

**AND THE PEOPLE CAME...**

- Week of August 4, 2024 -

Sunday School -----	30
Sunday Morning Service -----	48
Sunday Evening Service -----	29
Wednesday Eve., 08/07/24 Service -----	12

**AND THE PEOPLE GAVE...**

- Week of August 4, 2024 -

<u>Undesignated</u> Tithes & Offerings -----	\$ 1,759.40
<b>TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 08/04/24:</b>	<b>\$ 1,759.40</b>

- Week of July 28, 2024 -

<u>Undesignated</u> Tithes & Offerings -----	\$ 6,649.50
Children's SS Missionary Fund -----	\$ 14.75
Auditorium A/C Replacement Fund -----	\$ 290.00
<b>TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 07/28/24:</b>	<b>\$ 6,954.25</b>

- Week of July 21, 2024 -

<u>Undesignated</u> Tithes & Offerings -----	\$ 6,051.14
<b>TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 07/21/24:</b>	<b>\$ 6,051.14</b>

- Week of July 14, 2024 -

<u>Undesignated</u> Tithes & Offerings -----	\$ 1,346.79
Sign Repair Fund -----	\$ 1.00
Auditorium A/C Replacement Fund -----	\$ 116.22
<b>TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 07/14/24:</b>	<b>\$ 1,464.01</b>

- Week of July 7, 2024 -

<u>Undesignated</u> Tithes & Offerings -----	\$ 1,446.45
Auditorium A/C Replacement Fund -----	\$ 150.00
<b>TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 07/07/24:</b>	<b>\$ 1,596.45</b>

Average amount of Undesignated Offerings needed for church operating expenses EACH WEEK, as a minimum = \$ 1,600.00



**WHAT IT MEANS TO BE SAVED**

1. Admit that you are a sinner.
2. Admit that God says all sins must be paid for.
3. Accept the fact that Christ took upon Himself the suffering necessary to pay for all your sins.
4. You must change your mind about sin and sinning (God calls this repentance).
5. By an act of your will, accept by faith the Lord Jesus Christ, Who can save you from the penalty of sin. Then, tell God about this in a simple prayer. Believe that God keeps His promise to save you, and thank Him for His salvation.



REV. FREDDIE MARKS, OKLAHOMA PASTOR, WAS NERVOUS IN HIS FIRST WEDDING... AND HE SAID...



YOU MAY NOW PUT THE FING ON HER RINGER!

**Church Directory**

Todd W. White -----	Pastor
Debra Carlton, Mickie Shatwell, Lois Mae Floyd -----	Pianists
Derek Quinnelly -----	Greeter
Kim Phillips; Shirley White/LeAnna White; Berdena Bergman/Debra Carlton; Daniel Avery/GiGi Avery; & Keith Shufelt -----	Teachers
Larry & Mary Byars -----	Outreach
Keith Shufelt -----	Men's Prayer Group
GinaMarie Shufelt -----	Ladies Bible Study/Flowers
Seth White -----	Sound/Video
Larry Byars, Derek Quinnelly, David Smith -----	Trustees

**REMINDER**



Dr. Oliver B. Greene  
1915-1976

**PAUL DECLARES JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH WITHOUT LAW OR WORKS**

by Dr. Oliver B. Greene

The Apostle Paul declares that both Jews and Gentiles are on the same grounds, insofar as sin and salvation are concerned.

*"We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the Law: for by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified"* (Galatians 2:15-16).

Paul points out here that it is not a question of justification for the Gentiles any more than it is a question of justification for the Jew also, because Jews and Gentiles in this dispensation of grace are justified before GOD in the same way . . . by grace, through faith, plus nothing. It will be a happy day in the lives of some church people when they realize the difference between justification "BEFORE GOD" (Romans 4:2), which is by faith alone, which saves the sinner, causing him to become a Christian; and justification "BEFORE MEN" (James 2:14-26), which is by works and which gives the believer a testimony before his fellow man. Through good works he proves to his fellowman that living faith abides in his heart.

We are justified before GOD by naked faith; we are justified before men through good faithful works . . . stewardship. JESUS commanded, *"Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in Heaven."*

Works do not have anything to do with justification before GOD. We are justified by faith without the deeds of the Law: *"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law"* (Romans 3:28). *"Not of works, lest any man should boast"* (Ephesians 2:9). *"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost"* (Titus 3:5).

Jew or Gentile, by the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified. Paul clearly states this again in Romans 3:20. Here he is saying to the Jews that if they hope to stand before GOD in peace, they too must come by grace through faith, and not by the works of the Law - or by the practice of Judaism.

Galatians 2, verse 17: *"But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid!"*

You will notice in Paul's writings that he many times asks a question, and then answers his own question immediately. In Paul's day it was customary for the Jews to speak of Gentiles as "sinners." Of course, many times they were referred to as "dogs." Paul knew that some Jew - perhaps even Peter - was asking, *"If we Jews turn from our religion and seek to be justified before GOD by faith in JESUS CHRIST alone, if we turn our backs upon the works of the Law, then will we not put ourselves in the same class with Gentile sinners? And if we do that, does that not make CHRIST the minister of sin? Would it not then be CHRIST who makes us sinners?"* Paul answers, *"God forbid!"*

Notice verse 18: *"For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor."*

Paul's reply to such a question as that of the preceding verse, is this: *"It is not Christ who makes us sinners - it is we ourselves...because if, after seeking justification through the finished work of JESUS CHRIST, we again turn to the Law of Moses as if we were still unjustified sinners seeking to become justified by the works of the Law, we are then transgressors of the Law and therefore we make ourselves sinners . . . because sin is the transgression of GOD's Law."* Read I John 3:4.

Never entertain the idea that Paul was against the Law of GOD. He testifies in Romans that the Law of GOD is holy an  
(continued, inside)

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righteous. JESUS came, not to destroy the Law, but to fulfill the Law - and what Paul was preaching is simply this: *“In JESUS we are Law-keepers. In JESUS we satisfy the Law of GOD - but ONLY IN JESUS; because what the Law could not do, what the Law had never done, JESUS did in a body like unto your body and mine.”* No, Paul was not minimizing the holiness and the power of the Law. He was simply attempting to set straight the people who had been confused by the legalizers who had been commanding believers to practice Law-works to complete their salvation and to be able to keep their salvation. Paul was one hundred percent against mixing Law and Grace. Paul preached pure Grace, and ONLY pure Grace, for salvation.

Verse 19: ***“For I through the Law am dead to the Law, that I might live unto God.”***

Is the believer under Law? Is the Christian subject to the Law of Moses? In Paul’s day, that question was already a burning issue. The Bible is crystal clear in giving the answer to the question, “Is the believer under the Law?” Paul answers: ***“Ye are not under the Law, but under Grace” (Romans 6:14).*** The believer is loosed and delivered from the Law (Romans 7:2). The believer is delivered from the Law (Romans 7:6). The Lord JESUS CHRIST is ***“the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone that believeth” (Romans 10:4).*** The Christian is free from the Law (Romans 8:2). And in our present Scripture (Galatians 2:19) the believer is ***“DEAD TO THE LAW.”***

It may be that some of the Jews asked Paul, “When and where did you die?” The answer is found in our next verse:

Verse 20: ***“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.”***

Paul answers by saying, *“I died when JESUS died on the Cross.”* When JESUS hung on the Cross, the passers-by saw only one man dying on a Cross; but GOD the Father saw more than one man. GOD saw more than a physical body. GOD saw the spiritual body, the mystical body - and that body is CHRIST. The church of the living GOD is the body of CHRIST. GOD looks upon the church as a body. JESUS is the Head; we born again believers are the members.

In I Corinthians 12:13, Paul declares, ***“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles.”***

Writing to the believers at Ephesus, Paul said, ***“For we are members of His body, OF HIS FLESH AND OF HIS BONES.”***

Writing to the believers in Colosse, Paul said, “And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence.”

CHRIST is the head of the church; we are members of His body. Colossians 3:3: ***“Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.”*** As GOD looked down upon Mount Calvary and saw the Lord JESUS dying on the Cross, He saw not only the head of the body, but GOD saw the entire body - complete, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing (Ephesians 5:27). He saw the glorious church that He purchased with His own Blood. GOD lives in the

eternal present. He knows the end in the beginning; and He saw in CHRIST the church . . . complete, without spot, the holy church that will be displayed in the heavenlies throughout eternity (Ephesians 2:7).

***“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will” (Ephesians 1:3-5).***

That is the meaning of the words of Paul, ***“For I through the Law am dead to the Law”*** He died when JESUS died on the Cross. Paul, by grace, was in CHRIST as He hung on the Cross, and what happened to JESUS on the Cross happened to Paul since he was in CHRIST. What happened to Paul happened to every born again believer from then until this day, and to every believer from this day until the church is completed and caught up to meet JESUS in the air.

***“WHEREFORE, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the Law BY THE BODY OF CHRIST” (Romans 7:4).***

The Law could do no more - it had no more authority over Paul. Certainly the Law holds nothing against a dead man - (“I... am dead to the Law . . . I am crucified with Christ”). If a person commits murder, the state tries him as a criminal, the judge sentences him to die in the gas chamber, and the sentence is carried out.

When the corpse of the murderer is removed from the gas chamber . . . when the body is buried . . . the courts hold nothing against the dead man. He paid the supreme penalty of death. JESUS CHRIST, the Son of GOD, paid the penalty for sin (***“The wages of sin is death”***). JESUS died for sinners. He knew no sin (II Corinthians 5:21). He was the sinless, spotless, Son of GOD. He willingly died on the Cross, that we might be saved, and all believers died with Him because in reality all believers were in Him when He laid down His life on the Cross. But that is not all: When JESUS was pronounced dead, Joseph of Arimathea went with Nicodemus to Pilate and asked for His body, in order that they might bury Him.

The record is found in Matthew 27:58-60: ***“He went to Pilate, and begged the body of JESUS. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered. And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock.”***

Beloved, notice the word “BODY.” Please notice that word is used three times in the account we have just read. The “body” of JESUS was begged for burial, Pilate surrendered the “body,” they wrapped the “body” in clean cloth, they buried it in Joseph’s new tomb.

We born again believers are crucified, buried, and risen with JESUS. What He experienced, we experienced with Him:

***“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried***

***with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:3-4).***

Yes, born again believers are crucified with CHRIST, buried with CHRIST in the baptism of His death. (Certainly Paul is not referring to the water in the River Jordan nor to the water in a baptistry. The baptism referred to in this scripture is the baptism of which JESUS spoke when He said, “I have a baptism to be baptized with.”)

When JESUS came out of that tomb, every member of the New Testament church came out with Him . . . that is, we were raised from the dead along with the Head of the church:

***“Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him: knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:8-11).***

Hear these precious words:

***“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. FOR YE ARE DEAD, AND YOUR LIFE IS HID WITH CHRIST IN GOD” (Colossians 3:1-3).***

But that is not all.

Hear this:

***“But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) AND HATH RAISED US UP TOGETHER, AND MADE US SIT TOGETHER IN HEAVENLY PLACES IN CHRIST JESUS” (Ephesians 2:4-6).***

Positionally, we born again believers sit with JESUS in heavenly places - now. Our Head is in Heaven, the Body to which we belong is in Heaven, the Foundation of the New Testament church is in Heaven. Our citizenship is in Heaven. We sit together in heavenly places in CHRIST JESUS.

What a wonderful position! It is tragic that so many professing Christians do not understand the marvel and the miracle of the grace of GOD. They have been misled by modern legalizers who put them under commandments. They worry, they struggle, they work, they toil, they strive, they endure . . . in an effort to keep saved! They are trying desperately to “make it in.” True believers are already “in” . . . we are SEATED WITH JESUS ***“IN HEAVENLY PLACES . . . We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.”***

***“For what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us . . .” (Romans 8:3-4).***

***“FOR CHRIST IS THE END OF THE LAW FOR***

***RIGHTEOUSNESS TO EVERY ONE THAT BELIEVETH” (Romans 10:4).***

The Law of Moses demanded death as the righteous penalty for all sin. The Law executed its sentence and claimed its demand upon Paul in the person of the Lord JESUS CHRIST, the Lamb of GOD, the substitute for sinners . . . He who died on the Cross on Golgotha’s hill.

GOD reckoned Paul in CHRIST - and put Paul to death in CHRIST when CHRIST died on the Cross for Paul. JESUS represented Paul on the Cross. JESUS also represented YOU, if you are a believer - and He wants to represent every sinner who may read these lines. If you are lost, JESUS is seeking you through this message. If you will believe on JESUS He will justify you before GOD, because JESUS is the ***“propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world” (I John 2:2).***

Paul declares, ***“We thus judge (reckon) that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again” (II Corinthians 5:14-15).***

Therefore, according to GOD’s reckoning at Calvary, we died in the Lord JESUS; but we did not remain dead. We arose from the dead when GOD raised up CHRIST from the dead, and we (believers) who died in CHRIST were also brought to life in CHRIST, because He is life: ***“I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life” (John 14:6).*** We believers were quickened together with CHRIST (Ephesians 2:5).

Therefore, we were crucified with CHRIST, we were raised with CHRIST, we now live in CHRIST because He is our life.

Since ***“Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God,”*** and ***“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God,”*** and ***“The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us,”*** and since that Word was JESUS, the only begotten Son of GOD, and since He died on the Cross, and if we believe in Him we become a member of His body, ***“of his flesh, and of his bones,”*** we can say that we live ***“by faith, (THE faith), of the Son of God.”***

What I have said is simply this: It is Christ in you, the hope of glory (Colossians 1:27). It is you in CHRIST, the hope of Heaven (Colossians 3:3). ***“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus”;*** so, the only position that makes you eligible to stand before a holy GOD is that of being in CHRIST by faith.

When we accept His finished work, we receive everything purchased through His finished work; because it is CHRIST in you-and CHRIST is a person. You do not receive JESUS “in parts” or on the “installment plan.” He is a personality, and when you receive JESUS, you receive all of Him. When you are born again you are completely born again. We are not saved in parts, a little at a time; we are saved when JESUS enters the heart by faith.

When Paul died in CHRIST, Paul met all the righteous requirements and commands of the Law. From that moment forward, he was forever delivered from the penalty of the Law.

The Law had put Paul to death - but it was not the Law that brought him back to life. The Law was neither the means of his life, nor was the Law the rule of his life. The Law was “done away” in CHRIST JESUS (II Corinthians 3:11).

That is the reason Paul said, **“The life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me, and gave Himself for me!”**

Verse 21: **“I do not frustrate the grace of GOD: for if righteousness come by the Law, then Christ is dead in vain.”**

What Paul is saying in this verse is simply this:

*“If a man could have been saved by obeying the Law . . . if a man could attain righteousness on his own merits through keeping the Law, then certainly there was no need for JESUS to die on the Cross!”* JESUS died because of man’s utter inability to save himself. The death of JESUS was an imperative on behalf of man. The natural man cannot know GOD, cannot understand GOD, and cannot receive GOD. No man can come to GOD except the Spirit draw him (John 6:44) and the instrument through which the Spirit convicts, convinces, and draws, is the Word of GOD. The Word of GOD is CHRIST, because it was the Word that became flesh and tabernacled among us. The natural man cannot please GOD (Romans 8:8-9); therefore it was imperative that JESUS take a body, and in that body do for man what man could never have done for himself.

You precious people who mix Law and Grace, who thunder out long and loud that we must keep the Law and live by the commandments, hear these solemn words:

**“Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the Epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart. And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward: not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of GOD; who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: FOR THE LETTER KILLETH, BUT THE SPIRIT GIVETH LIFE. But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; WHICH GLORY WAS TO BE DONE AWAY: How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious. Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech. And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ.”**

O Beloved, can you not see the clear truth set forth here?

**“But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away. Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, THERE IS LIBERTY. But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, EVEN AS BY THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD” (II Corinthians 3:3-18).**

Here Paul is saying to us that the believer is not transformed into the image of CHRIST by the works (or practices) of the Law; but by the HOLY GHOST abiding in his bosom. It is the Spirit that giveth life, not the letter of the Law; because the letter of the Law killeth . . . it is the ministration of death . . . the ministration of condemnation. But the Spirit quickeneth us together with Christ. . . and every born again believer possesses the Holy Ghost! (Romans 8:9)

**“Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ” (Colossians 2:16-17).**

## **NEWS OF INTEREST TO CHRISTIANS**

❑ **EVANGELICALS AND THE PRAYER CIRCLE** - The prayer circle is a practice adapted from Jewish mysticism and paganism that is growing in popularity within the dangerous waters of “evangelicalism.” It was practiced at the 2012 *Revive Our Hearts* conference in Indianapolis. (Conference speakers: Nancy Demoss Wolgemuth, Joni Eareckson Tada, Joy McClain, Janet Parshall, Mary Kassian, and Priscilla Shirer.) A circle was drawn around the speaker’s podium in the belief that prayer within the circle brought special concentration, protection, and power.

This is derived from the myth of a Jewish miracle worker rabbi named Honi HaMe’agel that is mentioned in the Jewish Talmud. (There is also an account of Honi sleeping 70 years.) To cause rain, he drew a circle around himself and from within the circle demanded that God bring rain. The practice has been popularized by Mark Batterson, pastor of National Community Church, Washington, D.C., in *The Circle Maker* (2011 audio, 2012 book). The book, which has sold more than 1 million copies, promises to “show you how to claim God-given promises, pursue God-sized dreams, and seize God-ordained opportunities.” Batterson commits a massive error by interpreting Scripture by a Jewish myth instead of interpreting the myth by Scripture (and thus rejecting it). The only sure protection in this age of frightful apostasy is to have a biblical testing mindset: to be born again, to be a serious Bible student, and to test everything by the Word of God. This is described in Hebrews 5:12-14.

❑ **MASSACHUSETTS ERASES “MOTHER” AND “FATHER” FROM BIRTH CERTIFICATES** - The following is excerpted from “Removes ‘Mother’ and ‘Father,’” PJMedia, July 31, 2024).

“Up in Massachusetts, House Bill 4750 just passed the state Senate and was headed for the governor’s desk to be signed into law as of yesterday. What this bill does is replace the words

‘mother’ and ‘father’ on new birth certificates with ‘person who gave birth’ and ‘other parent.’ ... Back in May, Illinois passed a similar law turning plain language into clunky, awkward mouthfuls, by rebranding offenders, as in, you know, criminals, into ‘justice-impacted individuals.’”

❑ **ANOTHER HOMOSEXUAL CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP LEADER** - In July, black gospel singer/evangelist Seth Pinnock of the United Kingdom announced his homosexuality by posting a poem on social media declaring he was “Black, Queer, Christian, Here.” Like others, Pinnock blames the condemnation of homosexuality for his depression, self-hatred, and drug addiction. He says he has found liberty through “progressive pastors” who helped him understand that God does not condemn him. “[They] helped me unlearn and relearn scripture, and to see this as a justice issue” (“This is right,” *The Guardian*, Jul. 28, 2024). They helped him “approach scripture with a modern, critical lens.” He told the *Guardian*, “[J]ust as churches have come to apologise for their entanglement with slavery, I can see a time when they will apologise for distancing and silencing queer people.”

He is referring to the black Pentecostal churches in which he grew up. He said the young generation has been positive toward his “coming out.” “Younger people are listening to movements that are more inclusive. Will black churches continue to be as influential on younger people? No. ... There are hundreds of thousands of young people who will now feel they can too be free. I know of churches that are already beginning to discuss LGBT+ issues because of my action.”

❑ **ANCIENT BLUE, PURPLE, AND SCARLET DYED FABRIC FOUND IN SOUTHERN ISRAEL** - Since the 1950s, ancient samples of the three colors of dyed fabric mentioned in connection with the tabernacle have been discovered in southern Israel (though there is no connection between these fabrics and the actual tabernacle).

The three colors are mentioned in Exodus 26:36--“blue” is the Hebrew tekhelet; “purple” is argaman; and “scarlet” is tola. Tiny swatches of blue dyed wool were found in the 1950s in a cave near the Dead Sea. The dye, made from the mollusk *Murex trunculus*, dates to about the time of Herod the Great (*Bible History Daily*, Jan. 2, 2014). The swatch of royal purple, also made from Mediterranean mollusks, was found at Timnah in 2020. It is Carbon-14 dated to about 1000 BC, the time of David and Solomon (*Bible History Daily*, Jan. 31, 2021). The piece of scarlet fabric was discovered this year in a cave near Masada (*Bible History Daily*, July 26, 2024). This dye was produced from a scale insect named *Kermes vermilio* and is Carbon-14 dated to about 1,800 BC, which is the time of Abraham.

❑ **JONI EARECKSON TADA AND CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER** - “Evangelicalism” today is filled with dangerous heretical practices promoted by seemingly “safe” people. Consider Joni Eareckson Tada, author of more than 40 books and extremely popular in evangelical circles. In 2023, she published *The Practice of the Presence of Jesus* to promote the contemplative prayer techniques of Nicholas Herman (c. 1611-1691), known as

“Brother Lawrence.” He was a Roman Catholic monk (“lay brother”) who preached Rome’s false gospel of sacraments and works, worshiped Mary as Queen of Heaven, and practiced mind-emptying meditation. He lived in a monastery in Paris called the Discalced Carmelite Priory, which is devoted to Mary.

A century before Brother Lawrence, Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross had reformed the Carmelite order with their mystical practices and extreme asceticism. Deceived by Rome, Lawrence thought that his own works atoned for sins. He labored under a terrible legalistic bondage of Roman asceticism rather than the wonderful freedom of the true gospel of Jesus Christ. He considered sacrifice and suffering as a means of salvation. Priest Joseph de Beauford, compiler of Lawrence’s teaching, observed, “His one desire was that he might suffer something for the love of God, FOR ALL HIS SINS, and finding in his last illness a favorable occasion for suffering in this life, he embraced it heartily.” “Lawrence encourages readers to listen to ‘the voice of God,’ chant mantras, empty your mind in order to be filled, and thus ‘experience God.’”

The Bible, to the contrary, instructs the believer to be sober-minded and vigilant, which means to be in full control of one’s mind. Emptying the mind is an exceedingly dangerous occult practice that enables demons to influence one’s thinking and allows error to run unchecked. It is a recipe for spiritual delusion. That Lawrence was dealing with demons is obvious from his own experience. When something would take his mind away from God he would receive “a reminder from God” that moved him to “cry out, singing and dancing violently like a mad man” (Gerald May, *The Awakened Heart*, HarperCollins, 1993). Joni (pronounced Johnny), who quotes from “Brother Lawrence” throughout her book, is drawing thousands of unsuspecting Christians into the very, very dangerous world of contemplative prayer. The practice almost invariably leads to ecumenical sympathy with Roman Catholicism, and often it leads to the heresies of universalism and even pantheism (God is everything) and panentheism (God is in everything).

❑ **CHRISTIANS AND SUNDAY SPORTS THEN AND NOW** - Prior to the onslaught of the rock & roll pop culture, most Christians in America were opposed to Sunday sports. In 1927, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled by a vote of 7 to 2 that Sunday baseball was “unholy” and “worldly employment.”

“The 1958 book *Ten Famous Christian Athletes*, authored by a Youth For Christ leader, featured only athletes who refrained from Sunday play. As late as 1960, an editorial in *Christianity Today* lambasted Christian athletes who played professional football and thereby ‘yielded to the lure of money and added fame, and joined in the desecration of the Lord’s Day’” (“How Billy Graham Made Peace with Sunday Sports,” *Athletes in Action*, a Cru Ministry, nd.). “By the 1960s, however, Graham’s views on Sunday sports had shifted. By then, athletes like Bill Wade, Don Shinnick, and Bill Glass (football), Bobby Richardson, Al Worthington, and Felipe Alou (baseball), had entered the professional ranks, playing on Sundays even as they expressed support for the born-again evangelistic message that Graham



espoused. Graham’s insistence that athletes maintain their Christian testimony by refraining from Sunday play weakened, and he began featuring Glass, Richardson, and other well-known professional athletes and coaches at his revivals” (Ibid.).

☐ **RICK JOYNER SAYS WE DON’T HAVE TO WORRY BECAUSE HE’S BEEN VISITING HEAVEN AND NO ONE UP THERE IS WORRIED** - New Apostolic Reformation (NAR) “prophet” and “apostle,” Rick Joyner, says we don’t have to worry, because he’s been hanging out in heaven where everything is just peachy. While the world faces genuine crises, Joyner is busy taking celestial vacations and bringing back “revelations” that conveniently elevate his own status.

The “heaven tourism” industry is thriving, and Joyner’s latest trip is just another pit stop in the long line of self-proclaimed prophets and apostles who peddle personal experiences over biblical truth.

This entire movement of modern “prophets and apostles” is a spiritual circus, with charlatans like Joyner leading the parade. They promise insider information from God, yet their supposed “prophecies” are vague, self-serving, and completely unverifiable.

Unlike the true prophets of the Bible, who called people to repentance and faith and obedience to God’s Word, today’s so-called prophets are more interested in expanding their platforms and selling books.

The real tragedy here is that these distractions lead people away from the sufficiency of Scripture. Instead of digging into the rich, transformative power of God’s Word, people are enticed by the latest heavenly gossip from these spiritual tourists.

☐ **POLL: AMERICANS ‘OVERWHELMINGLY’ SUPPORT ISRAEL, ADVOCATE FOR HAMAS’ REMOVAL FROM GAZA** - A significant majority of U.S. voters continue to show strong support for the Jewish State over Hamas, with most demanding the removal of the Islamic terrorist organization from Gaza and advocating for conditional ceasefires based on key concessions, according to a Harvard CAPS / Harris poll.

Conducted last month, the poll reveals a robust pro-Israel stance among American voters amidst the ongoing conflict with Hamas that began after the worst massacre in Israel’s history on October 7, when some 3,000 terrorists attacked Israel, killing festival-goers and torturing, raping, executing, and kidnapping Jewish residents in nearby towns.

The survey of nearly 2,200 U.S. voters shows that 7 in 10 voters only favor a conditional ceasefire with Hamas contingent on the release of hostages, as well as the terror group vacating power in Gaza.

Further, an overwhelming 82% of voters believe that Hamas should be completely removed from Gaza, reflecting a strong desire for decisive action against the U.S.-designated terrorist organization.

The sentiment aligns with the larger support for Israel’s military operations in the region, with 72% of voters backing continued Israeli operations in Rafah, a key area of conflict in the coastal enclave.

The poll, whose results are nationally representative and adjusted for various demographics to match population proportions, also highlights voter attitudes towards the broader regional conflict, particularly in northern Israel.

Approximately two-thirds of voters believe that Israel should retaliate if Hezbollah continues its rocket attacks, signaling strong support for Israel’s right to defend itself against hostile actions from neighboring terror groups.

While the ongoing Israeli-Hamas conflict has prompted widespread international debate, with many nations and organizations calling for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire, the recent poll reveals that U.S. voters largely support Israel’s military strategy, favoring conditional ceasefires and the removal of Hamas.

It also demonstrates that while anti-Israel sentiments tend to be amplified, suggestive of declining support, the majority of Americans still firmly back the Jewish State — a democratic ally against terrorism.

☐ **MALE BOXER IMANE KHELIF TAKES THE GOLD IN WOMEN’S BOXING AT THE WOKE PARIS OLYMPICS AFTER BEATING CHINA’S YANG LIU** - A boxer with male DNA – XY chromosomes – took the gold medal in the woke Paris Olympics on Friday. Algerian boxer Imane Khelif beat China’s Yang Liu to win the gold medal in women’s boxing.

A male boxer is now the female Olympic champion.

Istvan Kovacs, the European vice president of the World Boxing Organization (WBO), has publicly asserted that Algerian boxer Imane Khelif is biologically male. His claim, which raises serious questions about fairness in women’s sports, was made during an interview with the Hungarian news outlet Magyar Nemzet.

Kovacs disclosed that he alerted the International Olympic Committee (IOC) about concerns regarding male participation in women’s boxing as early as 2022. Despite these warnings, he claims that no action was taken. “The saddest thing in the story is that the problem was not with the level of Helif’s testosterone, because it can be adjusted nowadays, but with the result of the gender test, which clearly revealed that the Algerian boxer is biologically male,” he said.

Kovacs further elaborated that five boxers, including Khelif, underwent testing by the International Boxing Association (IBA), and all were found to be male. Despite reporting these findings to the IOC, he lamented that there has been no response or action taken.

☐ **IHOP FRANCHISE TO PAY EMPLOYEE FIRED FOR NOT WORKING SUNDAYS** - A franchise for the national breakfast restaurant chain IHOP has settled with a cook who filed a complaint after he was asked to work on Sundays in violation of his religious beliefs.

The U. S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission announced Tuesday that a franchise that owns several IHOP restaurants in North Carolina has reached a \$40,000 settlement with a former cook fired for declining to work on Sundays so he

could go to church.

The unnamed employee began working for Suncakes NC, LLC, in January 2021. He informed management of his religious beliefs and his desire not to work on Sundays upon taking the job.

While management of the IHOP in Charlotte where he worked initially accommodated him, that changed when new management took over.

The employee was asked to work on Sunday, April 25, 2021, and again two Sundays later. After working those two Sundays, the cook reminded his superior about his religious objection to working on Sundays and indicated that he would not be working the following Sunday. This prompted the general manager to fire him.

The EEOC listed comments made by the general manager suggesting hostility toward the cook’s religion, which was reportedly shared with other employees at the IHOP location. The employer allegedly remarked “religion should not take precedence over [the employee’s] job” and maintained that the cook “thinks it is more important to go to church than to pay his bills.”

Under the settlement reached, Suncakes will pay the cook \$40,000 in monetary damages, provide annual training to its managers about the provisions of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 banning religious discrimination, post notices to employees about the decision, and revise its religious accommodation policies.

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 declares it unlawful for an employer “to fail or refuse to hire or to discharge any individual, or otherwise to discriminate against any individual with respect to his compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment, because of such individual’s race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.”

The law defines “religion” as “all aspects of religious observance and practice, as well as belief, unless an employer demonstrates that he is unable to reasonably accommodate any employee’s or prospective employee’s religious observance or practice without undue hardship on the conduct of the employer’s business.”

The settlement comes more than a year after the EEOC filed a lawsuit in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of North Carolina on behalf of the cook.

“Religious discrimination is intolerable,” said trial attorney Taitionna Miles in a statement. “Employers must respect all sincerely held religious beliefs, which includes providing reasonable accommodations when no undue hardship exists.”

Melinda Dugas, a regional attorney in the EEOC’s Charlotte office, noted that “requesting an accommodation for a religious accommodation is protected activity under federal law.”

“Employers are prohibited from taking adverse employment action against an employee for exercising that right,” Dugas said.

A month after the lawsuit was filed in June 2023, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled unanimously in favor of a U.S. postal worker who resigned rather than work on Sundays in violation of his religious beliefs.

In *Greg Groff v. Louis DeJoy*, the justices vacated a lower court ruling siding against postal worker Greg Groff. Like the IHOP cook, Groff contended that requiring him to work on Sundays violated Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

☛ **An anonymous author made this striking comparison:**

“Socrates taught for 40 years, Plato for 50, Aristotle for 40, and Jesus for only 3. Yet the influence of Christ’s 3-year ministry infinitely transcends the impact left by the combined 130 years of teaching from these men who were among the greatest philosophers of all antiquity. Jesus painted no pictures; yet some of the finest paintings of Raphael, Michelangelo, and Leonardo da Vinci received their inspiration from Him. Jesus wrote no poetry; but Dante, Milton, and scores of the world’s greatest poets were inspired by Him. Jesus composed no music; still Haydn, Handel, Beethoven, Bach, and Mendelssohn reached their highest perfection of melody in the hymns, symphonies, and oratorios they composed in His praise. Every sphere of human greatness has been enriched by this humble Carpenter of Nazareth. “His unique contribution to the race of men is the salvation of the soul! Philosophy could not accomplish that. Nor art. Nor literature. Nor music. Only Jesus Christ can break the enslaving chains of sin and Satan. He alone can speak peace to the human heart, strengthen the weak, and give life to those who are spiritually dead.”

☛ Ralph Barton, the internationally known cartoonist whose drawings appeared in Life, Puck, Liberty, and other noted publications, committed suicide at the age of forty.

In addition to the pathetic farewell note that he wrote, he penned the following lines describing so graphically the bitterness of sin:

*“I have had my will,  
Tasted every pleasure;  
I have drunk my fill  
Of the purple measure.  
It has lost its zest;  
Sorrow is my guest;  
Oh, the lees are bitter, bitter –  
Give me rest.  
“Love once filled my bowl,  
Running over with blisses;  
Made my very soul  
Drunk with crimson kisses.  
But I drank it dry;  
Love had passed me by,  
Oh, the lees are bitter, bitter –  
Let me die.”  
Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?  
I have found thee ... in bitterness!*