

# FRIDAY CHURCH NEWS NOTES

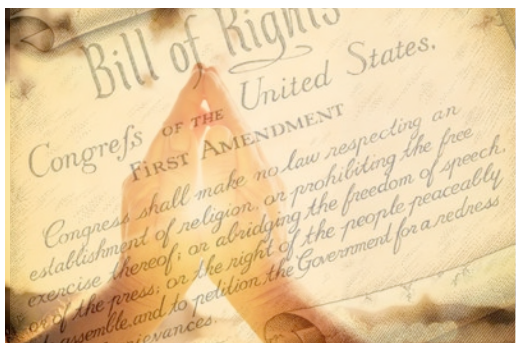
## MORE EVIDENCE UNEARTHED ON ISRAEL'S ANCIENT HISTORY

The following is excerpted from “2,700-year-old seal impression,” *The Times of Israel*, Jan. 1, 2018: “Past and present collided last week when an extremely rare seal impression discovered in Jerusalem’s Western Wall plaza and bearing the inscription ‘To the governor of the city’ was presented to Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat. According to site excavator Dr. Shlomit Weksler-Bdolah, ‘This is the first time that such an impression was found in an authorized excavation. It supports the biblical rendering of the existence of a governor of the city in Jerusalem 2,700 years ago.’ At the presentation, Barkat said, ‘This shows that already 2,700 years ago, Jerusalem, the capital of Israel, was a strong and central city.’ The minuscule clay seal impression, or docket, was found while researchers were examining the dust from a First Temple structure 100 meters northwest of the Western Wall at a site the Israel Antiquity Authorities has been excavating since 2005. ... The small (13 x 15 mm and 2–3 mm thick) fired lump of clay bears an image and inscription. On the upper portion of the impression, two figures wearing striped garments face each other. ... Weksler-Bdolah explains that the governor most likely functioned much like today’s mayor. The role is referenced in the Hebrew Bible: in 2 Kings 23:8, Joshua is listed as the governor of the city in the days of Hezekiah, and in 2 Chronicles 34:8, Maaseiah is noted as governor of the city in the days of Josiah.”



2,700-year-old governor's seal that scholars say corroborates part of Biblical history and supports Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

## IMPORTANT FREEDOM OF RELIGION CASE BEFORE SUPREME COURT— A MATTER CALLING FOR PRAYER



The following is excerpted from “Supreme Court Hears Landmark Religious Liberty Case,” *ChristianHeadlines.com*, Dec. 6, 2017: “Yesterday, the Supreme Court heard what Eric Metaxas calls ‘perhaps the most important free speech and religious freedom case in our lifetime.’ Eric explains the case succinctly: Jack Phillips is an artist who designs cakes. His business, Masterpiece Cakeshop, is an expression of his faith. He has refused business in the past that conflicted with his faith--for instance, he won’t design Halloween cakes or cakes that celebrate divorce. The Satanic Temple recently asked him to create a cake for Satan’s birthday, but he refused. When a same-sex couple asked him to design a cake for their same-sex wedding, he declined. He offered them any cake or other product in his store. But the couple was infuriated

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and brought him before the Colorado Civil Rights Commission. It fined Phillips and ordered him and his employees to go through a ‘re-education’ program. He has since stopped making custom wedding cakes, a decision that has cost him 40 percent of his business. The Supreme Court has previously ruled that government cannot force citizens to make, say, or do something that carries a message they reject. For example, the Court has ruled that the government cannot compel Jehovah’s Witnesses to salute the flag. Now the Court is being asked to extend this religious freedom to the rest of us. Can businesses ‘discriminate’ against customers? Writing for *The Hill*, Emilie Kao states, ‘At stake is whether the First Amendment to the Constitution protects all Americans at all times.’”

## **SELFITIS,** **A NEW PSYCHOLOGICAL ADDICTION**

A new addictive behaviour that has been coined “selfitis” is the object of a study that was published in the *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction* (Nov. 2017). Janarthanan Balakrishnan of Madura, India, and Mark Griffiths of Nottingham Trent University in the U.K. authored “An Exploratory Study of ‘Selfitis’ and the Development of the Selfitis Behaviour Scale.” The scale divides selfie takers into categories of *borderline*, *acute*, and *chronic*, and a study of 225 students from India universities found that 57% fell into the highest categories. (India has the most users on *Facebook*.) Six things were found to be the driving factors in obsessive selfie taking: Environmental enhancement (taking selfies to better enjoy my environment), social competition, attention seeking, mood modification, self-confidence, and subjective conformity. Men “were found to exhibit selfitis at a higher rate than women.” Oh yes, and selfie-stick users “were perceived as less socially attractive, moderately narcissistic, and moderately inconsiderate.”

## **THOUSANDS PRAY AT WESTERN WALL FOR RAIN**

In the midst of a long and serious drought in Israel, thousands gathered at the Western Wall in Jerusalem to pray for rain. The event was organized by the Agriculture Minister Uri Ariel. Prominent rabbis led the prayers. In February, the Sea of Galilee reached its lowest level in nearly 100 years (“Thousands pray,” *The Times of Israel*, Dec. 28, 2017). This is the fifth time in the last eight years that the chief rabbis have led prayer rallies for rain, but the drought continues. Deuteronomy 28, which explains Israel’s situation over the past 2,500 years, says, “And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of

the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day ... all these blessings shall come on thee ... The LORD shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season ... But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes ... that all these curses shall come upon thee ... thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass ... The LORD shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust” (Deut. 28:1, 2, 12, 15, 23, 24).

## BONO SAYS PAUL WAS WRONG



Bono, frontman for the rock band U2, stated his view of the Bible in a recent interview as follows: “The person who wrote best about love in the Christian era was Paul of Tarsus, who became Saint Paul. He was a tough - - - - -. He is a superintellectual guy,

but he is fierce and he has, of course, the Damascus experience. ... Now, it doesn’t cure him of all, of what he thinks of women or gay people or whatever else, but within his context he has an amazingly transcendent view of love” (“Bono: The Rolling Stone

Interview” with Jann Wenner, Dec. 27, 2017). So according to Bono, the apostle Paul needs to be cured of his views of women and gay people and other things. Doubtless a modern, supercool guy like Bono can straighten out poor misguided Paul. U2 is much more than a popular rock band. U2 and Bono are praised almost universally among contemporary and emerging Christians. Bono has been applauded by Eugene Peterson, author of *The Message*, Brian McLaren, Tony Campolo, Bill Hybels, Rick Warren, Rob Bell, and many others. *Christianity Today* almost worships U2. But Bono’s Christ is not the Christ of Scripture and his rock & roll lifestyle is a reproach to biblical holiness, which he readily admits. (For more about U2 and Bono see the *Directory of Contemporary Worship Musicians*, which is available for free viewing or downloading from [www.wayoflife.org](http://www.wayoflife.org).)

## MICHAEL W. SMITH CONTINUES TO CALL FOR ECUMENICAL UNITY

One of the great dangers of using contemporary worship music is that it builds bridges to the one-world church. To my knowledge, 100% of the popular contemporary worship musicians are radical ecumenists, including Stuart Townend and the Gettys. They have non-critical association with “Christians” of every stripe, including Roman Catholics. To them, “separation” is almost a dirty word. Michael W. Smith is one of the most prominent and influential names in contemporary worship, and he continues to call for ecumenical unity. The goal of his new live album *Surrounded* is “to unify the Church’s diverse expressions into one passionate, joyful cry of worship.” He says, “I feel God moving through His Church and He is calling us together to be one voice and one heart. One bride. Every nation, every tribe and every tongue. Every social class, EVERY DENOMINATION” (“Michael W. Smith

Releases Two Albums,” [louderthanthemusic.com](http://louderthanthemusic.com), Dec. 2017). It is impossible to reconcile the Bible’s clear and forceful warnings about false teaching and apostasy (e.g., Romans 16:17; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; 11:1-4, 14-15; 1 Timothy 1:3; 4:1-5; 2 Timothy 3:5; 4:3-4; 1 John 4:1; Jude 3; Revelation 2:14-16) with contemporary praise music’s call for ecumenical unity. For those who love the Bible, interpret it literally, and hold it to be the sole and final authority for faith and practice, it is clear that the voice Michael W. Smith is hearing is not God’s. “Therefore I esteem all *thy* precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way” (Psalm 119:128). Bible-believing churches that are messing around with contemporary music and are not properly educating their people about this issue are playing with spiritual fire, but most of the pastors are *terribly* and *carelessly* and *willfully* ignorant of such things.

# EVOLUTIONIST RETRACTS KEY STUDY ON ORIGIN OF LIFE

The following is excerpted from “Evolutionist Retracts,” *Christian Headlines*, Dec. 22, 2017: “A secular scientist who attempted to explain the origins of life has made a bold admission that bolsters arguments against Darwinian evolution. Jack Szostak of Harvard University published a 2016 paper in *Nature Chemistry* claiming he and his colleagues had figured out a way to get RNA to replicate itself. Darwinian evolutionists believe RNA, a nucleic acid present in all living cells, were some of the first molecules to form on the Earth and give rise to living things. But for that to happen, the RNA would have had to somehow reproduce on its own without requisite enzymes that would not have evolved yet. Szostak claimed to have facilitated RNA self-replication in his lab, but earlier this month, he said one of his colleagues, Tivoli Olsen, realized they had misinterpreted the data when she could not reproduce the original experiment’s results. ‘In retrospect, we were totally blinded by our belief [in our findings] ... we were not as careful or rigorous as we should have been (and as Tivoli was) in interpreting these experiments,’ Szostak told *Retraction Watch*. In his 2009 book *Signature in the Cell*, the Discovery Institute’s Stephen Meyer noted the inadequacy of using RNA to explain how life spontaneously appeared on earth. That inadequacy continues to stymie evolutionists today. ‘As I have

investigated various models that combined chance and necessity, I have noted an increasing sense of futility and frustration arising amongst scientists who work on the origin of life,’ Meyer wrote, referencing some of Szostak’s earlier work on the subject.” [Concluding note: There is *zero* scientific evidence that life arose from non-life or that higher life evolved from lower life. In fact, such a thing is contrary to every known scientific fact. The defense of Darwinian evolution has always depended on smoke and mirrors.]



**Jack Szostak**

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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](mailto:fbns@wayoflife.org).

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