

FRIDAY CHURCH NEWS NOTES

ISRAEL APPROVES INTEGRATED PRAYER SITE AT WESTERN WALL

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government has announced a plan to build a new worship site at the Western Wall that will accommodate both sexes. Currently there are segregated worship areas at the Wall, a large one for men and a smaller one for women, with the sections divided by a wall. For years, the Women of the Wall organization, which represents the "liberal streams of Judaism," has been demonstrating for mixed-sex prayer. In Herod's Temple women were restricted to the Court of the Women. It was also called the Middle Court, because it was between the Court of the Gentiles and the Court of Israel which was for Jewish men. The synagogues were also traditionally divided into men's and women's sections until recent times when the more liberal ones integrated worship. The Israeli government plans to build a mixed-sex worship area to the south of the existing worship areas in a place currently occupied by an archaeological dig. The Western Wall Plaza was built in 1967 immediately following the Six-Day War when Israel gained access to eastern Jerusalem. The area of the plaza near the Wall, known as the lower plaza, functions as a synagogue.



The Western Wall

THE ANCIENT BABYLONIANS' "FANCY MATH"

Recent research by astrophysicist Mathieu Ossendrijver, using ancient tablets at the British Museum, has found that from



Babylonian Tablet

about 1800 BC the Babylonians used a "complex geometrical model that looks like a rudimentary form of integral calculus to calculate the path of Jupiter" ("Babylonians tracked Jupiter with fancy math," *Live Science*, Jan. 28, 2016). The tablets analyzed by Ossendrijver date from about 1800 BC to 50 BC. The Babylonians developed "abstract mathematical, geometrical ideas about the connection between motion, position and time that are so common to any modern physicist or mathematician" ("Math whizzes of ancient Babylon figured out forerunner of calculus," *Science*,

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ENGLAND APPROVES GENE EDITING

The following is excerpted from “Scientists get ‘gene editing’ go-ahead,” *BBC*, Feb. 1, 2016: “UK scientists have been given the go-ahead by the fertility regulator to genetically modify human embryos. It is the first time a country has considered the DNA-altering technique in embryos and approved it. The research will take place at the Francis Crick Institute in London and aims to provide a deeper understanding of the earliest moments of human life. It will be illegal for the scientists to implant the modified embryos into a woman. But the field is attracting controversy over concerns it is opening the door to designer--or GM--babies. DNA is the blueprint of life--the instructions for building the human body. Gene editing allows the precise manipulation of DNA. ... The experiments will take place in the first seven days after fertilisation. During this time we go from a fertilised egg to a structure

called a blastocyst, containing 200-300 cells. ... The work will be led by Dr. Kathy Niakan, who has spent a decade researching human development. Earlier this year, she explained why she had applied to edit human embryos: ‘We would really like to understand the genes needed for a human embryo to develop successfully into a healthy baby. The reason why it is so important is because miscarriages and infertility are extremely common, but they’re not very well understood.’”



KUWAIT AIR ENDS NEW YORK SERVICE OVER REFUSAL TO CARRY ISRAELIS



Kuwait Airways Jet

Kuwait is supposed to be a “moderate” Muslim nation, but it has shut down a coveted London to New York service rather than carry Israelis as ordered by the U.S. Department of Transportation. Like Saudi Arabia, Kuwait does not allow Jews even to visit the country. The following is from *The Times of Israel*,

Jan. 17, 2016: “Kuwait Air is ending its New York to London service over the carrier’s refusal to carry Israeli passengers.’ The U.S. Department of Transportation will not tolerate unlawful discrimination, and has mandated that the airline immediately cease that practice and allow Israeli passengers to travel between the U.S. and London,’ Anthony Foxx, the transportation secretary, said in a statement on Friday. ‘In light of our demands, Kuwait Airways has chosen to cease passenger service from New York JFK airport to London Heathrow by January 18.’”

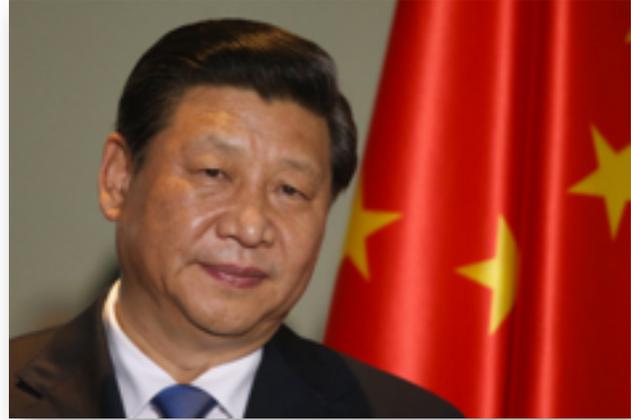
THE ANCIENT BABYLONIANS' "FANCY MATH"

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Jan. 28, 2016). Alexander Jones of New York University says, “Such concepts have not been found earlier than in 14th century European texts on moving bodies. Their presence testifies to the revolutionary brilliance of the unknown Mesopotamian scholars who constructed Babylonian mathematical astronomy.” The path of Jupiter was important to the Babylonians, as their chief god Marduk was identified with this planet. “And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top *may reach* unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth” (Genesis 11:4).

CHINESE LEADER CALLS FOR PALESTINIAN STATE WITH JERUSALEM CAPITAL

The following is excerpted from “Chinese Leader,” *Times of Israel*, Jan. 22, 2016: “Chinese President Xi Jinping called on Thursday for the establishment of a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital. Speaking to the Arab League in Cairo while on a tour of the region, Xi said China supports the peace process in the Middle East and backs a Palestinian state along the 1967 borders with Israel. Xi also said his country would provide \$7.6 million to the Palestinians in support of a new solar power project. He announced billions of dollars in special loans and investments in the Middle East, as Beijing seeks to boost its economic ties and clout in the region.”



Chinese President Xi Jinping

POPE: BAPTISM UNITES ALL CHRISTIANS

The following is by Matt Costella, Fundamental Evangelistic Association, Jan. 26, 2016: “Baptismal regeneration--the belief that one becomes a member of the body of Christ through baptism rather than through faith alone in the person and work of Jesus



Pope Francis

Christ--is a false gospel embraced by many of the major ‘Christian’ denominations. Pope Francis recently stated that Christian baptism not only brings salvation to the sinner, but it is the key to

unity with all Christians--Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant. In his general audience during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, the pope declared that ‘the mercy of God, which works in baptism, is stronger than our divisions’ (Catholic News Agency, ‘Pope Francis: For Christians, Baptism Is Stronger Than Differences,’ Jan. 20, 2016). According to the pope, baptism creates ‘an indissoluble bond between

us Christians, such that, by virtue of baptism, we can consider ourselves truly brothers.’ The CNA report described how the pope pointed to a 12th century baptismal font in the Lutheran Cathedral of Riga in Latvia and said the font signals the origin of faith recognized by all Christians which ‘is our common baptism.’ The culprit for disunity, according to the pope, is ‘egoism, which plants seeds of division, closure, and contempt in our minds and hearts.’ Christians today need to understand--especially as evangelicals continue to laud the pope and strive for unity with Rome--that the false gospel of baptismal regeneration embraced and propagated by the Roman Catholic Church is truly a damnable heresy. Baptism is simply an ordinance to be practiced by those who have already trusted in Christ as Savior--an outward testimony of one’s relationship with God. And it should be noted that ‘egoism’ does not create division in the church--false doctrine does! God’s Word commands believers to not only separate from false doctrine and those who practice it, but it commands Christians to ‘earnestly contend’ for the faith and warn about the ‘wolves in sheep’s clothing’ who attempt to destroy the flock and draw away disciples after themselves.”

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH BANS INTELLIGENT DESIGN INFORMATION

The very liberal United Methodist Church has banned the Discovery Institute from sponsoring an information table at its upcoming General Conference. The Discovery Institute promotes the intelligent design position. Dr. John West, Vice President of the Discovery Institute, observes, "Preventing United Methodist leaders from even hearing about intelligent design isn't open-minded. It's intolerant and exclusionary. Maybe United Methodist officials should change their slogan to 'Closed Hearts, Closed Minds, Closed

Doors'" ("United Methodist Church Displays Intolerance," *Evolution News & Views*, Jan. 18, 2016). In 2004, the United Methodist Church passed a resolution stating that it "opposed the introduction of any faith-based theories such as Creationism or Intelligent Design into the science curriculum of our public schools." Of this statement, the Bible says, "But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11:6).

NOAH WEBSTER'S "PROPHECY" ABOUT 21ST CENTURY AMERICA

Noah Webster, author of the *Blue-Backed Speller* and the *American Dictionary of the English Language*, was one of the most important and influential figures in early American history. His spiritual conversion in 1808 at age 49 had a dramatic impact on his thinking, and his passion from then to the end of his long life was to encourage Bible education in America. He was convinced that a free republic could only exist if the citizens were righteous and wise, and he believed that only the Bible has the power to produce



such citizens. In 1835, he issued the following warning: "God has provided but one way, by which nations can secure their rights and

privileges: by obedience to his laws. Without this, a nation may be great in population, great in wealth, and great in military strength; but it must be corrupt in morals, degraded in character, and distracted with factions. This is the order of God's moral government, as firm as his throne, and unchangeable as his purpose; and nations, disregarding this order, are doomed to incessant internal evils, and ultimately to ruin" (Noah Webster, *Instructive and Entertaining Lessons for Youth*, 1835).

INFORMATION

The Friday Church News Notes is designed for use in churches and is published by Way of Life Literature's Fundamental Baptist Information Service. Unless otherwise stated, the Notes are written by David Cloud. Of necessity we quote from a wide variety of sources, but this obviously does not imply an endorsement. We trust that our readers will not be discouraged. It is God's will that we know the times (1 Ch. 12:32; Mat. 16:3) and that we be as wise as serpents and harmless as doves. The News Notes remind us that the hour is very late, and we need to be ready for the Lord's coming. Are you sure that you are born again? Are you living for Christ? "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof" (Rom. 13:11-14). This material is sent only to those who personally subscribe to the Fundamental Baptist Information Service mailing list. To SUBSCRIBE, go to <http://www.wayoflife.org/wayoflife/subscribe.html>. TO UNSUBSCRIBE OR CHANGE ADDRESSES, go to the very bottom of any email received from us and click "Manage My Subscription." Way of Life Literature, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org.