
FRIDAY CHURCH NEWS NOTES

THE ASCETIC NUN WRAPPED IN CHAINS AND IRONS



*The exposed nun is wrapped with chains
(Image courtesy Israel Antiquities Authority)*

The skeleton of a nun wrapped in chains and irons was recently discovered in an ancient monastery in Jerusalem. This is the first physical evidence of an extreme ascetic practice that was reportedly widespread in the early centuries as apostate Christianity was spreading everywhere. “Theodoret of Cyrrhus, a 5th-century Christian writer, mentions two women, Marana and Cyra, who bound themselves with chains for decades” (“Buried in Chains,” *World Israel News*, Mar. 10, 2025). The ascetic principle began to be taught in the first century as a part of gnosticism (Col. 2:20-23). According to asceticism, salvation and holiness are obtained by human works,

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THE HAWAIIN NOAH

More than 200 flood accounts have been collected by researchers in 70 languages. They come from every part of the world, including Mesopotamia, Egypt, Africa, Persia, India, Greece, China, the Polynesian islands, and the Americas. Though containing mythical elements, the stories represent a universal memory of the Flood. “Ninety-five percent of these traditions have common elements with Genesis and they say that the flood was global” (Nozomi Osanai, *A Comparative Study of the Flood Accounts in the Gilgamesh Epic and Genesis*). In 1905, Stephen Peet wrote, “[T]here are many descriptions of the remarkable event [the Genesis Flood]. Some of these have come from Greek historians, some from the Babylonian records; others from the cuneiform tablets, and still others from the mythology and traditions of different nations, **so that we may say that no event has occurred either in ancient or modern times about which there is better evidence or more numerous records, than this very one which is so beautifully but briefly described in the sacred Scriptures.** It is one of the events which seems to be familiar to the most distant nations ... It is true that many look upon the story as it is repeated in these distant regions, as either referring to local floods, or

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especially through abuse of the body. Monasticism increased in the third and fourth centuries during the persecutions of the Roman emperors. Many fled to the deserts and other remote places in the Judean wilderness east of Jerusalem toward Jericho and the Sinai Peninsula and Egypt, and it was in this region that the practice of asceticism began. The prominent ascetics were called “the desert fathers.” (The word “hermit” means “of the desert.”) The ascetic life was promoted by many of the influential “church fathers,” including Origen, Jerome, Basil, Augustine, and Chrysostom. The practice of asceticism grew ever more intense and strange. They beat themselves, deprived themselves of sleep for long periods, fasted abusively, partook of nearly inedible food, took vows of silence, stood for days without sitting down, didn’t bathe, kept hoods drawn over their faces. They abandoned marriages and withdrew from all normal human relationships, taking vows to isolate themselves from their loved ones for the rest of their lives. They submitted themselves to endless vain rituals. The first error of Roman Catholic asceticism is its false gospel of works and sacraments. They replaced the gospel of free, eternal salvation by Christ’s grace alone through Christ’s blood alone with a gospel of salvation by grace *plus* works. According to the *Ladder of Divine Ascent*, which depicted the fundamental concepts of monasticism, monks and nuns ascend to heaven on a ladder of good works and ascetic practices.

THE MYSTERIOUS NATURE OF THE ANTICHRIST

There is something very mysterious about the coming Antichrist. On one hand, the Antichrist appears to be a man. He is called “that man” (2 Th. 2:3). He arises from “the people ... that ... shall destroy the city and the sanctuary,” referring to the Roman legions that destroyed Jerusalem and the second temple in AD 70 (Da. 9:26). On the other hand, the Antichrist is described as the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit (Re. 11:7; 17:8). The “bottomless pit” is the Greek *abussos*, which is where some fallen angels are held captive. The demons who were cast out of the demoniac of the Gaderenes begged Jesus not to send them into “the deep” (*abussos*, Lu. 8:31). Satan will be incarcerated in the bottomless pit during the Millennium (Re. 20:1-3). The Antichrist is called “the beast” 28 times in Scripture (Da. 7:6, 11; 11:7; 13:1, 2, 3, 4, 14, 15, 17, 18; 14:9, 11; 15:2; 16:2, 10, 13; 17:7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17; 19:19, 20; 20:4, 10). Is

the Antichrist a man? Is he a demon? John Walvoord surmised that the beast out of the pit is Satan, who, together with the world dictator of Revelation 13:1 and the false prophet of Revelation 13:11, forms “the satanic counterfeit of the divine Trinity.” We cannot accept this, because the beast and Satan are cast into the lake of fire at separate times and as different personages. Compare Revelation 19:20 with 20:10. W.C. Stevens surmised that the Antichrist is “a resurrected man” who comes out of the pit described in Ezekiel 32:17-32. The bottom line is that we won’t know for sure until we have more light. For now, we know everything God wants us to know and everything we need to know. We know that Christ’s coming, our blessed hope, is “at hand”; it is imminent. “But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer” (1 Peter 4:7).

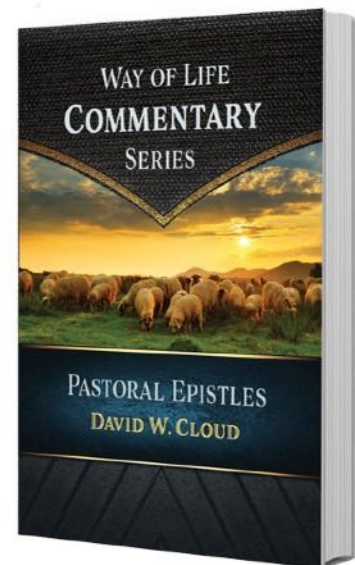
THE HAWAIIAN NOAH

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as the result of contact with civilized people, who have brought it from historic countries, and yet the similarity of the story is such as to make even this explanation unsatisfactory” (“The Story of the Deluge,” *American Antiquarian*, July-August 1905, p. 203). See “Flood Legends from Around the World,” nwcreation.net. See also *After the Flood* by Bill Cooper. Consider one of the Hawaiian flood accounts which features Nu’u (it is easy to see the name *Noah* here), who is said to be the 13th generation of the first man. (Noah was the 10th generation from Adam.) The “gods” instructed him to build a large canoe roofed over like a house by which to escape the flood with his wife and three sons. He also carried a male and female of all animals. Water covered all the land. After the flood, Nu’u made landfall on top of a large mountain. In thanksgiving, Nu’u offered a sacrifice. This account also features a rainbow (“Flood in World Myth and Folklore Pacific,” curioustxonomy.net).

TESTIMONY ABOUT THE WAY OF LIFE BIBLE COMMENTARIES

A pastor recently wrote as follows: “I love a good commentary. It is my normal procedure to investigate a passage of the Bible, and then look up a few trusted commentaries to see how these good men handled the same passage. Right now, I am preaching through I Timothy in our midweek service, and I picked up your Pastoral Epistles Commentary. The information is thorough and completely trustworthy. I really enjoyed reading the introduction (read it a couple of times). We are now in chapter 5, and I am indebted to the valuable research that your commentary provides. I have also read your commentaries on Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel to accompany my own morning devotions. I consider it a spiritual challenge every time I pick up one of your books, but your commentaries are my favorite so far. Thank you for being used of God to be a blessing to many others. Every pastor should invest in the treasure of books you have written for their personal library, for their church library, and church book store. Our people



have been very blessed and strengthened by your hard work.” Currently there are commentaries on 37 books of the Bible with 15 more scheduled for 2025: Genesis-Deuteronomy (scheduled March 2025), Joshua-Chronicles (scheduled June 2025), Psalms, Proverbs (scheduled last half 2025), Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Minor Prophets (12 books), Romans, Corinthian Epistles, Prison Epistles (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians), Thessalonian Epistles, Pastoral Epistles (1 and 2 Timothy, Titus), Hebrews, General Epistles (James, 1 & 2 Peter, 1, 2, 3 John, Jude), Revelation.



PLANTS FOCUS LIGHT



The following is from CreationMoments.com, February 14, 2025: "In many ways, a plant is like a machine that changes the energy of sunlight into food energy that is needed by the rest of the living world. The energy which runs the plant is light. Now, if you were going to design a better, more efficient plant, how might you do it? Obviously, one way to improve a plant would be to create one that can do its job with less light. But remember, the plant cannot store more energy than it receives. And if the plant was too sensitive to light, a strong dose of sunlight could kill it. The obvious solution is to outfit the plant with tiny lenses which focus even dim light into the chemical centers where photosynthesis takes place. Due to man's ignorance, modern science has often regarded plants as if they were simple, unsophisticated forms of life. Now scientists have discovered that many plants do indeed have special cells which focus and concentrate the available light into the very centers where it is needed. One plant's shaded leaves were found to intensify available light by 26 times. And if the light gets so strong that it could damage the leaves, the light is focused onto cells which can absorb the extra light. Plants are much more complex, higher-performance living things than we ever suspected. Plants incorporate designs based on a highly sophisticated knowledge of both chemistry and physics. What a wonderful witness they are to our Creator!"

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.

SAIL ON

The following is by John Phillips: "Keeping on was the genius of Columbus. Many mariners had sailed west, but none of them had remained on a westerly course so determinedly for so long. Joaquin Miller described his persistence:

**Behind him lay the gray Azores,
Behind the Gates of Hercules;
Before him not the ghost of shores,
Before him only shoreless seas.
The good mate said: "Now must we pray,
For lo! the very stars are gone.
Brave Admiral, speak, what shall I say?"
"Why, say 'Sail on! sail on! and on!"
They sailed and sailed, as winds might
blow,
Until at last the blanched mate said:
"Why, now not even God would know
Should I and all my men fall dead.
These very winds forget their way,
For God from these dread seas is gone.
Now speak, brave Admiral, speak and
say"
He said: "Sail on! sail on! and on!"**