

PATTERNS & PARALLELS IN THE FEASTS OF GOD

God created patterns and parallels between the spring Feasts and the fall Feasts.

By Gregory Dullum

The closer we look at anything man has created, the more likely we are to see its imperfections and flaws. Put something we think is smooth under a microscope and we'll see that it has pits and flaws and roughness that we can't see with the naked eye or feel with our fingers.

On the other hand, the closer we examine things God has created, the more perfection we see. The more we magnify God's creation under a microscope, the more beautiful, the more amazing, the more mind-boggling his creation becomes.

Let's look at something God has created that is not part of his physical creation but is something He has created nonetheless. Let's examine God's Feasts, looking for patterns and parallels that God put in them, hidden beneath the surface.

The fall Feasts start this month. The Feast of Trumpets is Sept. 21. However, if we live in South America, South Africa or Australia, or anywhere in the southern hemisphere, the SPRING Feasts would be fast approaching. Don't get me wrong—in the southern hemisphere they will be keeping the Feast of Trumpets, Day of Atonement, Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day, but it is about to be spring in the southern hemisphere.

A friend who lives in Australia once wrote about how the Feasts fit in their appropriate seasons. There were lessons that can be drawn from nature and applied to the Feasts—but he wrote about the Feasts as they come in the southern hemisphere—and the seasons were OPPOSITE from the seasons in which most of us keep the Feasts!

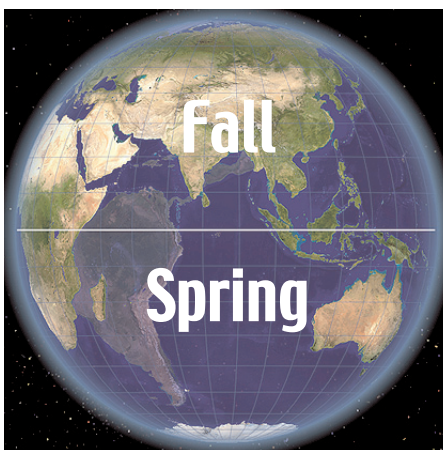


Photo by Gregory Dullum

The Feasts that start this month come in the fall in the northern hemisphere but are in the spring in the southern hemisphere.

For example, he wrote: "One cannot help but appreciate the divine wisdom in setting Passover in the autumn.

"The growing season has ended, the end of the harvest is near, and the earth is winding down in early autumn. These facts symbolize the declining conditions of the planet and its societies. It is only Christ's sacrifice that saves us from the permanent winter of Satan's misrule of the Earth."

Most of us are so used to keeping the Feast of Tabernacles in the fall, it is strange to think of it occurring in the spring in the southern hemisphere. My friend wrote this: "The glorious season of the spring holy days—The Feast of Trumpets, Atonement, the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day—is set in the times of refreshing of the earth. The winter is over, the planting has begun, the days are warming up and life

is bursting out anew on the land!"

That set me to thinking. God knew when He set up the Feasts in the northern hemisphere that there would be patterns and parallels we could learn from nature here in the northern hemisphere—for example, the small spring harvest and the greater fall harvest. But God also knew there would be people living in the southern hemisphere where the seasons are reversed, so He set up patterns and parallels tied to nature there as well.

There is a *wonderful* UNITY among God's Feasts. There are patterns and parallels that can be seen when we compare the spring Feasts with the fall Feasts. I am sure we have all noticed some of them. For example, there is a SEVEN-DAY feast in *both* the spring and in the fall.

I saw *some* parallels in the past. But they did not become clear to me until I changed the way I looked at them. If all the Feasts were listed on a line, I considered the spring Feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread to be on the left, and then Pentecost, which comes in the early summer, to be in the middle, and the four fall Feasts to be on the right. This visualization made sense to me because Passover and Unleavened Bread are so close together, and then we have to wait seven weeks for Pentecost. Then we must wait an even longer time for the fall Feasts, which are closely bunched together.

This visualization created an unbalanced line. With Pentecost in the middle, there were only two spring Feasts on the left and four fall Feasts on the

FEASTS

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1 2 3 4 5 6 7 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

▲
FEAST OF
TRUMPETS

Feasts

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right. One day I changed the way I looked at the Feasts. I moved Pentecost to the left and included it with the spring feasts. I moved the Feast of Trumpets to middle. Then suddenly many patterns and parallels came into focus.

Feast of Trumpets

In the diagram above, I put a triangle under a time line, so it looks like a see-saw. Under the triangle, I placed the words, "Feast of Trumpets." The Feast of Trumpets—not Pentecost—belongs in the middle. Why put the Feast of Trumpets in the middle? Two reasons.

1. The Feast of Trumpets is the middle feast of seven. Put it in the middle and there are three feasts on each side of it.

2. The Feast of Trumpets marks a turning point in history. It pictures the return of Jesus Christ to this earth with the sound of trumpets (Mat. 24:30-31). When Christ returns, everything will change. The governments of this world will fall under the government of God (Rev. 11:15). We, who are firstfruits, will be changed from physical into spirit beings (1 Thes. 4:15-17).

The Feast of Trumpets is when everything changes. So it belongs in the middle. Now let's look at patterns and parallels that we see on each side of the triangle.

1. New Year

On the far left point of the line, there is a numeral 1. This pictures the new year on *God's sacred calendar*.

"Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, 'This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you' " (Ex. 12:1-2). The first day of the first month (Nisan or Abib) in the spring is the beginning of a new year on God's sacred calendar.

Above the point of the triangle, in the middle of the line, is another numeral 1.

This numeral 1 pictures the new year of the Jewish *civil calendar*. Over in the country of Israel today, they keep the Feast of Trumpets as a New Year's cele-

bration. Some of our wall calendars call the Feast of Trumpets "Rosh Hashanah." Some may say "Jewish New Year." Why is this considered a new year?

The Gospel in the Feasts of Israel by Viktor Buksbazen says, "Actually there are two new years in Judaism. One, according to Biblical time reckoning begins on the first day of the month of Nisan or Abib, which means Spring....

"The other, New Year's Day, which the Jews officially recognize and celebrate, is the first day of the seventh month according to the Jewish calendar, and is called the month of Tishri....

"The ancient Rabbis believed that the Lord created the world in the first week of the month of Tishri. Therefore the first day of the seventh month is considered the beginning of creation and the beginning of the year..." (1958, pp. 22-23).

There are new years on both sides of our triangle. Both come on the first day of their respective months. On the left, in the spring, is the new year that begins God's sacred calendar. It is the first day of the first month. On the right, in the fall, is the secular new year on the first day of the seventh month.

2. Setting Apart Lamb or Goat

To the right of the first numeral 1 is a 2.

On the 10th day of first month, in ancient Israel, a lamb was selected to be sacrificed on Passover.

"Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying, 'On the tenth day of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household. And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take it according to the persons; according to each man's need you shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats. Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight' " (Ex. 12:3-6).

Note that this lamb could come from the sheep *or from the goats!* This lamb represented Christ as a Passover sacrifice (1 Cor. 5:7).

To the right of the second numeral 1 is another 2.

On the 10th day of the seventh month, a goat, representing Christ, was selected to be sacrificed. This happened on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:29-30):

"And he [Aaron the high priest] shall take from the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats as a sin offering, and one ram as a burnt offering. ... He shall take the two goats and present them before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. Then Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats: one for the LORD and the other for the scapegoat. And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the LORD's lot fell, and offer it as a sin offering" (Lev. 16:5, 7-9).

Both animals were selected on the 10TH DAY of their respective months. The Passover lamb (or goat)—that represented Christ (and was to be sacrificed)—was SELECTED on the 10th day of the *first month*. The Atonement goat that represented Christ (and was to be sacrificed)—was SELECTED on the 10th day of the *seventh month*.

3. Christ's Sacrifice for Sins

To the right of the first numeral 2 is a 3.

This numeral 3 represents the *first feast of the year*—Passover (Ex. 12:6-8, 11-13). Passover comes on the 14th day of the first month. It celebrates Christ's sacrifice to wash away our sins. In 1 Cor.

The SABBATH SCOOP

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PRINT CIRCULATION: 78 • COST PER ISSUE: FREE
<http://sabbathcoop.myfreesites.net>

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5:7, we are told that Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. What did his Passover sacrifice do for us? It washed us from our sins in his blood (Rev. 1:5).

What is another name for Christ's Passover sacrifice? "And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the ATONEMENT" (Rom. 5:11 *King James Version*, emphasis added).

To the right of the second 2 is another 3.

This 3 pictures the *first Feast after Trumpets*. What is it called? The Day of ATONEMENT. There is that word again!

Atonement comes on the 10th day of the 7th month. Does the Day of Atonement have anything to do with Christ's sacrifice? Does it parallel Passover in any way? On the Day of Atonement we see a goat offered as a sin offering, picturing Christ's sacrifice (Lev. 16:7-9).

Although the Feasts of Passover and Atonement are *similar*, there is a DIFFERENCE.

Passover pictures Christ dying for our sins on a *personal level*. It pictures the firstfruits being forgiven of their sins and becoming AT ONE with God (Rom. 5:5-11, Mat. 26:19, 20, 26-28).

The Day of Atonement pictures Christ dying for the *sins of the nation*, and the *whole world*. The word atonement can be broken down to AT-ONE-ment. The whole world will become AT ONE with God because Satan—the author of sin and the one who deceives the whole world—will be put away for 1,000 years (Rev. 20:1-2).

4. Coming Out of Sinful World

The night after Passover is the beginning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. This Feast begins on the 15TH DAY of the *first* month, *under a full moon*.

On that night, we celebrate the Night to Be Much Observed, which represents us coming out of sin, just as Israel came out of Egypt on that night. This is represent-

ed on the left side of our time line by a No. 4 immediately to the right of No. 3.

"And it came to pass at the end of four hundred and thirty years—on that very same day—it came to pass that all the armies of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt. It is a night of solemn observance to the LORD for bringing them out of the land of Egypt. This is the night of the LORD, a solemn observance for all the children of Israel throughout their generations" (Ex. 12:41-42).

On the 15TH DAY of the *seventh* month begins the Feast of Tabernacles. This is pictured on our time line by a No. 4 to the right of the second No. 3.

While the eve of the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles is not a special observance, we probably notice a big full moon rising when we come out of services that night, just we saw a big full moon rising when we left the meal on Night to Be Much Observed.

The Night to be Much Observed, on the 15th of the first month, pictures *leaving* Egypt and *moving to a place God has chosen*. For ancient Israel, it meant heading to the Promised Land. The beginning of the Feast of Tabernacles is NOT to be kept at home! We are to *leave home* and keep the Feast *where God has chosen* to place his name (Deut. 16:15).

Both Night to Be Much Observed and the first night of the Feast of Tabernacles are on the 15th of their respective months. Both nights have full moons, both picture coming out of this sinful world and living in a place God chooses—a place governed by his laws.

5. Living Sin-Free for 7 Days

Beginning with the 15th day of the first month, we celebrate a seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread. This is indicated by a 5 on the left side. Since leaven pictures sin, we are picturing living our lives without sin—having put it out before the Feast began (Ex. 12:15-17, 19-20). We see a spiritual aspect explained in 1 Cor. 5:7-8.

Beginning with the 15th day of the seventh month, we celebrate a seven-day Feast of Tabernacles. This is indicated by a 5 on the right side. During this time, we picture the whole world living for 1,000 years without sin, having put away the source of sin—Satan—before the Millennium began (Rev. 20:3). Will the attitude of the people be one of *coming out of sin* and living God's way?

"Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established on the top of mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, 'Come,

let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we will walk in His paths.' For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem" (Isa. 2:2-4).

Here is another unifying factor: When the ancient Israelites kept the Feast of Tabernacles in the fall for seven days, their thoughts were directed back to leaving Egypt—a time we usually associate with the seven-day spring Feast of Unleavened Bread (Lev. 23:39-43).

6. Giving the Law

About seven weeks after the Feast of Unleavened Bread is Pentecost. This is indicated by a 6 on the left side of the line. One thing Pentecost pictures is the giving of the law on Mount Sinai (Ex. 19:1, 16, 20:1-3). God SPOKE the commandments. But He also WROTE them. On what did He write them? "He gave Moses two tablets of the Testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God" (Ex. 31:18).

Immediately after the Feast of Tabernacles is the Eighth Day or Last Great Day. It is the seventh and last Feast (Lev. 23:36). It pictures a time when all of the dead who have not known God will be given a chance to live again as humans and learn God's way (Ezek. 37:1-6). How will they know the LORD? By *keeping his laws*. Where will the laws be written at this time? "But this is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God and they shall be My people" (Jer. 31:33).

7. The Giving of the Holy Spirit

On Pentecost, God gave his holy spirit to his church (Acts 2:1-4). This is indicated by a 7 on the left side.

There also is a 7 next to the 6 on the right side. The Last Great Day pictures the White Throne Judgment. The holy spirit be given to those brought back to human life at this time (Ezek. 37:13-14)!

Summary

I find the patterns and parallels between the spring and fall Feasts to be amazing! The first three focus on what God is doing with us personally—the firstfruits. The last three show what God will do with the rest of the World—after Christ comes—and *it's the same thing!* God is not a respecter of persons.

What an AWESOME God to plan out his Feasts in such a way that these patterns and parallels run through them and *bind them all together* in UNITY!

Know Your Bible

By Charles Nenninger

1. What was set up by the Israelites at Shiloh?
2. Who was the father of the Israelites?
3. Who was king of Israel before David?
4. Who was the father of John the Baptist?
5. What relation was John the Baptist's mother to Mary?

(Answers on page 5)

DEACONS: HELPERS IN THE CHURCH

Deacons are targeted in persecutions but they defend the faith publicly.

By Gregory Dullum
Part 5

Deacon Burned

Seventy-three years after the persecution at Lyons, we have record of Christians being martyred in Smyrna and Pergamum under the Roman governor Quintilianus.

In March A.D. 250, Quintilianus arrived in Smyrna before a “great Sabbath”—probably the Jewish feast of Purim which coincided with a multi-day pagan festival. While in Smyrna, he sentenced the bishop Pionius to death. (Pionius’ hero had been Polycarp, whom we read about last month. Pionius had never met Polycarp, but he had been a church copyist and had copied his story on paper.)

In mid-April Quintilianus went from Smyrna to Pergamum, where he presided over the burning of a bishop, a *deacon* and a church lady. “In mid-April, he was harangued by Christians in Pergamum’s amphitheatre, that huge arena which spreads across the natural backdrop to the upper city’s theatre, the steepest stage in the ancient world. The Latin version [of Eusebius’ account] remarks that the crowds in Pergamum had been in a hurry. They had wished to light the Christians’ bonfire before it started to rain.”

One of the martyrs was named Papyrus. Whether he was the bishop or the deacon is not clear. I would assume he was the bishop, who would have had the higher position and would have spoken for the three. The deacon and church lady, awaiting their martyrdom with him, would have heard the bishop utter these words: “Here the fire burns briefly, but there it burns forever, and by it, God will judge the world. It will drown the sea, the mountains and the woods. By it God will judge each human soul” (*Pagans and Christians* by Robin Lane Fox, 1987, pp. 490-491).

Deacons Become Target

When the Roman Emperor Decius died in 251, Emperor Gallus provided two years of peace before fresh edicts were issued against Christianity in 253. It was Emperor Valerian (253-260) who attacked the church most strongly after Decius.

Valerian targeted church leadership, and this included the deacons:

“In 258 he commanded that all bishops, priests, and deacons of the church, together with all Christian Senators and judges, should be condemned to death, if

they refused to recant. By this time there was a method in the attack. It was aimed at destroying, not, as Decius, the whole body of Christians (this had at length proved impracticable), but the organization of the church, together with everyone of the higher ranks who belonged to it. The formless and undisciplined masses that remained would, it was hoped, be powerless to uphold Christianity. In Carthage the bishop Cyprian, in Rome the deacon Laurentius ... and with them many others, fell victims to this persecution.” The edicts of persecution were repealed under Emperor Gallienus, who succeeded his father, Valerian, in 260 (*Outlines of Church History* by Rudolf Sohm, 1895, p. 16).

It was under the persecution of Valerian that Christian services and places of meeting were attacked for the first time (Fox, p. 422).

“In summer 257, the Emperors Valerian and Gallienus sent a rescript to their provincial governors and ordered that bishops and elders should be punished and that no Christians should hold a meeting or enter one of the ‘cemeteries.’ If they did, they should be put to death. In summer 258, a second Imperial letter was published; it enlarged on the matter and specified the penalties of death, exile and forced labour for Christians in various higher classes.... For the first time, Christians were not merely obliged to compromise. Their worship and common life were threatened with extinction. ... When the second Imperial letter was publicized, the penalties were made harsher: Church leaders were to be martyred, not exiled. However, the sequel suggests there was little popular support for the demand. ...

“In the persecutions of 257/8, Christian leaders were rounded up by troops under the governor’s authority, not by the local cavalry and police of the cities themselves” (Fox, pp. 550-552).

Fortunately for the Church of God, Emperor Valerian was captured and killed by the king of Persia. His son and former partner, Gallienus, ordered that churches and cemeteries be returned to Christians. “[W]e have no knowledge of martyrdoms, as opposed to Christian fictions of them, between 260 and the 290s. When we then find Christians being martyred, they are soldiers in the army. The charge against them is not their religion and their refusal to sacrifice, but their refusal to serve in the ranks, an offense which was punishable on

other grounds” (Fox, p. 553).

Church Flees

In the year 313, the Roman Emperor Constantine converted to “Christianity.” He did not become a member of the true Church of God, but he allied himself with a branch of Christianity that became the Roman Catholic Church. He began to force this brand of “Christianity” upon all citizens of the Roman Empire. In 321 Sunday was recognized as a legal holiday throughout the empire. At the Council of Nice in 325, Catholicism was established as the state religion. Sunday as established as the day of worship (instead of the seventh-day Sabbath) and Passover observance was done away.

“As protector and a favorer of a counterfeit form of ‘Christianity,’ Constantine forced everyone, pagan or Christian, either into conformity—or exile!

“The True Church chose exile!” (*Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course*, Lesson 50, 1969, p. 6).

“The history of persecution [under pagan emperors] ends, in this light, as a history of failure: its most positive consequence lies elsewhere, in the history of the Christian Church. Not only did it create the enduring cult of martyrs and intercessors; it split the churches into schisms, as ‘true’ uncompromised brethren refused to serve leaders from the ‘false’ compromised majority. It also scattered the believers more widely” (Fox, p. 601).

We have record of various persecutions and Church movements throughout the following centuries. The most notable movements were the Paulicians (684-870), the Bogomils and Cathars (901-1244), Petrobrusians (1100-1126), Albigenes (1155-1244), and Waldenses (1173-1347).

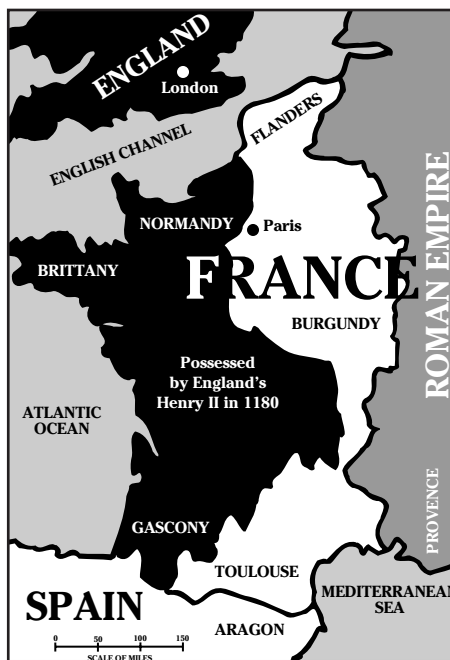
The next reference to deacons that I can find comes from the late 1100s as the subject of church organization among the Cathars is discussed.

Cathars had Deacons

The Cathars lived in southern France in a region called Languedoc.

“No official document contains so much as an outline of the way the Catharist Church was organized: as we shall see from subsequent events, these people had nothing to gain by getting themselves officially registered as heretics.

“Nevertheless, this organization did in



Map by Greg Dullum

Languedoc was part of Toulouse. It was not yet part of France. It was nestled between Spain, British-controlled France and the Roman Empire.

fact exist. To begin with, each province had its own bishop, together with two assistants, known respectively as the bishop's *filius maior* and *filius minor*, or elder and younger son. Before he died the bishop would ordain the *filius maior* as his successor; the *filius minor* in turn now became his *filius maior*, and the regional congregation of *perfecti* [believers] elected a new *filius minor*.

"Each important locality had its deacon, assisted by a varying number of *perfecti*, both men and women. We know that there were never all that many of them [deacons]" (*Massacre at Montségur: A History of the Albigensian Crusade* by Zoé Oldenbourg, 1961, p. 57).

Deacons assisted in the ceremony when people first became believers and had hands laid upon them by the minister. "In the presence of a congregation of the faithful the new postulant was led towards the table, before which there stood those ministers whose business it was to receive him—deacons or ordinary *perfecti*, clad in the long black robes that symbolized their withdrawal from the world. The officiating minister and his two assistants now washed their hands, so as to be able to touch the holy Gospels. Then the ceremony began" (Oldenbourg, p. 46).

Later, when persecution increased against the Cathars, they stopped wearing black robes and wore instead a simple cord under their clothes. Men wore the

cord around their neck, women around their waist (Oldenbourg, p. 47).

Women were not allowed to become deacons: "We do not find any women among the Cathar bishops or deacons; this active branch of the apostolate was reserved for men, since they were better fitted to endure the danger and fatigue of a wandering, vagabond existence. Nevertheless the *perfectae* [female believers] enjoyed very great esteem, and some of them were regarded virtually as the Mothers Superior of their particular communities" (Oldenbourg, p. 61).

Deacon Burned in Witch Hunt

The French, to the north of Languedoc, fought a war to unite the two territories. When the French won victories, they attempted to make their conquered lands Catholic as they were, by stamping out what they called "heresy."

In 1226, stern reprisals against "heretics" were decreed by the French government: "...but after 1226 the heretical witch-hunt began again. The Catharist Bishop of Carcassone, Pierre Isarn, was burnt at Caunes, as was the deacon Gérard de la Mothe after the capture of La Besade" (Oldenbourg, p. 239).

Arnald Hot Criticizes Catholics

Although the distant government of France sought to stamp out the Cathar religion from Languedoc, the local people supported the Church of God. They did not enforce the official decrees and the church continued to enjoy some freedom of religion there.

"At Cabaret, the deacon Arnald Hot was in residence at the chateau [castle]; in 1229 this chateau had been occupied by French troops, yet two years later it was already a meeting place for all the heretics in this area. The Cathars, deacons and *perfecti* alike, travelled the countryside without even attempting to conceal themselves: bestowing the *consolamentum* [laying on of hands], preaching, and indeed, exercising their ministry in a more or less normal fashion" (Oldenbourg, p. 275).

The deacon Arnald Hot was openly critical of the Catholic religion. When the Spanish Catholic Bishop of Osma came to the area to conduct public debates in an at-

DEACONS

Continued on Page 6

Know Your Bible Answers

1) The tabernacle. 2) Jacob. 3) Saul. 4) Zacharias. 5) Her cousin.

Fun Fact

of creation, history, holidays & the Bible



Drawing and Fun Fact are courtesy of NAPS

The first artificial limbs were developed by Ambroise Paré, a French surgeon, around A.D. 1540.

Witerature

Wit and wisdom to complement the truths of the Holy Bible can be found in secular writings.

Minnesota Crime Commission Report by Oscar Hallam *et al*, 1926, p. 16.

Crime & Punishment

"To present the picture in a different light, what must the criminal think of society's efforts to deal with him? If he be familiar with the actual operation on criminal law, he must know that he may escape arrest altogether; that if arrested, he may not be held by the police or sheriff; if held, he may not be indicted or have information filed for his prosecution; if prosecution be commenced, he may not be brought to trial, because the county attorney may nolle or dismiss, or he may be allowed to plead guilty to a lesser offence than that which he has committed; if tried, the trial may result in failure to convict; if convicted, he may have sentence suspended, or if committed, it may be for a maximum lower than that provided by statute; and if, finally, he should reach a state penal institution, he may be released by a Board of Parole; and if that fails, he may still apply for a pardon."

Eccles. 8:11, Isa. 26:10

Quotable Quotes

"Modesty and unselfishness—these are virtues which men praise—and pass by."
—André Mauroi

Memory Scripture

"For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving an example, that you should follow His steps."
—1 Peter 2:21

Deacons

Continued from Page 5

tempt to win converts to Catholicism, Hot debated him and maintained that:

“The Church of Rome defended by the Bishop of Osma was neither holy nor the Bride of Christ; rather it was espoused of the Devil and its doctrine diabolical. It was that Babylon which St John called, in his Apocalypse, the mother of fornications and abominations, drunk with the blood of the Saints and of Christ’s martyrs. Moreover the Bishop’s ordination was neither sanctified nor valid nor, indeed, established by Our Lord Jesus Christ. Christ and his Apostles had never ordained nor laid down the Canon of the Mass as it now existed” (Oldenbourg, p. 94).

Persecution Increases

Persecution by the Catholic Church against all heretics—including the Church of God—continued to increase during the Medieval Inquisition.

When living became unbearable or too dangerous in one area, the brethren moved elsewhere. Some sought protection in the Balkans, Hungary, Spain and Portugal. Many headed north into Germany and England.

In 1586-87, Mary, Queen of Scots, was convicted of conspiracy and executed in England. This caused a break between England and the Roman Catholic Church. The following year, 1588, the “invincible” Spanish Armada attacked Britain in an attempt to bring the island back into the Catholic fold. The Armada was overwhelmed by a great storm. This was seen by the British as miraculous intervention by the hand of God. It enabled Britain to remain politically free and encouraged it to remain non-Catholic.

The Church of God enjoyed some freedom of religion in Britain and flourished there. It was not long, however, before the official Church of England began persecuting the Church of God (and others it considered to be heretics) in much the same manner that the Catholic Church had when it was the official church of the land.

Beginning in the 1620s, dissenters started traveling across the Atlantic to the New World. “Religious unrest, and in some cases outright persecution, as well as political dissatisfaction, had sent English dissenters to the colonies since the 1620s” (*Religious Enthusiasm in the New World* by David S. Lovejoy, 1985, p. 154.)

It is in America, among the Pilgrims, that we will see our next reference to deacons.

(To be continued!)



North Korea Tests Ballistic Missile

“North Korea tested an intercontinental ballistic missile on Friday [July 28] that, for the first time, appeared capable of reaching the West Coast of the United States, according to experts—a milestone that American presidents have long declared the United States could not tolerate.

“The launch, the second of an intercontinental missile in 24 days, did not answer the question of whether the North has mastered all the technologies necessary to deliver a nuclear weapon to targets in the lower 48 states. But just a few days ago, the Defense Intelligence Agency warned the Trump administration that the North would probably be able to do so within a year, and Friday’s test left little doubt that Kim Jong-un, the North Korean leader, is speeding toward that goal” (“North Korea Tests a Ballistic Missile That Experts Say Could Hit California” by David Sanger, Choe Sang-Hun and William J. Broad, *The New York Times*, www.nytimes.com, July 28, 2017, p. 1).

North Korea could be preparing to arm itself with the capability of hitting the Middle East with nuclear missiles. Bible prophecy indicates that Europe (the king of the North) will occupy the Holy Land before Christ returns and “kings from the east” will attack (Dan. 11:40-44, Rev. 16:12-14, 16).

Trump Threatens North Korea With ‘Fire & Fury’

“President Trump threatened on Tuesday [Aug. 8] to unleash ‘fire and fury’ against North Korea if it endangered the United States, as tensions with the impoverished nuclear-armed state escalated into perhaps the most serious foreign policy exchange yet of his administration.

“In chilling language that evoked the horror of a nuclear exchange, Mr. Trump sought to deter North Korea from any actions that would put Americans at risk. ... Administration officials have said that a pre-emptive military strike, while a last resort, is among the options they have

made available to the president.

“‘North Korea best not make any more threats to the United States,’ Mr. Trump told reporters at his golf club in Bedminster N.J. ... ‘They will be met with fire and fury like the world has never seen’” (“Trump Threatens ‘Fire and Fury’ Against North Korea if It Endangers U.S.” by Peter Baker and Choe Sang-Hu, *The New York Times*, www.nytimes.com, Aug. 8, 2017, p. 1).

These threats could be some of the “rumors of wars” that will happen during “the beginning of sorrows” leading up to Christ’s return (Mat. 24:3, 6-8).

Strong Quake Hits China

“A strong earthquake [on Aug. 10] shook a mountainous region in southwestern China near a famous national park, killing seven people, injuring 88 others and knocking out power and phone networks. ...

“The magnitude-6.5 quake struck a region bordered by the provinces of Sichuan and Gansu at a depth of just 5.5 miles, according to the U.S. Geological Survey. Shallow earthquakes tend to cause more damage than deeper ones” (“Strong quake strikes China, killing at least 7” by Gillian Wong, Associated Press, *Southeast Missourian*, Aug. 9, 2017, p. 9A).

“Earthquakes in various places” is a sign we are in the “beginning of sorrows” leading up to Christ’s return (Mat. 24:3, 7-8).

Cholera Strikes Yemen

“After two and a half years of war, little is functioning in Yemen. ...

“In just three months, cholera has killed nearly 2,000 people and infected more than half a million, one of the world’s largest outbreaks in the past 50 years” (“‘It’s a Slow Death’: The World’s Worst Humanitarian Crisis” by Shuaib Almosawa, Ben Hubbard and Troy Griggs, *The New York Times*, www.nytimes.com, Aug. 23, 2017, p. 2).

“Pestilences” (disease epidemics) also are a sign that we are in the “beginning of sorrows” leading up to Christ’s return (Mat. 24:3, 7-8).