this name,

artificial intelligence, or AI, arrived in a world already shaped by Shannon's book about information theory, which was captured in the 1949 first edition of *The Mathematical Theory of Communication*.

Shannon's book gave researchers a blueprint for thinking about information, noise, and computation—the kind of groundwork AI practitioners would keep borrowing from and improving in the decades that followed. Artificial intelligence, AI, is not spirit. It is not consciousness, and it is not a mind. What people today treat as mysterious machine intelligence began as mathematics printed in a thin textbook. What looks like AI thinking machines began as statistics. What feels alive as AI chatbot characters are simply ones and zeroes playing bits.

Here is the acid test: technology does not create character. It magnifies it. Scripture has long warned us about knowledge without humility. In Genesis 11, in the story of the Tower of Babel, humanity said, "Let us build. Let us make a name for ourselves." The problem was not bricks. It was pride. Technology was not evil; self-exaltation was, and still is, the culprit.

Proverbs 14:12 tells us, "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death." Efficiency seems right. Acceleration seems right. Automation seems right. But what seems right can end destructively if wisdom is absent.

In 1 Corinthians 8:1, Paul writes, "Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up." Knowledge has increased, but humility has not necessarily kept pace. Daniel 12:4 says, "Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase." Today, information moves instantly. Computation scales exponentially. Scientific capacity accelerates. But Daniel does not say wisdom increases. Let me repeat that: Daniel does not say wisdom increases. He simply says knowledge increases. Period. That distinction truly matters.

Here is the evidence of history. Humans split the atom, and the atomic bomb arrived before restraint. Humans built the horseless carriage, and industrial power raced ahead of wisdom. Humans built the internet, and instant global speech outran truthfulness.

Power first, maturity later. Capability accelerated faster than character. That is technological adolescence. Strength without discipline becomes volatility. Power without humility becomes instability.

Now let us be clear about the tool itself. Artificial intelligence is not sentient. On one hand, this tool is a statistical pattern engine trained on massive amounts of human language. It predicts sequences from the designated dataset and data patterns. It processes statistical probabilities at extraordinary speed. Metal, wires, plastic, and electricity do not think; they calculate.

On the other hand, the human brain remains categorically different, capable of moral reasoning, conscience, spiritual awareness, and abstract judgment. These twain shall never meet. The machine reflects human knowledge back at scale. It does not originate it. But tools amplify, and here is where the matter becomes serious, brethren.

We are not witnessing the birth of thinking machines. On the contrary, we are witnessing the concentration of human power. The reality test is not technological; it is moral. That morality is not defined by convenient culture or efficiency. It is defined by the law of God. Will human beings exercise power within the boundaries God has set? Will knowledge be governed by humility? Will innovation submit to righteousness? This technology does not suspend divine law. It reveals whether we respect it.

So, as we move forward into an age of powerful tools built from metal, wires, plastic, electricity, and computer programs, remember this: the issue is not whether machines will think. The issue is whether humanity will think clearly. Not whether machines will act, but whether human beings will act righteously. The future will not be decided by silicon circuits or software code, but by the character of the people who design, deploy, and depend on them.

Artificial intelligence and all those related technologies are only modern tools of convenience, much like the cable cars that carried people up and down the hills of downtown San Francisco. The tool moves the passenger, but does not choose the

destination. Silicon computer chips have no conscience. Software code has no morality. The machine will never possess a mind, but we humans must never lose ours.