

Reflections



HILLVIEW BAPTIST CHURCH

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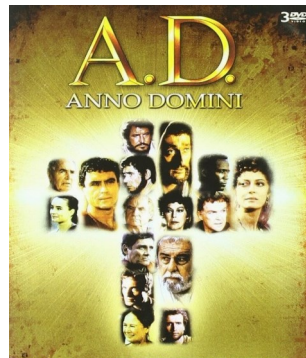
January 2024

What Year Is It? - by Dr Jerry Sheperd

In ancient times, including biblical times, days, months, and years were determined by astrological phenomena: the movements of the sun, moon, and stars. But when it came to establishing years, that was commonly done with reference to the reigns of kings or critical events. It was common to make reference to years by phrases such as “the eighteenth year of the reign of King Hezekiah,” or “the thirtieth year since the earthquake.” For example, if someone asked you what year it was, you would probably reply by saying something like “Why, it’s the fifteenth year of King Jehoahaz.”

Things changed in the Middle Ages, with the invention of the Julian, and then Gregorian, calendars. Now, the years were based on the birth of Jesus Christ (or at least what they thought was the year; they may have been off a bit). The years leading up to the birth of Christ have come to be designated BC (before Christ), and the years after Christ’s birth are designated as AD. It is commonly misunderstood that AD is an English abbreviation meaning “after the death of Christ.” However, the AD actually represents the Latin *anno domini*, “the year of the Lord,” which is itself an abbreviated expression of a longer Latin phrase, which is translated, “in the year of our

Lord Jesus Christ.” Additionally, it should be noted that while the BC abbreviation should always come after the year, the AD abbreviation should always precede the year. So, it is 722 BC, but it is AD 2024, that is, “in the year of our Lord, 2024.”



It would be tempting to use this knowledge against atheists. When an atheist refers to the year 2024, or even possibly AD 2024, are they, unsuspectingly, actually confessing belief in the lordship of Christ? Are they betraying the fact that they actually believe in God? On a side note, I have often told my students that the word “goodbye” is actually a contraction of the old English, “God be with ye.” Invariably, a student will then remark that every time an atheist tells someone “goodbye,” they are actually confessing their deep-seated belief that God does exist! However, this temptation should be resisted. After all, if you call me up and ask me if I’d like to have coffee with you this Thursday, should I reply that I am shocked that you said

“Thursday,” betraying the fact that you worship the Norse deity Thor? Oh, why are you so insistent that we should go to church on Sunday? Is it because you want to worship the Sun God? So, we really should not use this kind of thing as an apologetic against atheists.

However, there is still a useful way to employ this information. Perhaps, when you write the date “2024” this year, you could remind yourself that Jesus Christ is the Lord of time, that he is the dividing point of history, that all the hours and days and weeks and months and years belong to him. This could also serve as a reminder that you belong to him as well. Your times are in his hands (Psalm 31:15; Job 14:5). Perhaps when you write the date “2024” this year, you could take that opportunity to remind yourself that you belong—body, mind, and soul entirely to Jesus Christ.

If someone should ask what the date is today, you could reply by saying, for example, “It is January 26, AD 2024,” or “It is January 26, in the year of our Lord, 2024.” Or, going back to the first paragraph of this article, you could say, “It is the two-thousand and twenty-fourth year of the reign of King Jesus.” **Now that would be a real conversation starter!**

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Reflections

Pumpkin Carving Mania - by Gloria Swain



On October 28/23 at 4 P.m. 13 church folks and 18 community members gathered to try their artistic talents at pumpkin carving. After a warm welcome and an opening prayer the carvers were given a few minutes to help themselves to snacks and then they got straight to preparing their pumpkins, in hopes of winning one of our great prizes.

The carvers were given one hour to show us their artistic abilities. In between time random draws were made for door prizes. These were donated by Hillview's Hospitality Group, Hillview's Missions Committee and Beyond Vision. A feast of

snacks were set up by the Missions Committee. Hillview's hospitality group served up hot chocolate, coffee and cold drinks. It was great seeing everyone working together to make this evening a success for the families.

Prior to the judging of the pumpkins Gloria did a devotional illustrating how being a Christian is being like a pumpkin. She explained how God picks you from the patch, brings you in and washes the dirt off you. Then He creates an opening and scoops out the yucky stuff. He removes the seeds of doubt and hate etc. Then He carves you a new smiling face and puts His light inside you to shine for all the world to see. Then a closing prayer.

The judges had a difficult time awarding the winning prizes. All of the carvings were very well done with a lot of hard work in a limited amount of time by the carvers. In the end the Children's first prize went to the most amusing pumpkin, second prize to the most original pumpkin and third prize to the pumpkin that looked most like its carver. Great job kids! There were also adult prizes for the most creative and the most far out pumpkin.

Sunday morning one of our young carvers and his mom showed up for church for the first time. Thank you Hillview for making them feel so warm and welcome. One by one we will win them.

Letter to the Editor

In the December 2023 story on the Nativity, the author attempted to explain the letters appearing in Jesus's halo. The explanation was incomplete and a suggestion was made that Wayne Baker might provide a more comprehensive answer. As expected he took on the challenge. His answer follows: (Ed)

Dear Editor.
The Greek letters Omicron (W), Omega (O), and Nu (N) are given the name Nimbus. The omicron is a word, and the Omega Nu is a second word. The Roman and Greeks began in the last



couple centuries before Christ to use halos to indicate images of gods or demigods. Slowly added to this list were those personages of import, with Emperors being added near the end of the list. The Christians

adopted this for images of angels and Christ. Slowly halo use was broadened including important Christian figures later. Currently the Roman Catholic Church policy is God, Christ, and angels, plus those recognized as saints, beatified, or by special permission. Only depictions of God the Father (in Old Testament manifestations) or Jesus Christ would be shown with the inscription in the Halo or Nimbus.

Wayne Baker

"CHRISTIANS ADOPTED THIS FOR IMAGES OF ANGELS AND CHRIST. SLOWLY HALO USE WAS BROADENED ..."

Food Bank Tactical Communications Training - by Gloria Swain



Recently the City of Edmonton Food Bank felt it was necessary to have front line staff trained to handle any difficult situations that may occur. Managers were concerned because of the increase of violence in our City and some tense situations occurring at Food Bank Distribution Centres.

This training was held at Food Bank Headquarters in early October. Jo and I attended this two day training session. The training was run by "Tip of Spear" Professional Protection Education Centre. The goal of the training was to learn how to deal with violations and offences while also preserving client relations. At times this can be challenging because of the personalities, alcohol and/or the involvement of drugs. The clients may be under the influence of those factors as well as mental health challenges.

De-escalation is our ultimate goal. This and working towards a positive outcome without having to resort to a physical reaction is our objective. Physical force should only happen after all other options are exhausted. As the two days progressed we

learned of other distribution centres having encounters with difficult people. Thankfully, to date we here at Hillview have only encountered a few very minor situations.

Through lectures, discussions and role playing we learned how to turn conflict into win-win situations. We learned that front line personnel are the face of the distribution centres, everything we say and do reflects on our Centre's image. As a church it is crucial that we manage situations, especially conflict, in a way that ensures our clients obtain what they need in a safe and positive environment. De-escalating the situation as soon as possible is key, especially being in control of our body language, tone of voice, assuring yourself that it's going to be O.K., stand tall, be firm with your "YES" and "NO".

At times it was difficult to sit there and even imagine that we could encounter someone with a knife or a gun. Hopefully Hillview will never see that day, but if it should happen, we were taught how to use our hands to deflect these weapons out of the violator's hands. Our hands are our only weapons, and it is important that we know how to use them properly. We had 'hands on' training. Thankfully my pretend attacker was an older gentleman, or I may not have lasted that entire training ses-

sion. Coming away from that two day training Jo and I discussed meeting with all of our Food Bank Volunteers and putting some safety measures in place. In the meantime please keep us in prayer each Monday afternoon from 12:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. God is our shield and protector. Amen



Food Bank Addendum:

Back in March of 2023 we decided to add Bible Distribution and clothing distribution as a side line to our Food Bank Distribution Centre. At that time we had no idea how successful these two side lines would be, so an unwritten goal was set that in a one year period we would distribute 100 Bibles and 1,000 items of clothing.

As of October 31 we are happy to report that our goals have been met. We have given out 101 Bibles and 1046 items of clothing not to mention kitchen items, bed sheets, towels, jewelry and knick-knacks. Thanks Hillview for your generous donations of Bibles and clothing. To God be the Glory.

"DE-ESCALATING THE SITUATION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE IS KEY, ESPECIALLY BEING IN CONTROL OF OUR ...!"

Reflections

The Flood Dilemma - by Wayne Baker

A Recap:

When dealing with the debate concerning Evolution versus Creation, the key factor is that both propositions concerning the dating of artifacts cannot be true. The issues include:

- how the date for the artifact was determined,
- what methods verify the method used to determine the artifacts date,
- and how the verification method is verified.

If the method (e.g. carbon dating) is used to prove or verifies the method, modern science will not accept or recognize the conclusion as dependable except for evolution. In addition, what must be known for the dating method to work, ask them to explain how they know the answers? If the original amount of the parent or daughter element (eg carbon 14) is unknown, how do they know the amount that has decayed over time? We will look at the flood of God's judgement at the time of Noah. Most questions and objections from evolutionists are answered by a careful study of the Bible. Many of the arguments presented are from "Answers in Genesis", an apologetics ministry advocating a literal interpretation of Genesis.

First Issue

Both evolutionists and young earth creationists may explain the finding of snails within the Himalaya Mountain range by proposing that the mountains were pushed up from the sea floor by geologic uplift. However, if the earth's mantle was mostly flat/level before Noah, estimates suggest (Jacques Cousteau) the earth's existing water would cover the

Second Issue

How did Noah gather all the animals for the ark? Simple, he didn't. Genesis 6:20 says God will bring them to Noah.

Third and Fourth Issues

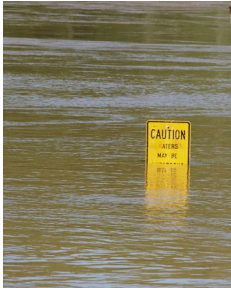
There is not enough room for all the animals. How many animals was Noah to have on the Ark? How much room was needed for them? How big was the ark? Who has

done any scientific experiments to determine the answers? Genesis 6:15 tells us 30 by 50 by 300 cubits or 45 by 75 by 450 feet. (Converting cubits to feet is thought to be 18 to 22 inches per cubit.) This capacity equals 522 railroad box cars. The number of animals is unclear; however, the Bible does give some qual-

ifications. They must be "birds of the air" or animals of the land. This excludes any aquatic animals (e.g. whales, fish etc.). They must have "the breath of life", that is breath, so insects, bacteria, mold, and other such life is excluded, leaving less than two thousand animals, or less than one thousand kinds. (Source: Answers in Genesis).

Fifth Issue

The word "kind" used in Genesis can confuse the issue. "Kind" is used in the



"MOST QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIONS FROM EVOLUTIONISTS ARE ANSWERED BY A CAREFUL STUDY OF ..."



(Continued on page 5)

Travelling with the Wisemen - by Wayne Baker

A couple of brief corrections or clarifications concerning the article appearing in the December issue of Reflection.

Where did the wisemen come from? The Bible does not say, but does give some clues. They came from the east, this would be east of the Jordan River.

In Matthew 2:7 Herod summoned the wisemen and in verse 17 he gives the order to kill all children of two and younger. Traditionally this means the time period since the star appeared. I suggest three rather than 2 since: "children of two years and younger" would mean any child who has not celebrated his third birthday.

If one assumes the wisemen took six months to study the

astronomical event, determine its meaning, and prepare for their journey, that leaves eighteen to thirty-six months for their journey as a maximum. Based on five days a week of travel, covering thirty miles a day, you can cover seventy-eight hundred miles per year. Eighteen months would allow one to cover eleven thousand seven hundred miles. It is less than five thousand miles from the coast of China to the coast of the Mediterranean Sea.

It is possible that the wisemen could travel from China, Burma, Tibet, India, and other places in Asia to Jerusalem, within the two-year span, let alone the three-year span. The other two assumptions I make are God would not create an unnecessarily long time for the

sign to appear, and the wisemen, recognizing the importance of the star, would not postpone their trip to show their respect for the newborn King.

Finally, King Herod may have rounded up the time frame.

This is the rational for saying the wisemen may have come from much further than the traditional view, this does not mean the tradition is wrong, it just allows for other possibilities. This is offered only for your consideration, and to introduce a wider perspective on who might be included in our Christmas story.



The Flood Dilemma

(Continued from page 4)

King James Bible, published in 1611. "Kind" is used as "reproducing after their own kind"; that is any animals able to reproduce fertile offspring, for example horses and zebras. However "kind" would also include animals that may not reproduce fertile offspring like horses and donkeys but can reproduce with a common third animal, such as a zebra. Zebras can have fertile offspring from horses and donkeys, so the three are grouped in the "equine" kind.

Evolution and Creation are both based upon "historical science" which means that it uses deductions and logic as the basis for much of the hypothesis they put forward. The ability to respond to the evolutionists attempts to discredit creationism and the Bible, allows us to identify the weakness of their argument. This also explains their strong objections to having schools teach any ideas or concepts that would question their "science".



"...just how firm are you about spiders?"

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Just in case you have not seen the Christmas lights at our Church, here are some pictures. Jonathan actually climbed inside the spruce tree to perfectly position the lights. Later a traditional nativity scene, donated by a neighbour, was added to complete the display. Ed

Creation Alphabetic (A to I)

Answers in Genesis 1 (KJV)

A _ _ _ _ _

v.9 and let the dry land _____

B _ _ _ _ _

v.20-And God said, Let the water _____ forth abundantly

C _ _ _ _ _

v.25 after his kind, and _____ after their kind

D _ _

V.10 And God called the _____ land Earth

E _ _ _ _ _

V.1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the _____

F _ _ _ _ _

V.6 And God said, Let There be a _____ in the midst

G _ _ _

V.4 And God saw the light, that it was _____

H _ _ _ _ _

V.8 And God called the firmament _____

I _ _ _ _ _

V. 11 fruit after his kind, whose seed is in _____

Tiny Editorial Comment:

In the December 2023 issue of the newsletter, I wrote that Reflections would be on sabbatical for January and February. Like many politicians, I misspoke, or I guess more accurately miswrote. Things changed, Dr . Shepherd offered to contribute a story and I had enough "left-over" or older stories to publish a themeless January issue. Some of the stories are rather dated, but I decided they were still interesting and relevant to the people of Hillview. For sure there will be no February issue. If you wish to submit an article for the March issue, please send it to me by February 20, 2024.