FRIDAY CHURCH NEWS NOTES

FURTHER ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE FOR THE SECOND TEMPLE

Archaeologists have unearthed clear evidence of a citadel built by Antiochus IV Epiphanes to control Jerusalem in 168 BC. The evidence consists of many things, including the following: first, physical evidence of the citadel (its foundation, a massive wall, and remnants of its tower); second, ballista stones and bronze arrowheads stamped with Antiochus's symbol, a pitchfork; third, coins dating to Antiochus's reign. This confirms the account in I and II Maccabees and Josephus' history of the Jewish wars. Acra Fortress, located south of the City of David, was constructed by Antiochus, king of Syria and a forerunner of the antichrist, in an attempt to quell a rebellion led by Jewish priests and centered in the Temple. The directors of the excavation have stated, "This sensational discovery allows us for the first time to reconstruct the layout of settlement and the actual look of the city on the eve of the Hasmonean revolt. The new archaeological finds testify to the establishment of a properly fortified stronghold constructed on the high bedrock cliff overlooking the steep slopes of the City of David hill. This stronghold controlled all means of approach to the Temple, and cut the Temple off from the southern parts of the city" ("2,000-year-old fortress unearthed in Jerusalem after century-long search," Times of Israel, Nov. 3, 2015).

SHARIA LAW AND BLASPHEMY

In Islamic Sharia law, blasphemy is punishable by death, but blasphemy is not limited to saying something against Allah. It also includes saying anything negative against Muhammad, the Quran, suggesting that the Sharia law is defective, or "refusing the decision of the ijma, which is the consensus of the Islamic community or umma" (Serge Trifkovic, The Sword of the Prophet, p. 106). The Sharia blasphemy law has often been used to target someone with a false accusation. This has happened frequently in Pakistan and other places in recent years. And Sharia often becomes mob rule, when Muslims take "justice" into their own hands and injure or kill those who are accused of blasphemy. No evidence is needed. In November 2014, a Christian husband and wife in Pakistan were burned alive by a mob on allegations of blasphemy. They were thrown into the brick kiln at the factory where they worked. The woman was pregnant with the couple's fifth child. "As the couple was burning and crying their innocence, the mob was shouting 'Allah hu Akbar,' 'death to blasphemer,' 'kill infidel Christians'" ("Christian Couple Burnt Alive," Pakistan Christian Post, Nov. 7, 2014). Some other Sharia laws are as follows: A Muslim who leaves Islam is subject to death. A non-Muslim who leads a Muslim away from Islam is subject to death. A non-Muslim who marries a Muslim woman is subject to death. Theft is punishable by the amputation of the right hand. Testimonies of four male witnesses are required to prove rape against a woman. A woman who has been raped cannot testify in court against her rapist(s).
HIGH SCHOOL Sexting Scandal

A Colorado high school is being investigated by police for a massive sexting scandal after several hundred indecent images of students were found on cell phones. George Welsh, Superintendent of Schools in the Canon City School District south of Denver, said, “There isn’t a school in the United States probably at this point that hasn’t at some point dealt with the issue of sexting” (“Sexting Scandal,” CNN, Nov. 7, 2015). He is identifying a moral plague, but the authorities only address its symptoms. The root issue is the promotion of moral license at every level of society, particularly by the entertainment industry.

RICHARD DAWKINS MAKES ANOTHER BLUNDER IN HIS DEFENSE OF FAIRY TALES

The following is excerpted from “Richard Dawkins Chides a Real Scientist,” Ken Ham, Answers in Genesis, Nov. 2, 2015: “On CNN, November 1, TV host Fareed Zakaria interviewed atheist/religious zealot Richard Dawkins. And no surprise, Dawkins, in his usual disparaging style, derided anyone who believes God created the universe and all life and who reject the fairy-tale belief that all life arose by natural processes. Dawkins particularly disparaged Dr. Ben Carson, running for US President. In this interview, Dawkins made the false claim (that he’s made many times) that ‘evolution is the bedrock of biology and biology is the bedrock of medicine.’ He went on to say this about Dr. Carson: ‘He clearly doesn’t understand the fundamental theorem of his own subject. That is a terrible indictment.’ Actually, by making such an ignorant and nonsensical statement, Dawkins is disproving his own accusation! Obviously, Dr. Carson didn’t need to believe in evolution to become a world-renowned pediatric neurosurgeon with sophisticated skills at age 33, receive 67 honorary doctorate degrees, separate conjoined twins, become a member of the Alpha Honor Medical Society, be named to the Horatio Alger Society of Distinguished Americans, be picked by Time magazine as one of the nation’s 20 foremost physicians and scientists, for the Library of Congress to select him as one of 89 ‘Living Legends’ ... along with many other accomplishments. How does that impressive list line up with what Richard Dawkins has accomplished in this world? And if Dr. Carson can achieve all these accomplishments without believing in evolution, what then does evolution have to do with medicine? As I challenged TV’s Bill Nye ‘the Science Guy’ (and I have also challenged Dawkins), name one technological advancement (including one medical advancement) that could not have come about without a belief in evolution? Well, there are no such examples. Evolution is not the ‘bedrock’ of biology or medicine! Evolution is a fairy tale, akin to Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs!”
TIGHT CLOTHING AND IMMODESTY

Theodore Roosevelt, 26th President of the United States (1901-09), wrote the following in 1916: “Christianity was saved in Europe solely because the peoples of Europe fought. If the peoples of Europe in the 7th and 8th centuries, and on up to and including the 17th century, had not possessed a military equality with, and gradually a growing superiority over the Mohammedans who invaded Europe, Europe would at this moment be Mohammedan and the Christian religion would be exterminated” (Roosevelt, *Fear God and Take Your Part*). Islam's attempt to conquer Europe in the eighth century was thwarted in the east by the Byzantines and in the west by the Franks.

Tight clothing is at least as much a potential moral stumbling stone for men as skimpy clothing. When we invited feedback on this issue in 2007 while writing the book *Dressing for the Lord*, most of the men who responded indicated that **TIGHT SKIRTS, TIGHT BLOUSES, FORM-FITTING JEANS, AND ONE-PIECE BATHING SUITS** hold a “VERY great potential” for lust. Since then it has become popular for females to wear tights under a tiny skirt or long shirt and think they are modest since they are “covered up,” but this is incredibly seductive attire. It makes me wonder what prostitutes do today to set themselves apart from the crowd. In our survey, one man said tight clothing is “very inviting and a potential for lust.” Another said, “You don’t even need to see skin; they provide all the curves.” Another said: “I would say the number one problem is any garment that is form fitting, be it jeans, pants, skirt, dress, shirt, whatever. Anything that is tight, no matter how long it is, leaves nothing to the imagination, and that defeats the whole purpose of covering the skin in the first place!” Another said: “One thing I see in my church is tight clothing. It is revealing the shape in a woman. This can be even more tantalizing to a man.” Another wrote: “The point is that it is not the type of clothing that can trip a man up, rather it is the amount and the level of cling to the body.” Some of the men also mentioned low-riding jeans as a cause for concern, not only because they totally emphasize the woman's figure but also because they are suggestive of a bare midriff even if covered with a T-shirt. The T-shirt in such a case is invariably tight, of course.

U.S. PRESIDENT WARNS ABOUT ISLAM’S MARCH

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ON THE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

I love good music, and I particularly love a good symphony orchestra. It is one of the most wonderful things that fallen man has invented, and it invariably turns my thoughts to music in Christ’s kingdom. I love the beauty of the sound, the unity, the complexity, the depth, the flexibility, the variety, and the brilliance and technical expertise required to write and perform a symphony piece. It is said that music is the language of the emotions, and what emotions a symphony orchestra can evoke! André Rieu and the Johann Strauss Orchestra with its repertoire of beautiful symphonic music can attract 65,000 listeners at one performance even in this shallow age of pop music. The following observation on the symphony orchestra is by the late Klaus Roy, program annotator for the Cleveland Orchestra, founded in 1918 and one of America’s “Big Five” orchestras: “What more miraculous creation of mankind is there than the symphony orchestra—a hundred musicians collaborating flawlessly in the creation of a single sonority from moment to moment, under the guidance of a single and singular mind who conveys the sound image of another’s tonal imagination, and carrying with it a single listener as it carries a thousand or two thousand? We tend to take for granted the skill and sensitivity of such a performing organism, and we should take time to marvel afresh that such a joint effort is possible for human beings, so rich in communication, beauty and meaning.” The symphony orchestra is evidence for the divine creation of man for those who have eyes to see.