FIRST CENTURY GOSPEL OF MARK FRAGMENT

It appears that a first century fragment from the Gospel of Mark has been recovered from an Egyptian mummy. The fragment was part of the mummy's face mask, which was composed of papyrus sheets glued together in layers and painted. Scientists and scholars led by Craig Evans of Acadia Divinity College have discovered how to loosen the glue and extract individual sheets with the original ink writings intact (“Ancient Biblical text discovered in an Egyptian mummy mask,” Science Alert, Jan. 20, 2015).

Evans told Live Science, “We’re recovering ancient documents from the first, second and third centuries. Not just Christian documents, not just biblical documents, but classical Greek texts, business papers, various mundane papers, personal letters. From a single mask, it’s not strange to recover a couple dozen or even more. We’re going to end up with many hundreds of papyri when the work is done, if not thousands.” The team has dated the Gospel of Mark fragment to about AD 90, by carbon-14, by handwriting analysis, and by the documents found with it. When the document is published, possibly later this year, more will be revealed, including what portion of Mark is written on the papyrus. The dating will then be critiqued by other scholars. This appears to be a major find. It could be the earliest fragment of the Gospels ever found, which would further authenticate the authenticity of the New Testament Scripture and provide yet more evidence to refute the old liberal theory that the Gospels were written long after the events. Currently, the oldest Gospel fragment is the Rylands Library P52 (P stands for papyrus), a portion of the Gospel of John dating to between AD 117 and 138. Previously, the oldest portion of Mark’s Gospel extant was P45, which is dated to AD 200-250.

NEWSBOYS CO-FOUNDER COMES OUT AS AN ATHEIST

George Perdikis, co-founder with Peter Furler of the Christian rock band Newsboys, has come out as an atheist. The band has always had at least one foot in the world. They were “influenced by everyone from the Police, Cure, and Rolling Stones to Keith Green and Jimmy Swaggart” (Jesus Rocks the World: The Definitive History of Contemporary Christian Music, vol. 2, p. 101), and, “Initially they played for the rowdy patrons of the local clubs and pubs, who threw beer bottles at them if they didn’t meet their standards” (Ibid., vol. 2, p. 100). In his testimony, Perdikis says that he was only ever really interested in rock & roll and living as he pleased. He says: “I always felt uncomfortable with the strict rules imposed by Christianity. All I wanted to do was create and play rock and roll... and yet most of the attention I received was focused on how well I maintained the impossible standards of religion. ... I left the band in 1990 and went back to Adelaide. ... As I carved out a life for myself away from the church, I began my own voyage of inquiry into what I believed. My perceptions started to transform when I became interested in cosmology in 1992. I soon found myself fascinated by the works of Carl Sagan, Neil deGrasse Tyson, Lawrence Krauss, Brian Cox, and Richard Dawkins. I learned so

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Government education inspectors in Britain have forced a Christian school to close after a young student was asked who are Muslims and replied that they are involved in terrorism. The true but politically incorrect answer was one of the reasons why the British government has labeled the school bigots and withdrew funding (“Christian School Forced to Close,” Brietbart.com, Jan. 21, 2015). Under new guidelines, inspectors rate schools on how they promote “British values.” Toward this end they nose around and ask individual students questions about their beliefs. The report on Durham Free School stated: “Leaders are failing to prepare students for life in modern Britain. Some students hold discriminatory views of other people who have different faiths, values or beliefs from themselves.” Another Christian school, Grindon Hall, has been placed in “special measures.” The fact that the school’s exam results are the best in the area is far less important to the inspectors than such essential matters as whether the students “knew what lesbians did, and whether their friends felt trapped in the wrong body.” As for preparing students for life, the Bible not only prepares students for life, it also prepares them for eternity, and secular schools are grossly inadequate to do either.

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much and was blown away by all the amazing scientific discoveries and facts. When my marriage dissolved in 2003, I turned my attention to human psychology. By 2007, I renounced Christianity once and for all and declared myself an atheist” (“Co-founded of Newsboys: ‘Now I’m an Atheist,’” standupforthetruth.com, Jan. 22, 2015). For a man to believe that Carl Sagan and Richard Dawkins are men committed to scientific facts is evidence of the grossest sort of spiritual blindness, which is always driven by the desire to walk after one’s own lusts (2 Peter 3:3). Perdikis concludes his testimony by saying, “The truth is--from someone who knows what went on then and what goes on now--the Newsboys aren’t as holy as they profess.” That Perdikis is doubtless correct in this observation is obvious by the Newsboys’ history. Christian rock is worldly music produced by professing Christians who love the world. In the fourth chapter of his epistle, James pronounced Ichabod and Tekel (1 Sam. 4:21; Daniel 5:27) over the entire field of Christian rock with the following words: “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (James 4:4).
President Barack Obama’s unwavering support for the murder of unborn children is again on display by his administration’s opposition to a bill that would ban abortions after 20 weeks. The White House called it an “assault on a woman’s right to choose” and “oppressive.” Bill H.R. 36 was introduced by Sen. Trent Franks (R-AZ) and has broad support, with nearly 160 cosponsors. The White House Office of Management and Budget opined, “Women should be able to make their own choices about their bodies and their healthcare, and government should not inject itself into decisions best made between a woman and her doctor.” Abortion is not about a woman’s body; it is about a baby’s body. And the hypocritical Obama administration has no qualms about injecting itself into anyone’s private business when it wants to. With the new Republican-controlled congress at the helm, the next two years will probably be known as the presidential veto years. The Christian News Network reports, “The majority of children who are aborted after 20 weeks gestation lose their lives through a procedure known as dilation and evacuation (D&E). Dilation and evacuation involves first administering medication that will stop the baby’s heart from beating. The mother’s cervix is then dilated and the baby is removed piece by piece with forceps. According to reports, the abortionist assembles the baby’s body parts on a tray to ensure that nothing is left behind” (“Obama Administration Opposes Bill,” Christian News Network, Jan. 21, 2015).
STUDYING GOD’S CREATION IS AN ADVENTURE

The late astronomer Edwin Hubble said, “Equipped with his five senses, man explores the universe around him and calls the adventure Science” (The Nature of Science, 1954). To our knowledge, Dr. Hubble made no profession of faith in Christ, so he did not even begin to understand what an adventure science can be. Before I was saved I enjoyed reading. I read widely, and I was interested in many things, but there was something missing in a deep, fundamental way. Learning wasn't really an adventure. It was interesting and even exciting at times, but overall the study of life was confusing, discouraging, and disappointing. Two thoughts came to me frequently in those days: Who can know for sure what is true? And what does it matter if I learn many things, since I am going to die? But since I have been saved, everything has been different. I have the “key” to learning, which is the knowledge of the true God in Jesus Christ and the possession of His Revelation in the Bible. I have been “called out of darkness into his marvellous light” (1 Peter 2:9). Now, learning is indeed an adventure. No matter what I study, from human history to natural science, I have light to interpret the subject properly, and I have the motivation to do so because I know the Creator, and I know that I have eternal life. Everything I learn about life points me to God, and that makes everything an adventure. Johannes Kepler, discoverer of the laws of planetary motion, understood this. Like most of the fathers of modern science, he believed in the God of the Bible and in divine creation, and he said, “I was merely thinking God’s thoughts after him. Since we astronomers are priests of the highest God in regard to the book of nature, it benefits us to be thoughtful, not of the glory of our minds, but rather, above all else, of the glory of God.”

CONCLUSION
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.