

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Church of God Big Sandy

ChurchofGodBigSandy.com

Oct. 14, 2023 • 1:00 p.m. • Sunset 6:48

Bible studies

Interactive study—1:00 p.m. Dave Havir
Presentation study—2:00 Daniel Hammons
(Also transmitted live)

Order of service—3:00 p.m.

Song leader Neil McIver
Pianist Dixon Cartwright
Scripture reading 1 Corinthians 15:24–28
Sermon Reg Killingley

Quick takes

1. Thank you—Thank you to the Feast coordinators in Big Sandy (David and Joyce Coleman) and in Destin (Neil and Martha McIver). Also, thanks to all the people who also served at our Feast sites.
2. Edifying the Body—This week’s article is “Course of Abijah” by Dave Havir.
3. Among Friends—This week’s article is “A Brief Look at Evil” by Dave Havir.
4. Eye on the World—This week’s “Eye on the World” has 338 headlines and three articles.

Prayer updates

In the Sept. 16 bulletin, we mentioned that **Mickey Voyce** was discharged from the hospital and went to a rehab facility in Tyler. She had some challenges with the facility (when it did not provide the necessary “wound vac”). During the Feast, Mrs. Voyce returned to the hospital for a few days. She is now home and very appreciative for your prayers that her wound from a recent surgery is doing better.

In the May 27 bulletin, we mentioned that **Linda Avey** was diagnosed with a kidney infection. In the Sept. 2 bulletin, we mentioned that her eGFR number (Estimated Glomerular Filtration Rate) had fallen from 17 to 15 and that a doctor had scheduled surgery to insert a shunt into her arm in preparation for possible dialysis. Since that time, she has continued to have challenges with her health. (Her number dropped to 13.) She was not able to attend the first six days of the Feast in Big Sandy, and the congregation was happy to see her on the last two days of the Feast. Yesterday, she had a doctor appointment to discuss two possible surgeries to get her ready for possible dialysis. (Surgeries for veins in her arm and in her neck are designed to prepare her for possible dialysis—if her numbers do not improve.) Mrs. Avey reports that her sisters are taking good care of her. She asks for your prayers that her kidneys will improve and that dialysis will not be necessary.

In the July 15 bulletin, we requested prayers for **Jerry Thompson**, who finds himself in a difficult situation due to a mistake he made and a possible overreaction made by others. Please remember him in your prayers.

New prayer requests

Last Saturday, **Nancy Amburgey** left soon after church because she felt “off.” When she got home and sat down, she had a stroke. On Tuesday, she reported: “I’m feeling pretty good now—no more dizziness or anything.”

Early in the Feast, **Ruth Roe** fell and hurt her left knee. Although she is feeling better, it is still causing her problems.

Daisy Semien (87-year-old aunt of **Lisa Smith**) had a stomach blockage, and the doctor did emergency surgery.

Mark Smith of Tulsa, Okla., is experiencing symptoms related to a covid infection.

“Course of Abijah”

This article is from the “Edifying the Body” section of the Church of God Big Sandy’s website (churchofgodbig sandy.com). It was posted for the weekend of Oct. 14,

By Dave Havir

BIG SANDY, Texas—Many Bible students believe that the Son of God was born in the autumn of the year. Why do they come to that conclusion? The answer to that question has to do with the phrase “course of Abijah.”

Starting point

Let’s notice some aspects of the first chapter of the book of Luke.

■ Luke 1:5—Zacharias, a priest, performed his duties during the course of Abijah.

■ Luke 1:23-24—After Zacharias returned home from Jerusalem, his wife Elizabeth conceived.

■ Luke 1:26-28—In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, Mary conceived.

■ Luke 1:36—John was born approximately six months before Jesus.

As you can see, the course of Abijah serves as a starting point to the chain of events.

System of priests

Since modern Christians are not living under a system of physical temples, physical priests and physical sacrifices, it is easy to see why the phrase “course of Abijah” means nothing to most.

What does history reveal to us about the course of Abijah?

Notice 1 Chronicles 24.

■ Verse 1—This chapter contained a listing of how the sons of Aaron were divided into work groups.

■ Verses 7-19—Here is a list of the 24 priests mentioned at that time.

■ Verse 10—Abijah was listed as the eighth priest in the order of 24.

A few more details

Here are a few more details about the course of Abijah.

■ The Jewish calendar begins in the spring (Nisan), so the first course of priests (Jehoiarib) began at that time.

■ After the 24th course was completed, the cycle of courses would repeat so that each group of priests would serve in the temple twice a year during their course.

■ However, all the priests would serve in the temple during three major festivals (Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles), which brought the total time of service to five times a year.

■ Many historians believe that the course of Abijah mentioned in Luke 1:5 was the early course and not the second course.

Fred Coulter's research

In his book titled *Harmony of the Gospels*, author Fred Coulter provided some details about the course of Abijah.

On page 8, Mr. Coulter wrote: "Each course or shift was to work one full week, from noon Sabbath to noon Sabbath (Talmud, Sukkah)."

On page 9, Mr. Coulter added: "The Talmud reveals that the first course, or shift, began in the first week of the first month of the Hebrew Calendar. The second course worked the second week. This rotation continued on a week-by-week basis through the twenty-four courses. Each course had the basic responsibility twice a year to perform a one-week shift.

"In addition, all courses were required to work three extra weeks during the year. These three weeks were for the three holy day seasons: Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. Thus, all the priests shared equally in the priestly responsibilities for the entire year."

Early course

Based on Mr. Coulter's writings, we see that he agrees with the many historians who conclude that the course of Abijah mentioned in Luke 1:5 was the early course and not the second course.

On page 9, he continued: "Zacharias worked the eighth course of Abijah, which was assigned the ninth and tenth weeks from the beginning of the year. The ninth week was from Iyar 27 through Sivan 5, which was June 3 through June 10. The tenth week was from Sivan 5 through Sivan 12, which was June 10 through June 17. This was during the week of Pentecost."

Autumn birth

On page 10, Mr. Coulter wrote: "John was born approximately between March 18-April 3 . . . Projecting forward nine months from Mary's probable conception, we arrive at the two-week period during which Christ was probably born. That two-week period was Elul 24-Tishri 8, or September 16-29."

An autumn birth seems correct when a Bible student considers that shepherds were watching over their flock by night (Luke 2:8).

Associated with a holy day?

Some people believe the birth occurred on the Feast of Trumpets, and other people believe that Christ was born at the beginning of the Feast of Tabernacles.

The people who prefer the birth time to be at the beginning of the Feast of Tabernacles often like to correlate the eight days leading to Christ's circumcision to the time frame leading to the eighth day of the Feast.

Food for thought

Here is a factor that has influenced many Bible students to accept an autumn birth.

■ Luke 3:23—Christ was 30 years old when He started His ministry.

■ Daniel 9:27—Many Bible students wonder if being cut off in the "middle of the week" meant that the ministry of Jesus Christ lasted for 3½ years.

■ In that scenario, a person can count backwards six months from His crucifixion (during the Passover in spring) to conclude the time of His birth was in the autumn.

“A Brief Look at Evil”

This article is from the “Among Friends” section of the Church of God Big Sandy’s website (churchofgodbig sandy.com). It was posted for the weekend of Oct. 14, 2023.

By Dave Havir

BIG SANDY, Texas—At our Bible study on Wednesday night, I gave a presentation titled “A Brief Look at Evil.”

This was the first Wednesday-night Bible study after the Feast of Tabernacles. This was the first Wednesday-night Bible study after Hamas attacked Israel.

After reminding the audience of my six-part series about “Evil and Wickedness” in May and June of 2022, I admitted that I wasn’t planning to start another series about evil. But I was certainly in the mood to talk about the subject of evil that night.

Reminder of series

Here was the reminder of the six-part Bible-study series in 2022.

■ 5/11/22—Evil and Wickedness in the Pentateuch.

■ 5/18/22—Evil and Wickedness in the Psalms.

■ 5/25/22—Evil and Wickedness in Ecclesiastes.

■ 6/1/22—Evil and Wickedness in Gospel writings.

■ 6/15/22—Evil and Wickedness in Paul’s writings.

■ 6/22/22—Evil and Wickedness in the rest of the New Testament.

Does God create evil?

Isaiah 45:7—“I form the light, and I create darkness; I make peace, and create evil [in the King James translation and ‘calamity’ in New King James translation]: I the Lord do all these things.”

How does God create evil?

■ God initiated a trial upon Job—Job 1:8 and Job 2:3.

■ God allowed Satan to propose some potential details of the trial—Job 1:9-11 and Job 2:4-5.

■ God approved the details—limiting the extent of the details—Job 1:12 and Job 2:6.

■ 1 Kings 22:20—When the Lord an-

nounced His intention for Ahab to have a negative result, various beings proposed details to accomplish the result.

■ 1 Kings 22:21—Then, a spirit came forward and offered to provide details.

■ 1 Kings 22:22—The Lord asked for the details—and, upon hearing the details, He approved the plan given by the spirit.

First scripture where evil is mentioned

■ Genesis 2:9—The Lord made every tree in the Garden of Eden, including the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

■ Genesis 2:16-17—The Lord told Adam that he could not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

■ Genesis 3:1-6—The serpent successfully tempted Adam and Eve.

■ Genesis 3:22-24—God removed Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden.

Some examples of evil

■ Genesis 6:5—God saw the preoccupation with evil.

■ Genesis 8:21—God acknowledged that man’s heart is evil.

■ Genesis 14:14-16—Lot was kidnapped, and Abram took soldiers to rescue him.

■ Genesis 34:1-29—Dinah was raped, and her brothers got revenge.

■ Genesis 50:20—When people plan evil, God can use it for good.

■ Exodus 1:22—Pharaoh ordered the killing of babies.

■ Exodus 2:11-15—Moses defended a citizen who was being abused—and had to flee from Pharaoh.

■ Matthew 2:16—Herod ordered the killing of children—Joseph took the Child to Egypt.

■ Matthew 14:1-12—Herod imprisoned John the Baptist and ultimately beheaded him.

Last scripture where evil is mentioned

■ Revelation 2:2—Firstfruits do not like to be around evil behavior—including the church leaders who use deceptions and lies.