

O Timothy

“Keep that which is committed to thy trust...”

A Monthly Newsletter for Spiritual Protection and Edification

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“Since the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 AD, Jews have been looking for a Messiah that will rebuild the temple. In Jewish Talmudic tradition, the rebuilding of the temple is associated with the coming of the Messiah. According to Maimonides (also called Rambam), the highest rabbinical authority, any Jew that starts rebuilding the temple is a potential Messiah.” Page 7.

Digging in the Walls: A month’s worth of news items, republished from Friday Church News Notes. Page 11.



THE EMPTY TOMB IS STILL EMPTY - By David Cloud

The attached photo, taken on my recent third trip to Israel, gives a good perspective of Jerusalem at the time of Christ’s death. It is a view of Old Jerusalem from the Tower of David or Jerusalem Citadel. This tower had nothing to do historically with King David, dating to the Byzantine and Islamic occupation of Jerusalem, but is a great viewing platform today.

The golden Dome of the Rock toward the right is on the Temple Mount where Herod’s Temple stood. The grey domes on the left are part of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. This was first built in 335 AD by the Emperor Constantine on the site where Emperor Hadrian had constructed a temple to Artemis or Venus after the Bar Kokhba revolt of 135 AD. Hadrian built it over the place revered by Christians as Christ’s tomb. Since that was only about 40 years after the death of the Apostle John and well within the lifetime of those who knew the apostles personally, it seems certain that they would have



Photo by David Cloud

known the exact tomb. Thus I believe the Catholic Church got that one right, and that is indeed the location where Christ was crucified and was buried in a tomb nearby (John 19:41-42). Boundary walls of the Venus temple

have been found among the archaeological remains beneath the church (Virgilio Carbo, *The Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem*, 1981).

The tomb was only a stone's throw from the Temple where the curtain was rent in twain at His death, signifying the opening of the way to God for believing sinners through Christ's atonement.

“And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent” (Matthew 27:51).

“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh” (Hebrews 10:19-20).

There is no logical explanation for the empty tomb other than the resurrection.

The Jews didn't steal it, because they wanted to prove that He did not rise. They took every precaution to prevent such an event, and after the stone was rolled away the the guards fled, they had to create the lie that the disciples had stolen the body (Matthew 28:11-15). If Jesus' body was located anywhere, they would have searched it out with all diligence and produced it.

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The Roman government had no motive to remove it. The highest Roman authority in Judea had ordered Jesus' crucifixion because of His claim to to kingship and had sealed the tomb for good measure.

As for Christ's apostles, it makes no sense that they would steal it. First, they were hiding in fear for their lives. Second, they had no opportunity, because the tomb was sealed and guarded. Third, they had no leader who could have envisioned and accomplished such a thing. Peter was a broken man at that point and had given up his discipleship to Jesus to go back to fishing (John 21:3). Fourth, they would have been fools to have suffered and died for a lie! The disciples didn't suffer for what others had seen, such as Muslims who die for the Koran; they died for what they had professedly seen themselves (Acts 4:18-20). We must not forget what the early Christians suffered for their testimony that Christ rose from the dead. They were denounced by family and friends, hated by and considered the enemies of society, tortured, kept imprisoned for years in dark, rat-infested cells. Their property was confiscated; they were crucified, burned alive, torn apart by wild beasts, chopped into pieces, roasted on racks; their tongues were torn out and their eyes put out. The also had to endure the torture and death of beloved family members. Fifth, it would have been impossible for such a large number of people to have kept the secret hidden. “Even if it had been possible, and the disciples the men to do it, the subsequent history of Christianity would have been different. Sooner or later, someone who knew the facts would have been unable to keep them hidden” (Frank Morison, *Who Moved the Stone?*). Sixth, a great moral religion like we find in the New Testament, which exalts truth and honesty, could not have been founded upon a despicable deception.

Just weeks after Christ's crucifixion, only a stone's throw from the empty tomb itself, Peter publicly proclaimed the resurrection and 3,000 believed, followed a little later by “a great company of priests” and “a great number” more (Acts 2:37-42; 6:7; 11:21). All of the people were aware of Christ's tomb. If anyone could have produced a body or come up with a reasonable account for it being missing, they would have!

Many lawyers have analyzed the evidence from a legal standpoint and have concluded that the evidence for the resurrection is overwhelming. We give eight examples

in the free eBook [Questions Answered on the Bible and Christianity](#).

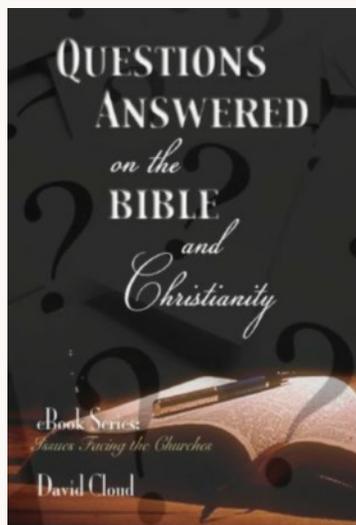
For example, Simon Greenleaf, Royall Professor of Law at Harvard University, was one of the most celebrated legal minds of America. In 1846 he published *An Examination of the Testimony of the Four Evangelists by the Rules of Evidence Administered in the Courts of Justice*.

"All that Christianity asks of men is, that they would be consistent with themselves; that they would treat its evidences as they treat the evidence of other things; and that they would try and judge its actors and witnesses, as they deal with their fellow men, when testifying to human affairs and actions, in human tribunals. Let the witnesses [to the Resurrection] be compared with themselves, with each other, and with surrounding facts and circumstances; and let their testimony be sifted, as if it were given in a court of justice, on the side of the adverse party, the witness being subjected to a rigorous cross-examination. The result, it is confidently believed, will be an undoubting conviction of their integrity, ability and truth" (*An Examination of the Testimony of the Four Evangelists*).

"Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover

also my flesh shall rest in hope: Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:22-36).

March 24, 2016 (David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org; for instructions about subscribing and unsubscribing or changing addresses, see the information paragraph at the end of the article)



Questions Answered on the Bible and Christianity

This apologetics book answers questions commonly asked by unbelievers and skeptics. It also contains eight evidences that the Bible is the divinely-inspired Word of God, a chapter on what the Bible says about the future, and a chapter about skeptics who were converted to Christ trying to disprove the Bible. The questions that are answered include the following: What is the Bible? Who wrote it? Hasn't science disproved the Bible? Do any scientists believe the Bible? How could all of the animals fit on Noah's Ark and was there enough water to cover the world? What evidence is there for God? Don't all religions teach basically the same

thing? Why does God allow suffering? Why did God order the destruction of nations? Is it possible to know the truth? What about those who have never heard about Jesus? Is there evidence that Jesus rose from the dead? Did Jesus go to Egypt or India to learn wisdom? What about reincarnation? Does the Bible say that women are inferior? Why can't Christians just keep their religion to themselves? Aren't Hindu scriptures older than the Bible? Why have Christians done bad things such as cause wars? What is the Trinity?

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“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (2 Timothy 4:3-4).

Many New Testament prophecies describe a turning away from the New Testament faith and the creation of false churches that follow man-made tradition and heresies instead of the pure doctrine of God’s Word. This is called apostasy, and the Bible says it will increase as the time of Christ’s return draws nearer. See, for example, Matthew 7:15-22; 1 Timothy 4:1-6; 2 Timothy 3:1, 5, 12-13; 4:3-4; 2 Peter 2:1-2; 2 John 7-11; Jude 3-4.

On a trip to Israel in April 2010, we saw the fulfillment of these prophecies throughout Israel.

Practically every important geographical site is owned by some apostate church that enriches itself by this means. There is the Church of the Nativity with its Chapel of the Milk Grotto; the Church of St. Peter at Capernaum; the Basilica of the Annunciation at Nazareth; the Church of the Beatitudes on the Sea of Galilee; the Church of the Loaves and Fishes at Tabgha; the Church of the Miracle at Cana; Elisha’s Church at Jericho; St. Peter’s Church at Jaffa; and the Church of John the Baptist in Samaria, to mention a few.

In Jerusalem there are churches in the supposed places where Jesus prayed, where He allegedly fell, where He was imprisoned, where he was beaten, where the tree was cut for His cross, where He died, where He was buried, where He rose from the dead, even where Mary died. There is the Church of Our Lady of the Spasm, the Church of Mary Magdalene, The Church of Our Lord Weeping, the Basilica of the Agony, St. Veronica’s Church, and even Saint Peter’s in Gallicantu (which

refers to the rooster that crowed the night Peter denied the Lord).

The preeminent showcase of false Christianity in Israel is the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, which sits on the alleged site of Jesus’ death and burial. Standing in the center of that church our guide gave an overview as follows:

“We are now inside the Holy Sepulchre Church. The church is occupied on one side by the Armenians; in the middle in the tomb and central nave by the Greek Orthodox; the rear end of the tomb belongs to the Copts; the area of the catacombs the Assyrian Church; where we are now standing near the rotunda, the Catholic Church; the Abyssinian or Ethiopian Church is on the rooftop. As the churches have a problem agreeing one with the other, the keys of the church are actually held by the Muslims, in the same family for 400 years. And it all falls inside a Jewish state. On the way in we had to pass the Muslim mosque of Omar in order to get into the main entrance to the Holy Sepulcher Church.”

This is in perfect fulfillment of the New Testament prophecies. These “churches” are all apostate. They preach a false gospel of sacramentalism and works. My son-in-law, who grew up in a staunch Hindu family in South Asia, observed that the Church of the Holy Sepulchre “is just like Hinduism.” There are idols and icons galore, priests decked out in impressive robes, incense, candles, bells, holy places, holy relics, holy pilgrimages, bowing down to images, kissing them, getting blessing from them.

In fulfillment of 2 Timothy 4:4, there are religious myths in abundance.

There is the myth of Mary's suffering with Christ. The 13th Station of the Cross, which is inside the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, features an image of Mary with a cross piercing her heart, depicting the myth that she participated in Christ's suffering for mankind.

There is the myth of Mary's sinless birth, of her ascension to Heaven, of her crowning as Queen of Heaven.

There is the myth that every Easter a holy flame appears in the tomb of Jesus at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. From this flame the Christian pilgrims light bundles of 33 tapers for blessing and luck. (There are 33 to signify the 33 years of Christ's earthly life.)

There is the myth that religious objects can be fortified with spiritual power by placing them on the holy sites.

This is the fable-loving Christianity that is described in New Testament prophecy by Jesus and His apostles.

It is also prophetically significant that there is a push for unity within Christianity today. The philosophy of unity is operating among liberal and "evangelical" Christians, as well. Even at the Garden Tomb, which is operated by an evangelical Protestant organization, ecumenism is the prominent philosophy. Our guide there was a Baptist, but he said that he works with Protestants, Orthodox, and Catholics, and they get along fine because they don't "argue about doctrine." This is apostasy. The Bible says that sound doctrine is preeminent (2 Timothy 3:16) and God's people are commanded to earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 3). The ecumenical philosophy is the leaven that is bringing all branches of Christianity together into one apostate loaf.

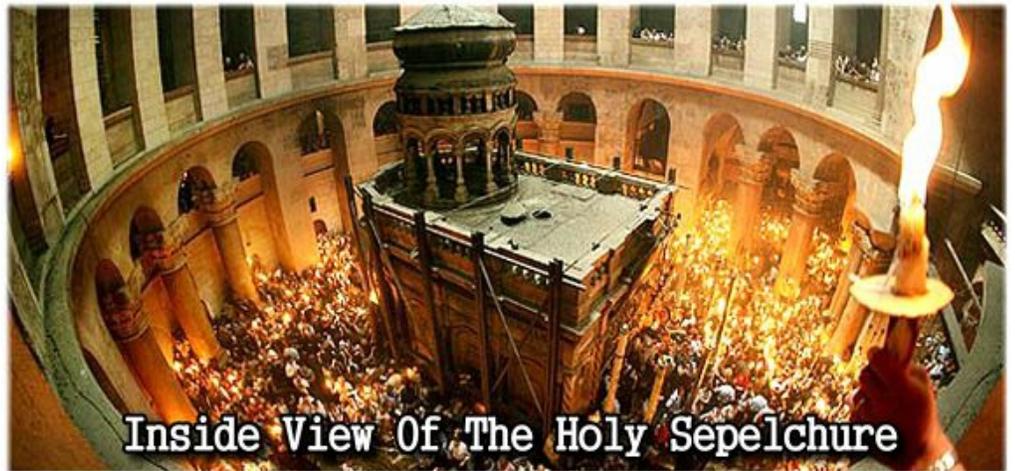
MARK TWAIN'S DESCRIPTION OF THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE

The following is from Mark Twain, *The Innocents Abroad*, 1867:

"Entering the building, through the midst of the usual assemblage of beggars, one sees on his left a few Turkish guards--for Christians of different sects will not only quarrel, but fight, also, in this sacred place, if allowed to do it.

"All sects of Christians (except Protestants,) have chapels under the roof of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and each must keep to itself and not venture upon another's ground. It has been proven conclusively that they cannot worship together around the grave of the Saviour of the World in peace. ...

"As we moved among the great piers and pillars of another part of the church, we came upon a party of black-robed animal-looking Italian monks, with candles in their hands, who were chanting something in Latin, and going through some kind of religious performance around a disk of white marble let into the floor. It was there that the risen Saviour appeared to Mary Magdalen in the likeness of a gardener. Near by was a similar stone, shaped like a star--here the Magdalen herself stood, at



Inside View Of The Holy Sepelchre

the same time. Monks were performing in this place also. They perform everywhere--all over the vast building, and at all hours. Their candles are always flitting about in the gloom, and making the dim old church more dismal than there is any necessity that it should be even though it is a tomb. ...

"We were shown the place where our Lord appeared to His mother after the Resurrection. Here, also, a marble slab marks the place where St. Helena, the mother of the Emperor Constantine, found the crosses about three hundred years after the Crucifixion. According to the legend, this great discovery elicited extravagant demonstrations of joy. But they were of short duration.

The question intruded itself: ‘Which bore the blessed Saviour, and which the thieves?’ To be in doubt, in so mighty a matter as this--to be uncertain which one to adore--was a grievous misfortune. It turned the public joy to sorrow. But when lived there is a holy priest who could not set so simply a trouble at rest? One of these soon hit upon a plan that would be a certain test. A noble lady lay very ill in Jerusalem. The wise priests ordered that the three crosses be taken to her bedside one at a time. It was done. When her eyes fell upon the first one, she uttered a scream that was heard beyond the Damascus Gate, and even upon the Mount of Olives, it was said, and then fell back in a deadly swoon. They recovered her and brought the second cross. Instantly she went into fearful convulsions, and it was with the greatest difficulty that six strong men could hold her. They were afraid, now, to bring in the third cross. They began to fear that possibly they had fallen upon the wrong crosses, and that the true cross was not with this number at all. However, as the woman seemed likely to die with the convulsions that were tearing her, they concluded that the third could do no more than put her out of her misery with a happy dispatch. So they brought it, and behold, a miracle! The woman sprang from her bed, smiling and joyful, and perfectly restored to health. ...

‘Not far from here was a niche where they used to preserve a piece of the True Cross, but it is gone, now. This piece of the cross was discovered in the sixteenth century. The Latin priests say it was stolen away, long ago, by priests of another sect. That seems like a hard statement to make, but we know very well that it was stolen, because we have seen it ourselves in several of the cathedrals of Italy and France. ...

‘The Greek Chapel is the most roomy, the richest and the showiest chapel in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. ... But the feature of the place is a short column that rises from the middle of the marble pavement of the chapel, and marks the exact centre of the earth. The most reliable traditions tell us that this was known to be the earth’s centre, ages ago, and that when Christ was upon earth he set all doubts upon the subject at rest forever, by stating with his own lips that the tradition was correct. Remember, He said that that particular column stood upon the centre of the world. If the centre of the world changes, the column changes its position accordingly. This column has moved three different times of its own accord. ...



‘If even greater proofs than those I have mentioned are wanted, to satisfy the headstrong and the foolish that this is the genuine centre of the earth, they are here. The greatest of them lies in the fact that from under this very column was taken the dust from which Adam was made. ...

‘It is a singular circumstance that right under the roof of this same great church, and not far away from that illustrious column, Adam himself, the father of the human race, lies buried. ...

‘The next place the guide took us to in the holy church was an altar dedicated to the Roman soldier who was of the military guard that attended at the Crucifixion to keep order, and who--when the vail of the Temple was rent in the awful darkness that followed; when the rock of Golgotha was split asunder by an earthquake ... and said, ‘Surely this was the Son of God!’ ...

‘In this altar they used to keep one of the most curious relics that human eyes ever looked upon--a thing that had power to fascinate the beholder in some mysterious way and keep him gazing for hours together. It was nothing less than the copper plate Pilate put upon the Saviour’s cross, and upon which he wrote, ‘THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.’ I think St. Helena, the mother of Constantine, found this wonderful memento when she was here in the third century. She traveled all over Palestine, and was always fortunate. Whenever the good old enthusiast found a thing mentioned in her Bible, Old or New, she would go and search for that thing, and never stop until she found it. If it was Adam, she would find Adam; if it was the Ark, she would find the Ark; if it was Goliath, or Joshua, she would find them. She found the inscription here that I was speaking of, I think. She found

perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them” (Mat. 13:14-15).

“But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him” (John 12:37-41).

“And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them” (Acts 28:25-27).

The Lord warned that the Jewish nation of that generation would be like a man who is dispossessed of an unclean spirit that then returns with seven other evil spirits.

“When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation” (Matthew 12:43-45).

The Lord Jesus said that the spiritual blindness would continue until the nation of Israel receives Him, which will happen during the Great Tribulation.

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord” (Mat. 23:37-39).

Since the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 AD, Jews have been looking for a Messiah that will rebuild the temple. In Jewish Talmudic tradition, the rebuilding of the temple is associated with the coming of the Messiah. According to Maimonides (also called Rambam), the highest rabbinical authority, any Jew that starts rebuilding the temple is a potential Messiah.



Following are some of the messianic figures that have appeared over the past 2,000 years:

SIMON BAR KOKHBA was the name given to Simon ben Kosiba. When Simon sought to liberate Jerusalem in 132 AD, he was proclaimed the Messiah by Rabbi Akiba ben Joseph and renamed *Bar Kokhba* (“Son of the Star”) based on the Messianic prophecy of Numbers 24:17. The Jews struck the coin of Bar Kokhba depicting the temple with the ark of the covenant inside and the Messianic star on the roof. The other side was inscribed with “To the Freedom of Jerusalem.” In 135 AD, the revolt was put down by the Romans with terrible brutality with the death and enslavement of more than half a million Jews. Judea was reduced to rubble, with 50 fortified towns and nearly 1,000 villages razed. Jewish children were allegedly wrapped in Torah scrolls and burned alive. It must also be noted that the Jews had extended their own brutality to Christians who refused to curse Jesus and accept Simon’s claim to Messiahship.

MOSES OF CRETE led many astray in the fifth century. His real name was Fiskis, but he claimed to be the new Moses who would lead the Jews back to Palestine by way of the Mediterranean Sea. Expectations were raised to fever pitch by predictions in the *Babylonian Talmud* about the return of the Messiah in the eighty-fifth jubilee between 440-471 AD. Fiskis traveled throughout Crete for a year gaining followers. They left their occupations and possessions, congregated on a cliff overlooking the sea, and the foremost of them cast

themselves off at his command. The *Chronicle of John of Nikiu* says that “Moses” perished with many of his followers, while the history by Socrates Scholasticus says that he simply disappeared.

SERENE OF SYRIA announced himself as the messiah in 723, claiming that he would lead Israel back to their land. “He had followers as far away as Spain,” but he was arrested by the Muslim Caliph Yasid and turned over to unsympathetic Jews.

OBADIAH OF ISPHAHAN proclaimed himself the Messiah in 744 and led a rebellion against the Caliph of Persia. He and his followers were killed.

ABRAHAM ABULAFIA (1240-1291) of Syria practiced a form of Jewish Kabbalahism by syncretizing Judaism with pagan mysticism. (The word *kabbalah* means “tradition.”) Through allegorical interpretation of Scripture and supposed esoteric or secret knowledge about God and the universe, the Kabbalah movement has produced a bewildering variety of views.

Kabbalah began with rabbis who wrote parts of the Talmud. Because Kabbalah teaching has at times produced insanity and apostasy, rabbis in the seventeenth century restricted its study to married men over age forty.

Abulafia promoted a mystical path of achieving union with God. Called “prophetic kabbalah” or “ecstatic kabbalah,” it “aims at producing a state of mystical ecstasy wherein the boundaries separating the self from God are overcome” (Daniel Frank and Oliver Laman, *Jewish Mysticism*). In such a condition, the mystic becomes a prophet. In 1280 he journeyed to Rome to convert Pope Nicholas III, but the pope died before he arrived. Abulafia declared himself a Messiah soon thereafter.

After writing a meditation manual in 1291, he disappeared from history. His meditation techniques include fasting, wearing the phylactery, using Hebrew letters and God’s names as mantras, breathing techniques, bodily positions, trembling, and mental imagery. The objective is to pass one-by-one through the “Fifty Gates of Understanding” to reach God and perfect knowledge. Abulafia described “another spirit” rising within his body through meditation. “You will then feel as if an additional spirit is within you, arousing you and strengthening you,

passing through your entire body and giving you pleasure” (Aryeh Kaplan, *Meditation and Kabbalah*, p. 85). He described human forms appearing before him and communicating with him and fearful experiences of becoming “another man.” This reminds us of the great spiritual danger of pagan meditation techniques and their potential for demon possession and spiritual delusion.

SHABBETHAI TZVI (1626-1676), a Sephardic rabbi and Kabbalist, proclaimed himself Messiah in 1648. He did this by pronouncing the Tetagrammaton or the name of Jehovah God to his followers, something that, under Jewish tradition, was allowed only by the high priest on the Day of Atonement. The Bible is filled with mentions of God’s name and commands for God’s name to be spoken in reverence, but Jewish tradition has made it unpronounceable. Shabbethai sang Spanish love songs all night, giving them mystical interpretations, and prayed and wept at tombs.

Nathan Benjamin Levi declared himself Shabbethai’s Elijah and declared that 1665 would be the Messianic year when the Messiah would conquer the world and lead the “Ten Lost Tribes” back to Israel, “riding on a lion with a seven-headed dragon in its jaws.” That year, he was declared the Messiah in the synagogue of Smyrna “with the blowing of horns, and shouts of ‘Long live our King, our Messiah.’” His followers called him “Our Lord and King, His Majesty be exalted.”

He had a wide following, not only in Turkey and Syria, but also in Europe, and many prominent rabbis accepted his Messiahship. But in 1666, after arriving in Constantinople, Shabbethai was given three choices by the Muslim Sultan Mehmed IV: endure trial by arrow (a volley of arrows would be shot at him, and if they missed he would be proven to be the Messiah), be impaled, or convert to Islam. Shabbethai converted. He took a second wife and called himself an Ishmaelite to prove his sincerity. About 300 families of his followers followed suit and were known thereafter as the *dönmen* (converts).

NACHMAN OF BRESLOV (1773-1810), founder of the Breslov Hasidic movement, promoted Kabbalah and its “esoteric secrets.” He taught that God could be approached as an intimate friend, ignoring the fact that Scripture teaches the necessity of atonement and mediatorship as signified by the Levitical priesthood and offerings. He taught his followers to spend an hour a day

in solitude engaging in such prayer. This is called *hitbodedut* (“to make oneself be in solitude”). He promoted a positive confession that would produce continual happiness. He taught the use of a mantra for meditation and used *Ribono shel Olam (Master of the Universe)* as his own mantra.

He did not claim to be the messiah, but in a secret writing allegedly found after his death he taught a mantra based on his own name that is supposed to help bring the messiah into the world. It is *Na Nach Nachma Nachman Meuman*. Earlier Kabbalah rabbis had stated that a song would be revealed that would restore true faith in God to the world by the Messiah, and this mantra is thought by many to be that song. It is based on the four Hebrew letters of the name *Nachman*, ending with a reference to the place of his burial in Uman, Ukraine.

The mantra is thought to dispel spiritual darkness and bring every sort of blessing, including forgiveness of sin. It has been put to song in contemporary Jewish music and can be seen inscribed in many places in Israel today. Those who use the mantra are called the *Na Nachs*.

RABBI MENACHIM SCHNEERSON (1902-1994), known as the Rebbe, didn’t proclaim himself the Messiah, but he was considered that by hundreds of thousands of Jews in the 1980s and 1990s. Even since his death in 1994, many have continued to consider him the Messiah and are waiting for his resurrection. Some don’t believe that he is dead.

Schneerson was the seventh rebbe or rabbi leader of an ultra-orthodox Jewish sect called *Lubavitch* (also called Chabad and Habad). This sect focuses on the return of the Messiah. Schneerson “transformed it from a small movement into the largest and most widespread Jewish movement in the world today.” It emphasizes humanitarian as well as religious activities.

Schneerson’s photo can be seen plastered on signs and walls in many parts of Israel. It is often accompanied with a crown and the Hebrew word *Mashiach (Messiah)*.

Other false Messiahs are Menahem ben Judah, David Alroy (1160), Asher Lemlein (1502), Reubeni and Solomon Molko (1525), Isaac Lauria (1572), Sabbatai Zvi (b. 1626), Mordecai Mokiah (1680), Jacob Frank (1726-71), Moses Luzzatto (1707-1747).

Many Jews are still looking for a temple builder, whether prophet or messiah, and the Temple Institute has prepared the articles for the Third Temple.

These include the menorah (made from 95 pounds of gold valued at two million dollars), the garments for the priests and the high priest, the table of shewbread, the laver, and the table of incense. In July 2012 the Temple Institute published a video entitled “The Children Are Ready,” depicting children building a model of the Third Temple on an Israeli beach.

As we have seen, in Jewish tradition, the coming of the Messiah is associated with the rebuilding of the Temple. Any Jew that starts rebuilding the Temple is a potential Messiah, and this is the belief of the Temple Institute.

The Jews are looking for a Messiah that will bring peace, that will solve their problems, that will help them to rebuild the temple, that will allow them to follow their tradition on equal footing with the Scripture, and that will not rebuke them as sinners but will help them follow their “positive inclinations.”

The Antichrist will be all of this and more--at first.

When the Antichrist comes, he will appear to be a sincere man who wants to help the world. He will not appear to be a monster. He will have more charisma than any ruler that has preceded him in history. He will be an astounding orator, speaking “great things” (Dan. 7:8). He will be bold and authoritative. Daniel says he will have a fierce countenance and understand dark sentences (Dan. 8:23). He will be a master of intrigue and have an astonishing ability to solve age-old problems.

But it will be a lie. Five times in Daniel the Antichrist is called a liar and a flatterer (Dan. 11:21, 23, 27, 32, 34).

After three and a half years, he will show his true character, and his peace program will result in “sudden destruction” in the form of the greatest time of trouble the world has ever seen.



DIGGING IN THE WALLS

God commanded the prophet Ezekiel to dig in the walls of Israel's temple and observe the evils being done in secret by apostate religious leaders of that day. "Then said he unto me, Son of man, dig now in the wall ... And he said unto me, Go in, and behold the wicked abominations that they do here. So I went in and saw. ..." (Ezek. 8:7-10).

Ezekiel was then instructed to preach against the errors of the leaders and to tell the people the things he had witnessed.

"Therefore prophesy against them, prophesy, O son of man. ... Then I spake unto them of the captivity all the things that the Lord had shewed me" (Ezek. 11:4,25).

The hour in which we live is very similar to that of Ezekiel's day. Many of those who profess to be the people of God are apostate. It was prophesied in the New Testament Scriptures that such would be the case in the closing hours of our age. This will culminate in the brief worldwide rule of an utterly apostate Harlot "church" (2 Tim. 3-4; 1 Tim. 4; 2 Pet. 2-3; Jude; Rev. 17).

As in Ezekiel's day much of the apostasy of our hour is hidden from the view of the average Christian. We intend by God's grace to "dig in the walls" of modern ecumenism and to expose and cry out against the things we find. In this section we also report on secular events which are relevant to Christians. May God give us ears to hear, minds to understand, and hearts to obey. Is the truth of God not worthy of defense?



CRYSTAL BIBLE TO LAST BILLIONS OF YEARS (Friday Church News Notes, March 4, 2016, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - Researchers in the United Kingdom have developed digital data discs that can survive an alleged 13 billion years and can withstand temperatures up to 1,832 F. The data is encoded by laser onto a glass disc that can hold 360 terabytes of information, which is equivalent to the information capacity of 25,500 basic iPhones ("Crystal Bible to last a billion years," CNN, Feb. 26, 2016). One of the first books they encoded is the King James Bible. In truth, the Word of God is eternal. After 13 billion years, the believer's life with Jesus Christ will only be starting. "For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven" (Psalm 119:89).

THE IMMORALITY SURROUNDING HILLSONG MUSIC (Friday Church News Notes, March 4, 2016, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - Former Hillsong pastor Pasquale "Pat" Mesiti has pleaded guilty to assaulting his second wife and is awaiting sentencing (*Christian Headlines*, Feb. 29, 2016). He was forced to step down in 2002 because of adultery and visiting prostitutes. In an interview with *Sight Magazine* in May 2006, he said he had a "sexual addiction." That was the year he was back in "ministry" after divorce and

remarriage and a "restoration" process. He is now known as "Mr. Motivation" and promotes a "millionaire mindset" that comes from the charismatic prosperity doctrine. Hillsong, a prominent voice in Contemporary Worship, began in Australia and has branched out in recent years to establish megachurches in many cities, including New York and London. The following is from a report by Hughie Seaborn titled "[*Warning: What Do You Know about Hillsong?*](#)" which was published in response to Hillsong's World of Worship Conference at the Cairns Convention Center September 4-7, 2002. This report by a former Pentecostal exposes the immorality that is rampant in these circles: "Hillsong had its beginnings in 1986 and was the inspiration of Mark and Darlene Zschech and Geoff Bullock. Bullock was a leader in the 'music ministry' of Brian and Bobbie Houston's Hills Christian Life Centre at Castle Hill, Sydney. Along with Pat Mesiti who eventually founded Youth Alive, the Zschech's were formerly part of a band that had an outreach to high school kids. (Mesiti, who rose to the exalted position of National Director of Australian Christian Churches, was sacked after it was discovered he was involved in adultery.) The Zschech's were introduced to Hills Christian Life Centre by Mesiti and were soon thrust into the 'music ministry' alongside Bullock. When Jeff Bullock



‘resigned’ from Hillsong after divorcing his wife, Darlene Zschech stepped into his position and was ‘worship pastor’ of Brian Houston’s Hillsong Church. Brian is the son of Frank Houston, an ex-General Superintendent of the AOG in New Zealand. Frank moved to Australia from NZ in 1977, in controversial circumstances of a sexual nature, and established Sydney Christian Life Centre. Despite the sexual offences committed in NZ, Houston rose to a position of eminence and great respect in the Pentecostal churches, as well as to the most senior position in the AOG in NSW. In 2000, Frank Houston was sacked after the NZ sexual offences became public, offences that were so serious he was not even given the option of quietly retiring [*Sydney Morning Herald*, March 27, 2002].”

FIRST LIBERTY INSTITUTE FILING SUIT IN BEHALF OF CHRISTIANS WHO LOST BAKERY OVER RELIGIOUS RIGHTS (Friday Church News Notes, March 4, 2016, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - First Liberty Institute is appealing the case of Aaron and Melissa Klein on the basis of religious liberty and free speech. The Kleins, owners of Sweet Cakes in Oregon, were forced to pay \$135,000 for refusing to bake a wedding cake for a lesbian couple. The Kleins tried to explain to the



lesbians that baking their wedding cake was against their religious convictions, but instead of going to another bakery, the lesbians brought a complaint against the young Christian couple. Melissa Klein says, “My faith teaches that God designed marriage to be between a man and a woman. For me to bake a cake for a same-sex wedding would go completely against what I believe” (“The Kleins,” firstliberty.org). First Liberty Institute is appealing the case to the Oregon Court of Appeals and higher if necessary. They are joined by Boyden Gray, former White House Counsel for President George H.W. Bush, U.S. Ambassador to the European Union, and law clerk to Chief Justice Earl Warren.

FLASHING LIGHTS, LOUD MUSIC INTERACT WITH BRAIN LIKE DRUG ADDICTION (Friday Church News Notes, March 4, 2016, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - A study by the University of British Columbia found that flashing lights and loud rock music, as in casinos, encourage rats to make “risky decisions.” The study found that rats generally learn to avoid risky behaviors that result in punishment, but under the influence of bright lights and loud music they take more risks (“Lights, music in casinos interact with brain like drug addiction,” UPI, Jan. 20, 2016). The reason is that the light and music activate the dopamine D3 receptor in the brain, the same receptor suspected to be involved in drug addiction. This was demonstrated when the dopamine receptor was blocked and the rats returned to their natural conservative stance toward risk taking. Casino owners have



obviously known of this connection for a long time, which is precisely why they create the specific light/music environment found in gambling rooms. Many top secular rock & rollers have testified that rock music is a drug, but contemporary Christian rockers scoff at any such danger. Now a scientific study has confirmed a music/drug connection, at least with the addition of bright flashing lights, which are common in “secular” rock concerts as well as in contemporary worship. Sober-minded Christians whose brains have not been corrupted by the world’s music are able to analyze these facts more properly and biblically.

ATHEIST BARRED FROM GIVING WITNESS IN AMERICAN COURT (Friday Church News Notes, March 4, 2016, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The following is from *Democracy in America* by Alexis de Tocqueville, 1835: “While I was in America, a witness, who happened to be called at the assizes of the county of Chester (state of New York), declared that he did not believe in the existence of God or in the immortality of the soul. The judge refused to admit his evidence, on the ground that the witness had destroyed beforehand all confidence of the court in what he was about to say. The newspapers related the fact without any further comment. The *New York Spectator* of

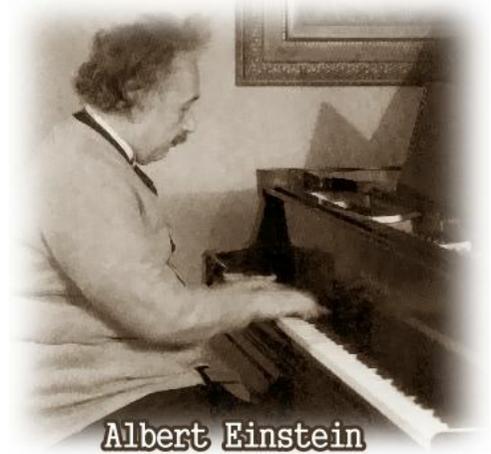
August 23rd, 1831, relates the fact in the following terms: ‘The court of common pleas of Chester county (New York), a few days since rejected a witness who declared his disbelief in the existence of God. The presiding judge remarked, that he had not before been aware that there was a man living who did not believe in the existence of God; that this belief constituted the sanction of all testimony in a court of justice: and that he knew of no case in a Christian country, where a witness had been permitted to testify without such belief.’”

THE U.S. NAVY’S MERCY AND COMFORT (Friday Church News Notes, March 4, 2016, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The United States Navy operates two hospital ships, the *USNS Mercy* and the *USNS Comfort*, which are tasked to support U.S. armed forces as well as to provide medical aid and humanitarian assistance. “Both serve as 70,000-metric-ton symbols of how much America cares as a nation and as a people” (“Hospital Ships,” navy.com). The ships are huge, the second largest in the U.S. fleet after the super carriers, and the fifth largest ships in the world. Converted from oil supertankers, the two ships originally cost \$560 million. Each one is 894-foot long (the length of three football fields) and the height of a 10-story building. In full capacity, each ship can carry 700 medical personnel.



They are 1,000-bed hospitals (including four intensive care wards). They have 12 operating rooms, an emergency/triage room, full medical labs, pharmacies, and are equipped with the latest technology such as CAT scanners and digital X-ray. They offer radiological, optometry, and dental services. They have their own medical oxygen producing plants, blood banks with a 5,000 unit capacity, and water distilling plants (300,000 US gallons per day). A flight crew operates the ship’s helicopter pad which can handle the Navy’s largest helicopters. Kitchens can provide meals for 1,000 personnel. They assist in natural disasters such as the Southeast Asia tsunami of 2004 and the Haiti earthquake of 2010. On a visit to Southeast Asia in 2010, the *USNS Mercy* treated 109,754 patients and performed 1,580 surgeries. In 2015, the *USNS Comfort* provided care for more than 120,000 patients (including 1,200 surgeries) in 11 countries in the Caribbean and South and Central America. These projects are largely funded by the U.S. government, but they are also assisted by volunteer medical personnel and supplies donated by private organizations. This level of benevolence can be traced to the Bible’s great influence on America, even at this late stage in her history.

ALBERT EINSTEIN AND MUSIC (Friday Church News Notes, March 4, 2016, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The following is excerpted from “Music and the Brain” by Laurence O’Donnell, cerebromente.org.br: “Albert Einstein is recognized as one of the smartest men who has ever lived. A little known fact about Einstein is that when he was young



he did extremely poor in school. His grade school teachers told his parents to take him out of school because he was ‘too stupid to learn’ and it would be a waste of resources for the school to invest time and energy in his education. The school suggested that his parents get Albert an easy, manual labor job as soon as they could. His mother did not think that Albert was ‘stupid.’ Instead of following the school’s advice, Albert’s parents bought him a violin. Albert became good at the violin. Music was the key that helped Albert Einstein become one of the smartest men who has ever lived. Einstein himself says that the reason he was so smart is because he played the violin. He loved the music of Mozart and Bach the most. A friend of Einstein, G.J. Withrow, said that the way Einstein figured out his problems and equations was by improvising on the violin.”

GOD’S CALL TO SINNERS (Friday Church News Notes, March 4, 2016, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The repetition of God’s call to sinners is evidence of the greatness of God’s great love and mercy to undeserving sinners. This call is repeated in the prophets so much that it is almost tedious. In Isaiah alone we see this in 1:16-19; 8:13-14; 27:5;

28:12; 30:15; 31:6; 33:13; 34:1; 40:26; 41:1, 21-24; 42:18, 23; 43:9, 26; 45:20-22; 46:12-13; 48:14-18; 49:1; 51:4-6; 52:10; 55:1-3, 6-7; 56:1-2; 57:19; 61:1; 65:1-3. God says, "I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people" (Isa. 65:2). God is not obligated to give *any* invitations, but He is motivated by love for His creatures. He went to great lengths to provide redemption, and He yearns for all sinners to be saved (1 Tim. 2:3-5; 2 Pet. 3:9). Think of your most beloved loved one, the person you love most in the world. If you knew that this person was in danger, you would plead with and beg him or her to turn back and be saved. One or two or three pleas would not suffice. That is God's heart for every sinner.

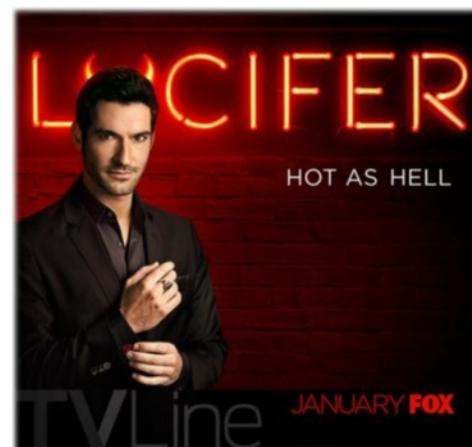
THE POPE AND THE WALL

(Friday Church News Notes, March 11, 2016, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The following is excerpted from "Trump, the Pope, and the Wall" by Bryan Fischer, OneNewsNow, Feb. 19, 2016: "Building a wall for the safety and security of citizens cannot possibly be, in and of itself, an ungodly thing to do. If it is, we need to rip the entire book of Nehemiah out of the Bible. The Pope created a firestorm of controversy by going to our southern border and making the building of a border wall the litmus



test of Christian faith. 'A person who thinks only about building walls, wherever they may be, and not building bridges, is not Christian. This is not the gospel.' Setting aside the plain truth that the litmus test of Christian faith is what a man does with Christ, not what he thinks about a wall, the Pope has hoisted himself on his own petard here. The Vatican is surrounded by the mother of all walls, and has the stingiest citizenship and immigration policy of any sovereign state in the world. ... The wall was originally built in the 800s for the same reason we need to build a wall along our southern border: to protect from invasion. Building a wall to keep people out is much different than building a wall to keep people in. One European country after another today is either building a border security fence or thinking about it because the tsunami of unvetted illegal Muslim aliens is threatening their safety and cultural identity. According to the Vatican press office, as of December 31st, 2011 the Vatican had granted citizenship to just 594 people: 71 Cardinals, 359 members of the clergy, 109 members of the Pontifical Swiss Guard, and 55 lay persons. In other words, outside of the Swiss guard, the Vatican uses a strict religious test for citizenship. The Pontiff would hardly be in a position to complain if the U.S. did the same. The Vatican is very stingy about granting refugee status to anyone. Its total contribution to solving the refugee crisis is to admit two--count 'em, two--refugee families inside its walls, both of them Catholic."

FOX'S NEW PROGRAM GLORIFIES LUCIFER (Friday Church News Notes, March 11, 2016, www.wayoflife.org,



fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The following is excerpted from "Lucifer continues to be portrayed as a likable guy," OneMillionMoms, Mar. 3, 2016: "Fox's new drama *Lucifer* glorifies Satan as a caring, likable person in human flesh. The character Lucifer Morningstar makes being the devil look cool and irresistible to women. ... The series focuses on Lucifer portrayed as a good guy 'who is bored and unhappy as the Lord of Hell.' He resigns his throne, abandons his kingdom, and retires to Los Angeles, where he gets his kicks helping the LAPD punish criminals. At the same time, God's emissary, the angel Amenadiel, has been sent to Los Angeles to convince Lucifer to return to the underworld. Lucifer questions Amenadiel, 'Do you think I'm the devil because I'm inherently evil or just because dear old Dad decided I was?' The question is meant to make people rethink assumptions about good and evil, including about God and Satan. ... The message of the show is clear. Lucifer is just misunderstood. He doesn't want to be a bad guy, it's God who is forcing him to play that role." **CONCLUDING NOTE:** According to Scripture, the devil is not the lord of hell. He is a high angel who led the first rebellion against God. He is called the "god of this world" and the

“prince of the power of the air,” but he is not a true god; he is under God’s power and is being used as an instrument for God’s purposes. He has never been in hell, but ultimately he will be cast into the lake of fire and will not be the lord or king of anything. While Fox and Fox News (both owned by 21st Century Fox) are more politically conservative than the other major television news sources, they are not a force for godliness.

KING GEORGE I AND HANDEL’S MUSIC (Friday Church News Notes, March 11, 2016, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143)

- The following is excerpted from “Music and the Brain” by Laurence O’Donnell, cerebromente.org.br: “The key component of music that makes it beneficial is order. The order of the music from the baroque and classical periods causes the brain to respond in special ways. This order includes repetition and changes, certain patterns of rhythm, and pitch and mood contrasts. One key ingredient to the order of music from the baroque and classical periods is math. This is realized by the body and the human mind performs better when

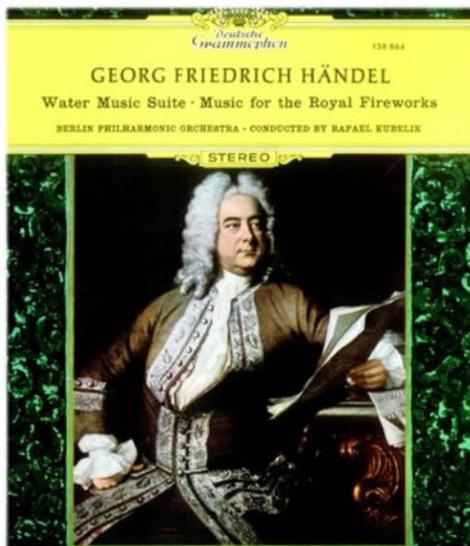
listening to this ordered music. One shining example of the power of order in music is King George I of England. King George had problems with memory loss and stress management. He read from the Bible the story of King Saul and recognized that Saul had experienced the same type of problems that he was experiencing. George recognized that Saul overcame his problems by using special music. With this story in mind King George asked Frederick Handel to write some special music for him that would help him in the same way that music helped Saul. Handel wrote his *Water Music* for this purpose.”

KNOWLEDGE SHALL INCREASE (Friday Church News Notes, March 11, 2016, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143)

- About 2,500 years ago, during the Persian Empire, an angel told the prophet Daniel, “But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased” (Daniel 12:4). We are seeing a dramatic fulfillment of this in our day. Recent inventions include the following: **Headway is being made in driverless vehicles.** Google and every major automobile company are engaged in research toward putting driverless vehicles on highways. Volvo plans to put 100 driverless cars on the streets of Gothenburg, Sweden, by 2017 (“The truth about driverless vehicles,” BBC, Oct. 13, 2014). Mines in Pilbara, Western Australia, are already using driverless heavy-duty trucks, each weighing more than 500 tons, and the U.S. Army is testing a fleet of “zombie” trucks. **Scientists at Cornell University have invented a scale that can weigh things as**



light as a virus or a DNA molecule. The weight is measured by units of daltons, with one dalton being about the weight of a single proton or neutron (“How Much Does DNA Weigh?” WorldChanging.com, May 26, 2005). **The U.S. Navy has put the first weaponized laser into operation on a warship.** The 30-kilowatt laser on the *USS Ponce* can destroy anything from large attack boats to missiles and aircraft (“Navy declares laser weapons ready to protect ships,” *Fox News*, Dec. 11, 2014). The cost of a laser beam is about 59 cents as opposed to the hundreds of thousands and even millions of dollars needed to fire an interceptor missile. The Navy is planning to put much more powerful lasers on its larger warships. **The Navy is also nearing completion of an Electromagnetic Railgun** which promises to revolutionize long-range weapons. A prototype was displayed to the public for the first time in Washington, D.C., in February 2015. “The EM Railgun launcher is a long-range weapon that uses electromagnetic energy, instead of conventional chemical propellants, to fire projectiles. The electromagnetic force is so powerful that it launches the projectile up to Mach 6, firing projectiles farther and faster than current options. These projectiles reach an amazing 4,500 mph and precisely hit targets more than 100 miles away” (“US Navy’s new ‘Star Wars’-style railgun hits Mach 6, *Fox News*, Feb. 5, 2015). **Researchers are**



nearing human testing of 3D-printed implants that can grow new body parts (“3D-printed implant will help you grow new knee joints,” *Fox News*, Dec. 17, 2014). New knee joints have been grown in sheep using 3D-imprinted scaffolds infused with human growth proteins. This prompts the body to regenerate the scaffold, which deteriorates as the tissue grows back. **3D systems has unveiled the world’s first professionally-certified, kitchen-ready 3D food printers.** The ChefJet Pro is a large-format full-color, multi-flavor printer. The printing material comes in flavors such as chocolate, vanilla, mint, sour apple sugar, and cherry sugar.



KEEPERS AT HOME (Friday Church News Notes, March 11, 2016, www.wayoflife.org, fbs@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - Few things are more important than for a Christian mother to be a keeper at home. Many fathers of godly grown children have told me that one of the wisest decisions they made was to keep their wives at home to be with the children. I can say that myself. My grown children can say that. The mothers of all eight of our grandkids are keepers at home, and it is paying good dividends to those families. Young families can easily use the extra income from the mother working outside the home, but God has promised to meet our needs when we put Him first (Mat. 6:33).

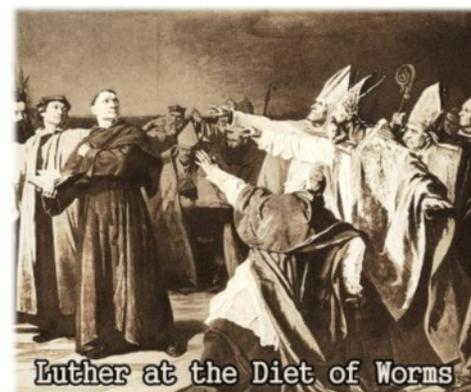


Evangelist Billy Sunday and his wife, Nell, provide a sharp warning on this subject. In 1908, they left their three boys (age 15, 7, and 1) in the care of nannies and traveled together on the evangelism trail. Nell was Billy’s campaign and business manager. Their boys turned out to be drunkards with nine marriages between them. They all died before age 40: George of suicide after being arrested for drunkenness and auto theft, Billy Jr. in a drunken car crash, Paul in the crash of an airplane he was piloting. Yet during World War I, Nell Sunday pushed for women to work outside the home. She said, “... at last, the doors of the Doll House have been opened and women have been invited to come into the great world outside.” The only Sunday child that turned out “right” was their first child, a daughter that Nell raised herself before venturing out of the home. If there aren’t children at home, of course, that is a different story. “The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good,

obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed” (Titus 2:3-5).

LUTHER AND THE IGNORANT GENTLEMEN AT ROME (Friday Church News Notes, March 11, 2016, www.wayoflife.org, fbs@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143)

- We have a lot of differences with the German Reformer Martin Luther, but one of the things that we respect and appreciate from his life is his boldness for the truth as he saw it. He didn’t mess around and mince words. He was not a religious politician. He imitated Bible prophets such as Enoch (Jude 14-15) in his earnest contention for the faith. We need a lot more of this today. Here is a man who lived in a day when protest against Rome could mean imprisonment, frightful torture, even burning alive, but he could not be quieted. He nailed his protest against the pope’s indulgences to the door of a major Catholic Church. He stood before the pope’s men at the Diet of Worms and refused to back down, saying, “I cannot submit my faith either to the pope or to the councils, because it is as clear as day that they have frequently erred and contradicted each other. Unless therefore I am convinced by the testimony of Scripture, or by the clearest reasoning, and unless they thus render my conscience bound by the word of God, I cannot and I will



not retract, for it is unsafe for a Christian to speak against his conscience. Here I take my stand; I cannot do otherwise: may God be my help!” Speaking of the right of the individual Christian to interpret the Bible, Luther wrote, “The Romanists profess to be the only interpreter of Scripture, even though they never learn anything contained in it their lives long. They claim authority for themselves alone, juggle with words shamelessly before our eyes, saying that the pope cannot err as to the faith, whether he be bad or good; although they cannot quote a single letter of Scripture to support their claim. Thus it comes about that so many heretical, unchristian, and even unnatural laws are contained in the canon law. ... In such a case, what is the need or the value of Holy Scripture? Let it be burned, and let us be content with the ignorant gentlemen at Rome” (Luther, *Appeal to the Ruling Class*).

JERRY FALWELL, JR. COMPARES TRUMP TO KING DAVID (Friday Church News Notes, March 25, 2016, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - Jerry Falwell, Jr., Chancellor of Southern Baptist-aligned Liberty University, likens U.S. presidential candidate Donald Trump to King David. In an interview with the school newspaper, *Liberty Champion*, he said that he has been friends with Trump since his first visit to Liberty in 2012 and has joined Trump on the campaign trail. He speaks of Trump as a down-to-earth guy who served Falwell and his family Wendy’s cheeseburgers and personally set up a big screen Elton John concert for Jerry, Jr., after learning that he is a long-time Elton John fan. The latter tells us a lot about Jerry, Jr.’s spiritual life as well as



Liberty University’s true soul, and it goes far to answer why Falwell would be so enthusiastic about Trump for president. To love Elton John’s music is to affiliate intimately with the evil things of the world and is gross disobedience to God’s Word. “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*” (Eph. 5:11). “For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 John 2:16). Falwell said, Trump “is the kind of guy that will walk into Washington, kick over the tables, kick over the chairs, throw the bums out, start over, and do things that a career politician would never do.” He said further, “God called King David a man after God’s own heart even though he was an adulterer and a murderer. You have to choose the leader that would make the best king or president and not necessarily someone who would be a good pastor.” We would reply, first, that God called David a man after His own heart and called him to be king BEFORE his adultery and murder. Beyond that, while it is true that Trump will probably kick things around, and that is what his supporters want, since they are fed up

with the status quo, this perspective does not take into account two fundamental issues: what will he kick? And how much power does a president have for kicking? Even the best president does not have the power to make substantive changes to the American government, let alone to America’s moral fiber. Such things would require overwhelming support from the American people, which does not exist on the good side, and an overwhelming majority in Congress, which is nowhere in sight. Substantial changes would require a massive dismantling of the incredibly bloated federal government and the welfare state. It would start with disbanding the Department of Education and putting education back into the hands of the families and communities. It would require impeaching hundreds of state and federal judges for ruling by fiat rather than according to the U.S. Constitution, for raising modern political correctness to the level of the Bill of Rights. It would require dramatic reduction of the power of vast bureaucracies such as the Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Homeland Security, and Occupational Health and Safety Administration. It would require the government to live within its means

and not bankrupt future generations with a pile of debt so massive it can barely be conceived. Fundamentally, “winning American back” would require bringing the American people back to moral character and the fear of God. Can Donald Trump do any of that? Not a whit. I have never seen evidence that he aims to do any of that, even if he were dictator. A president is not a pastor, tis true, but a man lacking moral character will not make moral decisions nor promote national moral character. A man who vows “till death do us part” and breaks that holy covenant two times over has a serious moral problem. A man who signs his word on documents and then uses bankruptcy to back out of his financial obligations when things get sticky (which is legal but not moral), is a liar and a thief. Someone says, “But if not Trump, it will be Hillary.” That’s no choice at all, but though I might not have a choice at the ballot box, I am not left without a choice. I can pray to the One who has ultimate control over human affairs, and I can urge others to pray, and prayer is a powerful thing that has been known to change the course of nations. “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James 5:16).

NOAH WEBSTER’S WISDOM COMPARED TO THAT OF JERRY FALWELL, JR. (Friday Church News Notes, March 25, 2016, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - Noah Webster, author of the *American Dictionary of the English Language* of 1828, who knew many of America’s Founding Fathers personally and was one of the most influential voices calling for the Constitutional Convention and the creation of America’s federal



government, believed that it is necessary to elect righteous men to positions of authority. “When you become entitled to exercise the right of voting for public officers, let it be impressed on your mind that God commands you to choose for rulers just men who will rule in the fear of God. The preservation of a republican government depends on the faithful discharge of this duty; if the citizens neglect their duty and place unprincipled men in office, the government will soon be corrupted; laws will be made not for the public good so much as for selfish or local purposes; corrupt or incompetent men will be appointed to execute the laws; the public revenues will be squandered on unworthy men; and the rights of the citizens will be violated or disregarded. If a republican government fails to secure public prosperity and happiness, it must be because the citizens neglect the Divine commands and elect bad men to make and administer the laws. ... When a citizen gives his suffrage [vote] to a man of known immorality he abuses his trust; he sacrifices not only his own interest, but that of his neighbor; he betrays the interest of his country” (Noah Webster, *Letters to a Young Gentleman Commencing His Education: to which is subjoined A Brief History of the United States*, 1823).

REVIVAL COULD COME (Friday Church News Notes, March 25, 2016, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The America that exists today simply could not do what it did 70 years ago to save the world from oppression. What’s missing today? God’s blessing. This is the answer that secular libertarians and unregenerate political conservatives don’t understand. Though America was not a godly nation in the 1940s when measured by the perfect standards of God’s Word, she was a nation that loved Israel, and she was a nation filled with churches that were much more faithful to God’s Word than they are today, and she was a nation of people that were much more God-fearing than they are today. The unchurched generally believed in God and feared Him and respected the Bible and respected churches and pastors, which was the salty influence of God’s people. Even Hollywood was bound by a moral code. The military chaplaincy program was robust and nearly universally respected. What was true during the war in my mom’s Baptist church in Kathleen, Florida, was true across the land. The church was open every day, and every day people knelt before God and confessed their sins and begged His help. American’s victory in WWII was not a foregone conclusion. Had Hitler developed the atomic bomb first, he would doubtless have used it first on Russia and then on America, and it could have been America surrendering rather than the Axis Powers.

America’s root problems are spiritual, and the only real solution is spiritual. The only thing that will help America out of her terrible plight is a true revival, and there could be revival.



Though the time on God’s prophetic calendar is late, there is no reason to believe that genuine revivals can no longer occur. But revival in America or Canada or England or other lands with anything like a biblical heritage will happen only on the basis of 2 Chronicles 7:14. “If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land” (2 Chron. 7:14). In context, this is a promise for Israel, but it has application to the church age. See Romans 15:4 and 1 Corinthians 10:11.

Nothing like a revival and lasting change will happen through Moral Majority programs or Tea Parties or Chick fil-A Days or Duck Dynasty support campaigns or bombastic, foul-mouthed Trump candidacies. As these have been tried repeatedly and enthusiastically over the past few decades, the moral depravity has only increased and the power of the forces for right and liberty has only decreased because these are carnal weapons that deal merely with symptoms and cannot affect the fundamental spiritual issues. These are band-aids on cancer. They can win minor socio-political skirmishes but not spiritual wars. Keeping *Duck Dynasty* on the air two years ago was

not a sign of moral victory at a fundamental level; it was a sign of the power of the almighty dollar. At the very time that A&E was being pressured into keeping *Duck Dynasty*’s Phil Robertson on the air by an outpouring of support via social networking and “new media” sites, federal judges were ruling against biblical marriage in Utah and Ohio, and the Supreme Court ruled against biblical marriage laws in New Mexico. Which of these events will have the most far-reaching and lasting consequences? The heart of the tree is being eaten away even as the watchers are rejoicing at supposedly keeping a few leaves alive.

Revival could happen if individual Christians and individual churches repent before God at a deep level, repent of their adulterous love for this God-hating world, repent of their spiritual carelessness and lukewarmness, and beseech His help.

If even 100 Bible-believing churches took 2 Chronicles 7:14 seriously, who knows what would happen? If they started a weekly prayer meeting specifically for revival, specifically to beseech God’s help for the nation, if they called for fasting and prayer, and if the members of those churches would spend time seeking God’s face in a persistent manner, who knows

how far the forces of evil could be driven back? God has never needed a majority. Gideon’s brave and vigilant few are enough.

The very fact that it is unlikely that even 100 Bible-believing churches will call for such prayer meetings, and that the majority of the members would not attend such meetings even if the pastors exhorted them to do so, is evidence that what I have often said is true about the root problem being the churches themselves. Even the best, for the most part, are lukewarm, settled down and comfortable in the world, not pilgrims but dwellers, mighty for pot luck and parties but weak for spiritual warfare.

THE YOUNG MESSIAH (Friday Church News Notes, March 25, 2016, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - In spite of the fact that it is entirely unscriptural, *The Young Messiah* has been endorsed by some 50 Christian leaders, from Catholic to “evangelical,” including prominent Southern Baptists. Johnny Hunt, senior pastor of First Baptist Church of Woodstock, Georgia, and former



THE SEA SAPPHIRE (Friday Church News Notes, March 18, 2016, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The following is from CreationMoments.com, February 4, 2016: “What tiny shrimp-like creature is a bright iridescent blue one moment and then--in the blink of an eye--invisible the next? It’s the Sapphirina copepod, also known as the ‘sea sapphire.’ Though the sea sapphire is only about a tenth of an inch long, it is surely one of the most amazing creatures in God’s creation. As an article at the *Deep Sea News* website points out, ‘The secret to the sea sapphire’s shine is in microscopic layers of crystal plates inside their cells. In the case of blue sea sapphires, these crystal layers are separated by only about four ten-thousandths of a millimeter, about the same distance as the wavelength of blue light.’ Now here’s where the creature’s vanishing act comes into play. ‘When blue light bounces off these crystal layers, it is perfectly preserved and reflected. But for other colors of light, these small differences in distance interfere, causing the colors to cancel out.’ And



what happens when they cancel out? The creature vanishes! You really need to see this. If you go to the Creation Moments website and search on the term ‘sea sapphire,’ you can then click on a link that will take you to a video of the sea sapphire in action. No one can deny that the sea sapphire’s vanishing act doesn’t rival what the most accomplished illusionists can do. Its unique abilities clearly point to a Creator who never ceases to amaze and delight us with His magnificent creatures!”

president of the SBC, says, “*The Young Messiah* is incredibly entertaining but just as much, it is spiritually inspiring and stimulating as we contemplate what the early years of Jesus’ life entailed. You MUST see it.” Jay Dennis, pastor of Church at the Mall, a Southern Baptist congregation in Lakeland, Florida, says, “I want every pastor, priest, Christian leader, follower of Jesus and even those who are not believers to see *The Young Messiah*. You will be taken into an atmosphere where you are captivated at how Jesus must have dealt with being fully human and fully God.” The movie is loosely based on the novel *Christ The Lord: Out of Egypt* by Anne Rice, who writes erotic/occultic fiction. In 1998 she

turned from atheism to Roman Catholicism, but in 2010, she quit “being Christian” because she refuses to be “anti-gay, anti-feminist, anti-secular humanism, and anti-science.” *The Young Messiah* follows the mythical journey from Alexandria, Egypt, to Jerusalem of a seven-year-old, long-haired “Jesus” and his parents. The child Jesus performs miracles, including raising the dead, but he doesn’t know that he is the Son of God. This is clearly a false christ, which the Bible so forcefully warns about (e.g., Mat. 24:4-5; 2 Cor. 11:4). The true Christ knew who He was, did not have to be helped by His parents, and He did no miracles until the wedding at Cana at the beginning of His ministry at age 30. “But thou *art* he that took me out of the womb:

thou didst make me hope *when I was* upon my mother’s breasts” (Psalm 22:9).

HUNDREDS OF INDIAN AND NEPAL WOMEN MURDERED AFTER BEING BRANDED WITCHES (Friday Church News Notes, March 25, 2016, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - In a mere two year period between 2012-2014, as many as 127 women were branded as witches and hung in Jharkhand, a state in eastern India (“127 women were branded witches,” *The Hindu*, Mar. 16, 2016). The same thing happens often in Nepal. Earlier this month, a mob burned alive a 40-year-old woman in Chitwan district, Nepal, after a shaman



fingered her as a witch who caused the drowning of a boy. “Hundreds of lower-caste women are thought to suffer abuse at the hands of ‘witch hunters’ every year in Nepal” (“Nepal mob burns ‘witch’ alive,” *The Telegraph*, Mar. 18, 2016). When a woman is suspected of causing an event such as an accident, sickness, or death, charges are trumped up against her and a gullible population take matters into their own hands. The murders are motivated by idolatrous superstition as well as revenge and greed. Anuja Agrawal, a professor at Delhi University, says, “Often there are long-term animosities between the perpetrators and victims which translate into witch-hunt. Witch-hunt is a convenient mechanism to get rid of not only women but also entire families” (“Greed for property and power behind Jhakhand witch hunts,” *Hindustan Times*, Sep. 19, 2015).

ARCHAEOLOGISTS FIND EBONY STYLUS AT UR (Friday Church News Notes, March 25, 2016, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - In late 2015, archaeologists working at ancient Ur found an ebony stylus for inscribing cuneiform on clay tablets. This is the first ebony object found there and is further evidence of the city’s trade with the Indus civilization in South Asia (also known as Harappan and Meluhha).

Elizabeth Stone of the State University of New York at Stony Brook, who is co-leading the Ur excavations, says, “There are texts that speak about the ‘black wood of Meluhha,’ but this is our first physical evidence” (“City of Biblical Abraham Brimmed with Trade and Riches,” *National Geographic*, March 11, 2016). The Indus civilization was a major commercial empire with trading ventures as far as Mesopotamia and Sheba in southern Arabia. The Indus people are



mentioned in the writings of Mesopotamian kings such as Naram-Sin of Akkad, grandson of the famous kingdom builder Sargon. Indus ships had a capacity as large as 20 tons, equivalent to a modern 40-foot shipping container (“Digging in the Land of Magan,” *Archaeology*, Archaeological Institute of America, May/June 1997). They traveled across the Indian Ocean to ports on the Persian Gulf near modern Bahrain and up the Euphrates River to Ur, Akkad, Babylon, and other cities. Indus ships also traveled to the port of Al Mukulla on the southern tip of the Arabian peninsula in the modern Gulf of Aden. (For more about the ancient Indus Civilization and its international trade, including a PowerPoint presentation, see the “Queen of Sheba” section of [Bible Times and Ancient Kingdoms](#), available from Way of Life Literature.)

MAN WHO SHOT IDAHO PASTOR SAYS MEDITATION STARTED IT ALL (Friday Church News Notes, March 25, 2016, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The following is excerpted from “The Man Who Shot Idaho Pastor,” Lighthouse Trails, Mar. 10, 2016: “A ‘manifesto,’ written by former Marine Kyle Odom, the 30-year-old man who shot Idaho pastor Tim Remmington, reveals that his life started to change drastically when he began doing meditation to relieve stress while in university. The meditation experiences led him into contact with familiar spirits (which he thought were aliens) and eventually led to two suicide attempts and then the shooting of Pastor Remmington. While Lighthouse Trails is not saying that every person who practices meditation is going to go crazy and start shooting people, we stand by our warning of 14 years that meditation does introduce meditators to demonic realms. For most, this realm seduces people into a complacent deception, and they may even appear more peaceful. For other meditators, like the student at Le Tourneau Christian University who graduated and told his parents he was now an atheist, they turn away from their Christian faith. Satan has many different methods of stealing a soul. And for some, these demons torture and torment a person, until they can eventually become like Kyle



Odom. The occult (Satan's domain) is not to be tampered with. When you consider that over 90% of the Christian colleges and seminaries are introducing **contemplative** spirituality (a belief system that incorporates meditation) to the lives of their students, it should make every Christian shudder and every Christian leader repent for allowing this into the church. ... [Contemplative guru] Richard Foster told his contemplative followers that they needed to say a prayer of protection before practicing contemplative prayer. Why would one need to do that, unless he is entering demonic realms? Meditation leads one to believe that God is in everything and all is connected together. This belief is an anti-christ religion, and that is why when people practice meditation, they are going to be influenced by familiar spirits. ... As we read the news story about Kyle Odom today, we were reminded about contemplative mystic Thomas Merton, who likened a contemplative meditation experience to an LSD trip. Odom's manifesto expressed many experiences that sound like a bad LSD trip; but it wasn't LSD--it was meditation, the very thing that most Christian leaders are either promoting or remaining silent about."

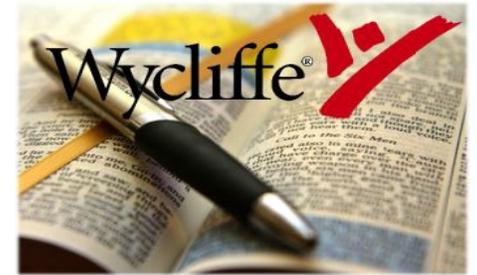
SEEKING IMMORTALITY THROUGH TECHNOLOGY (Friday Church News Notes, March 25, 2016, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-

4143) - Russian Dmitry Itskov is one of the world's billionaires who is seeking immortality through technology. His *2045 Initiative* aims to create an android capable of downloading someone's personality within 30 years ("Media mogul Dmitry Itskov," *The Telegraph*, Mar. 13, 2016). Itskov, who is "100 percent sure it will happen," says, "The ultimate goal of my plan is to transfer someone's personality into the new artificial carrier. Different scientists call it uploading or they call it mind transfer. I prefer to call it personality transfer." Other billionaires who are seeking immortality through technology are Google founder Larry Page, Oracle CEO Larry Ellison, and venture capitalist Paul Glenn. Page, who funds a company called Calico (California Life Company) with the objective of curing old age, believes that there is no need for humans to start dying once they hit their 80s ("Larry Page Lists 5 Things That Google Will Conquer," *Business Insider*, May 15, 2014). Ellison says, "Death makes me very angry," so he created the Ellison Foundation to find a way to cheat death. Glenn funds the Methuselah Foundation, which claims that "the first person to live to be 1,000 years old is certainly alive today." The Bible gives both the bad news and the good news about death: "For the



wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

WYCLIFFE BIBLE TRANSLATORS KILLED IN MIDDLE EAST (Friday Church News Notes, March 25, 2016,



www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The following is excerpted from "Four Wycliffe Bible Translators Murdered," *Christian Headlines*, Mar. 18, 2016: "Four Bible translators have been murdered by militants in the Middle East, Bible translating ministry Wycliffe Associates, reports. According to Wycliffe, a raid took place on the translators' office. Two of the translators were shot and killed, while another two died of wounds from being beaten. The last two managed to protect and save the lead translator by lying on top of him while the militants beat them with their now-empty weapons. The militants also destroyed translating equipment, including Print on Demand equipment, books, and translation materials. However, Wycliffe says the militants did not destroy the 'computer hard drives containing translation work for eight language projects.'"

THE NAME OF THE GOD OF JACOB (Friday Church News Notes, March 25, 2016, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - "The LORD hear thee in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee" (Psalm 20:1). "Why does He call Himself 'the God of Jacob'?" I think there are a number of suggestive thoughts. Perhaps the first is that He is the God that the poor sinner needs, for Jacob was a poor crooked stick from the time he first came into this world right on through the years. The name *Jacob* means 'the grafter' or 'the cheat,' literally, 'the heel catcher.' A man who would trip another by catching his heel. It is like the flesh in every one of us; what heel catchers we are! But God is known as 'the God of Jacob' because He wants you and me to know that He is the God who is interested in poor sinners. And then again I think the thought of 'the God of Jacob' suggests the God of the individual. God singles people out. 'I am that man's God,' and He singled you and me out. We can look up into His face and say, 'You are my God.' And then there is



this thought that He is the God of patience, and what patience He had with Jacob! He took that crooked man and chastened, educated, and taught him by discipline until at last when an old man he became a quiet, patient, godly worshiper. We read that Jacob, when he was dying, 'worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff' (Heb. 11:21). It took him a long time to reach that place, but he attained it at last. What patience God has had with some of us!" (H.A. Ironside commentary on Psalms).

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- Exalting the Lord Jesus Christ; His eternal perfect, and preserved Word; and the Gospel of his Grace. (2 Peter 3:1-2, 18)
- Standing for the whole counsel of God. (Acts 20:27; Jude 3)
- Challenging Christian workers to uphold the truth and resist the apostasy of our times. (1 Timothy 6:20-21)
- Exposing the spirit of error and compromise within Christendom (Hosea 4:6a; 2 Tim. 3)
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