

From the Pastor

In last week's "From the Pastor" I mentioned that Philip Schaff, the author of a six volume work titled "History of the Christian Church," goes to great lengths in his effort to support the traditional date of December 25 for the birth of Jesus.

Concerning the "shepherds abiding in the field" he recorded the words of the Talmudists that "this fact points to any other season rather than winter, and is therefore not favorable to the traditional date, though not conclusive against it." He added the clause "though not conclusive against it" in order to give room for the possibility of December 25 being the date despite the historical fact that shepherds would not be in the fields on December 25. The sheep were brought into shelter by November since there was no fodder (green grass) in the fields for the sheep to eat in the winter.

Schaff also attempts to have Herod's death in early spring so he can have Jesus' birth (at least only a few months before Herod died) still fit the traditional date. Herod may have actually died only a month or so after Jesus was born. Schaff puts Herod's death in March while ignoring the date recorded by the Jews for Herod's death. John Gill in his "Expositor" (commentary) when commenting on Matthew 2:19 records the fact that the Jews preserved the date of Herod's death as "the seventh day of the month Cisleu, and which answers [in that year] to the twenty fifth of our November: and was afterwards observed as a day of rejoicing by the Jews."

Finally, on page 123 of Volume 1 of the "History of the Christian Church, Schaff candidly admits there are problems with accepting the traditional date of December 25. He states, "There still remain, however, three difficulties not easily solved..."

I will deal with only the first problem here. Schaff explains, "Quirinius cannot have been governor of Syria before autumn 750 (B.C. 4), several months after Herod's death (which occurred in March 750), and consequently after Christ's birth; for we know from coins that Quintilius Varus was governor from 748 to 750 (B.C. 6-4), and [thus] left his post after the death of Herod."

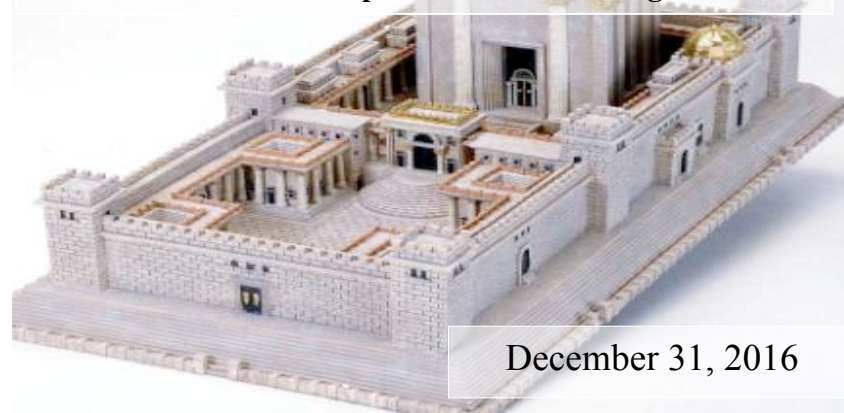
The problem Schaff has in asserting that Herod died in March 750 is that Cyrenius [Quirinius – According to the "On-line Bible Greek Lexicon" Cyrenius is "the Greek form of the Roman name Quirinius] did not become governor of Syria until the fall of 750 or 4 B.C. Schaff records that it can be proven from coins that Quintilius Varus was governor of Syria in the spring of 4 B.C. when Herod was supposed to have died.

Herod died in late November and not March when Cyrenius (not Quintilius) was governor. Cyrenius was governor when Jesus was born (before Herod died). Luke 2:1-2 NKJV records, "And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This census first took place while Quirinius [Cyrenius] was governing Syria." Jesus was not born in the days of Quintilius Varus (therefore, not December 25, 5 B.C.) but in the days of Quirinius. Thus, Jesus was born no earlier than autumn of 4 B.C.

I hope this is clear. I also hope that we see that historians (and others) ignore facts so they can support their own traditional ideas.

	Victoria	Corpus Christi	Harlingen
Sunset Today in:	5:41pm	5:45pm	5:49pm
Sunset Friday 1-6	5:45pm	5:49pm	5:54pm

Church of God South Texas **Victoria - Corpus Christi - Harlingen**



December 31, 2016

Victoria

Sermon: Steve Moody

Corpus Christi

Sermonette: Arnold Mendez, Jr.

Sermon: Arnold Mendez, Sr.

Harlingen

Sermonette: Gilbert Gonzalez

Sermon: Arnold Mendez

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they shall be filled."

Matthew 5:6

Announcements and Schedule

Sabbath 12/31	Regular locations and times for Corpus Christi, San Antonio, Harlingen, and Victoria.
Sabbath 1/7	Regular locations and times for Corpus Christi, San Antonio, Harlingen and Victoria. Mr. Chapman will be in Victoria. Mr. Moody will be in Corpus Christi. Mr. Mendez will be in Harlingen.

Foundation Institute Continuing Education Seminars 2017

Foundation Institute, Center for Biblical Education, is pleased to announce two weeklong seminars will be held in the Church's office in Allen, Texas, next summer. The dates will be June 26-30 and July 17-21, 2017. An exciting and varied program of classes will be offered, taught by FI instructors David Johnson and Ralph Levy and other ministers from the headquarters office. More details will be forthcoming as summer plans firm up.

Spaces will be limited, so if your plans are certain, please reserve your space early. You may send an email to Mr. Johnson, at david.johnson@cogwa.org, to indicate your interest, but your place will be reserved only when your tuition is received. Tuition will be \$75 per individual, or \$125 per couple, and will include the cost of a light lunch each day.

The class offerings in each seminar will be similar, with most of the content repeated, so please sign up for one seminar only.

Those who have come in previous summers have stayed in motels or with friends. Some FI apartment housing is likely to be available; more details will be made known at a later date.

Updates

From David Baker, regional director, Asia and the Philippines:

This past weekend a powerful typhoon hit the northern Philippines killing at least six people. More than 380,000 people evacuated their homes for emergency shelters and other safer grounds. Typhoon Nina cut power to five entire provinces due to toppled electric posts and trees. More than 300 flights were delayed or re-scheduled and ferries were barred from

sailing, stranding more than 12,000 travelers.

We are very happy to report that all our members are safe and only one or two had minimal damage to their homes.

Upcoming Activities: Dates to Remember

San Antonio Potluck: The next potluck is scheduled for January 14

Harlingen Bible Study & Potluck: The next Bible Study/potluck is scheduled for January 28