The results of the U.S. presidential election were interesting, to say the least, and it was satisfying to see the Clintons go down in defeat after their attempt to thumb their noses at the nation’s laws, but nothing of substance has changed, morally and spiritually. An immoral man lacking in true wisdom will occupy the White House, and his character will not change when he takes the oath of office. While he and the Republican majority will doubtless accomplish some things that will be improvements over the last administration and will probably appoint a better man to the Supreme Court, they will not change the character of America or stop the downward slide. An anti-constitutional, judicial activist mindset will still be promoted in the law schools. The government will not shrink. The deficit spending that is bankrupting the nation will not stop. Onerous government regulations will not be rolled back. The homosexual agenda will continue its breathtaking progress. The foolish addiction to alcohol and drugs will continue to spread, as evidenced by the legalization of marijuana in yet another state. The Muslim goal of establishing sharia law will not be stopped and probably not even hindered. The public school system will remain a vast humanistic indoctrination program. The murder of unborn children will continue apace. The nation will remain more frightfully divided than since the Civil War. The rampant wickedness and idolatry that permeates every level of American society will remain a stench in God’s nostrils. The only way that substantive change could possibly come would be if the Bible-believing churches really moved on to “praying ground” and committed themselves to serious intercession for the soul of the nation. “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 Chronicles 7:14).

CHRIST’S TOMB POSSIBLY FOUND DURING RESTORATION AT CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE

Last month, during restoration work in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, a team of excavators removed two marble slabs covering the tomb thought to be that of Jesus Christ, and dug down to the original limestone floor. They found part of the tomb intact and installed a new window to allow a view of the new discovery. “When the marble cladding was first removed on the night of October 26, an initial inspection … showed only a layer of fill material underneath. However, as researchers continued their non-stop work over the course of 60 hours, another marble slab with a cross carved into its surface was exposed. By Friday night, just hours before the tomb was to be re-sealed, the original limestone burial bed was revealed intact” (“Original limestone bed” on which Jesus was buried uncovered,” The Times of Israel, Oct. 31, continued on next page...
CHRIST’S TOMB POSSIBLY FOUND DURING RESTORATION AT CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE

continued from front page

2016). Though the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is an apostate mess, divided into jealously-held territories controlled by the Roman Catholic Church and branches of the Eastern Orthodox Church, we believe that it was built over the sites of Christ’s crucifixion and burial. In AD 135, the Roman Emperor Hadrian built a temple of Artemis (Diana) over the tomb that was revered by Christians as Jesus’ tomb. This was only about 40 years after the apostle John’s death, and the location of the tomb would still have been known. Two hundred years later, in 335, the Emperor Constantine pulled down the Artemis temple and built the Church of the Holy Sepulchre over that place. Thus it was built on the actual site of Christ’s tomb. Constantine destroyed the pagan temple, dug down to the tomb, and built the church over it. Part of the tomb was destroyed in 1009 on order of the Fatimid caliph of Egypt, but at least six other first century tombs exist nearby, so we know this was a burial place outside the city walls at the time of Jesus. The latest edition of Bible Times and Ancient Kingdoms has a PowerPoint presentation of Christ’s Passion Week which illustrates these things extensively.

THE EMPTY TOMB STILL WITNESS TO CHRIST’S RESURRECTION

Jesus Christ rose from the dead early Sunday morning about 2,000 years ago, and the tomb has been empty ever since. Fifty days later, on Pentecost, Peter preached somewhere in the vicinity of Herod’s Temple and told the people that Jesus had risen from the dead (Acts 2:22-24). Everyone hearing that sermon knew about these events and knew where Jesus’ tomb was located nearby. If the tomb wasn’t empty, they would have mocked Peter as a liar and rejected his preaching. Instead, 3,000 of them believed, and a little while later “a great company of priests” believed (Acts 6:7). They believed in Christ’s resurrection because there is no other reasonable explanation for the empty tomb. The Jews didn’t take the body, because they wanted to prove that Jesus was not the Son of God. The story the Jewish leaders concocted about the disciples stealing the body while the guards slept was patently a lie (Mat. 28:11-15). If the guards were sleeping, how could they know what happened? Further, the disciples would have been fools to have suffered unto death for a lie. The Roman government didn’t take the body, as they are the ones who had sealed the tomb to put the disturbance surrounding Jesus to rest. The tomb was empty because Christ rose from the dead, and He was seen by hundreds of eyewitnesses. “For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep” (1 Corinthians 15:3-6).
MAX LUCADO SAYS UNITY CREATES BELIEF AND IS THE KEY TO EVANGELISM

Church of Christ pastor and best-selling author Max Lucado is calling for Christian unity as the key to evangelistic success. He says, “On the last night of his life Jesus prayed a prayer that stands as a citadel for all Christians [John 17:20-21] ... Unity creates belief. How will the world believe that Jesus was sent by God? Not if we agree with each other. Not if we solve every controversy. Not if we are unanimous on each vote. NOT IF WE NEVER MAKE A DOCTRINAL ERROR. But if we love one another. ... The world will be won for Christ when the church is one in Christ” (“Max Lucado: Jesus Prayed for Unity,” Christian Post, Nov. 2, 2016). In his book In the Grip of Grace, Lucado thanks God for the Pentecostals, Anglicans, Southern Baptists, Presbyterians, and Roman Catholics. These good-sounding platitudes are so deadly wrong. Lucado is a wolf in sheep’s clothing. He would have God’s people ignore false teaching for the sake of unity. He would have them love false teachers more than they love God and truth. We are to mark and avoid false teachers (Rom. 16:17) and avoid those who “have a form of godliness but deny the power thereof” (2 Tim. 3:5). We are to earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 3), and it is impossible to earnestly contend for sound doctrine while striving for ecumenical unity at the same time. Paul didn’t seek unity with heretics; he reproofed them sharply (e.g., 1 Cor. 15:35-36; Gal. 5:7-10; Col 2:8). Lucado has never renounced Church of Christ heresy and has maintained a close relationship with Pepperdine University and Abeline Christian University, both staunch Church of Christ institutions. In June 1997, I talked with Lucado on the phone as well as with Elder Doyle Jennings of the Oak Hills Church. Both stated that they believe that baptism is necessary for salvation, but they do not believe in “baptismal regeneration.” They have added the rite of baptism to the grace of Christ for salvation. This is standard Church of Christ error, and it is a very serious matter for it constitutes a false gospel. Elder Jennings told me he does not accept the doctrine of eternal security, while Lucado said this doctrine is not an issue in the church and the people are free to accept it or reject it. This is significant. Those who believe that a born again child of God can lose his salvation do not understand the gospel properly. Lucado is laden down with heresies, including contemplative mysticism and salvation apart from personal faith in Christ. In the book Max on Life the following question is asked: “What about the people who have never heard of God? Will God punish them?” Lucado replies: “No, He will not. Heaven’s population includes throngs of people who learned the name of their Savior when they awoke in their eternal home” (p. 222). No wonder Lucado calls for “unity.” Heretics love ecumenical unity and hate biblical separatism.
NEW ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE UNEARTHED IN LACHISH

The city of Lachish was one of the largest and best fortified cities in ancient Israel, and archaeological research since the 1930s has unearthed a wealth of material supporting the Bible’s account of ancient history. There is evidence of the city’s destruction by the Assyrian king Sennacherib in the eighth century BC during the reign of Hezekiah (2 Ch. 32:9): the siege ramp, hundreds of iron arrowheads, lance heads, sling stones, and stone ballistae. The siege and destruction of Lachish is described from the Assyrian perspective in an amazing series of bas-reliefs from Sennacherib’s palace discovered by Henry Layard in the mid-1800s. Today the 90-foot-long series of pictorial reliefs line the walls of the Lachish Room in the British Museum, standing as mute witness before the world of the historical accuracy of the Bible for those who have eyes to see. The reliefs show the Assyrians attacking the city, building a siege ramp, using battering rams to destroy the walls, and brutally mistreating the Jewish prisoners. New evidence confirming biblical accounts pertaining to Lachish and ancient Israeli history was discovered earlier this year during a new excavation of the main Lachish gate. The gate has now been completely exposed, and it is 13 feet tall, 80 feet wide, and 80 feet deep. It is the largest known gate of the First Temple period and is one of the best preserved. It is a three-chambered gate (three large chambers on each side), and the benches with armrests where judges and city elders sat are still extant. On the side of the gate is a chamber with stairs leading down to another chamber where offerings were made to Baal on two four-horned altars. This confirms the Bible’s account of Judah’s descent into idolatry during the days of Ahaz (2 Ki. 16:3-4). Further, the altars were found to have been desecrated by breaking the horns, which confirms the account of Ahaz’s son Hezekiah’s zeal against idolatry (2 Ki. 18:4). And to top it off, archaeologists have found a toilet in the Baal chambers. It is “a stone fashioned in the shape of a chair, with a hole in its center.” We read in 2 Kings 10:27 how that Jehu made the Baal temple in Samaria into a toilet, and in Lachish we now find evidence of this practice. (For an extensive visual study of Lachish see the course Bible Times and Ancient Kingdoms and the accompanying PowerPoint presentation “Hezekiah and His Times,” available from Way of Life Literature.)

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INFORMATION

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