

Scripture Standard

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Contents

- 1 **Editorial**
Allan Ashurst
- 2 **Things To Think On.**
Derek L. Daniell
- 4 **Apostle John**
Jonathan Ashurst
- 6 **We Sin**
Allan Ashurst
- 10 **Editorial continued**
- 11 **Why was Jesus Baptised?**
Allan Ashurst
- 13 **NEWS AND INFORMATION**
- 13 **JESUS REIGNS**
Allan Ashurst
- 14 **WHAT WAS CYRENIUS DOING IN SYRIA?**
Allan Ashurst
- 16 **NOTICES**

Pleading for a total return to New Testament principles.

Scripture Standard
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New Testament Principles - 6

AS AT THE BEGINNING

The Hebrew nation had gone terribly astray from God and were practising heinous idolatry, copying the nations around them .

Now read these verses. They are mind blowing:

Therefore says the Lord, the **LORD** of hosts, the mighty One of Israel, ... I will lay my hand on you and **purely purge away your dross and take away all your sin, and I will restore* your judges as at the first, and your counsellors as at the beginning: afterwards you will be called, the city of righteousness, the faithful city.** Isaiah 1:24-26.

*[The Hebrew word SHOOWB is also translated "restore" in Daniel 9:25 (KJV/AV)].

So, in captivity, YHWH purged them, then restored the nation to what it was like at the beginning when he appointed for them judges, Deuteronomy 16:18, 25:1, Ezra 7:25.

In asking for a king they were rejecting YHWH from being their ruler. Was that idolatry?

This day you have rejected your God , ... and you have said to HIM ... appoint a king over us.' 1 Samuel 10:19.

However YHWH was going to purge the nation, even of that and restore the city to what it was like at the beginning. Then and only then, it would be called righteous, faithful.

And I will turn my hand upon you, and **purely purge away your dross, and take away all your tin: I will restore your judges as at the first, and your counsellors as at the beginning: afterwards** you will be called, **the city of righteousness, the faithful city.** Isaiah 1:25,26.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

Things To Think On

Derek L. Daniell - Tunbridge Wells

Every waking hour of our life our mind is thinking of something. How good it is when we can train our mind to think on good things. Paul said:

Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Philippians 4:8.

A Christian's thoughts should be centered on godly things, not evil. Some may ask "Can our thoughts be controlled?"

In 2.Corinthians 10:5 we read:

Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

From what Paul said it is obvious that we can control our thoughts if we work at it.

Why Think On The Good Things?

We should think on good things first of all because we are commanded to do so. Paul said:

If there is any virtue, and if there is any praise, think on these things. Philippians 4:8.

Paul is speaking through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, therefore we must treat what he says as a command of God. We also need to think on good things because we are as we think. Solomon wrote:

For as he thinks in his heart, so is he. Proverbs 23:7.

If we are thinking of good things then we won't be defiled (Matthew 15:19-20). God knows our thoughts and knowing that God knows our thoughts should motivate us to only want to

think on the good things (1 Corinthians 3:20). and if we think on the good things there will be less chance of us sinning. For when we sin then we must ask God to forgive us of that sin. In Acts 8:22 we can read where evil thoughts need to be repented of:

Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of your heart might be forgiven you.

If we would take Paul's advice (command) and think on the good things then we would not have to repent of evil thoughts.

What Should We Think On?

We should train our mind to think on the Lord's thoughts.

Isaiah said:

Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, says the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. Isaiah 55:7-9.

We need to remember that God's thoughts are not like ours.

When we come together for worship, prayer and praise, (Acts 2:42,47) we need to remember Jesus in his appointed way, (1. Corinthians 11:23-34). We should think on honourable things (Romans 12:17). We need to think about our saviour Jesus Christ and why He came to this earth. That He came and suffered, bled, and died so that we can have forgiveness of sins (Romans 6:3-4). Our mind should be set on things above, (Colossians 3:2). Let us train our mind to think on the good things that Paul stressed in Philipians 4:8. If we would allow God to direct our every step in life (Jeremiah 10:23), then life would be so much easier. Let us resolve now to give our

heart and mind over to Jesus and let His example lead us each day as we strive to be the right influence before others. Are you determined to set your mind on thinking of good things and to follow the teachings of Jesus? If not why not?

THE APOSTLE JOHN

Jonathan Ashurst, Byron GA

The Apostle John was one of Jesus' closest companions. From the life of the Apostle John, we see how Jesus can transform people and use them for great good in his kingdom.

Before discussing his life, it may be helpful to distinguish this John from others with a similar name. He is not to be confused with John the Baptist, who prepared the way for the Messiah. Nor is he the same person as John Mark, mentioned in Acts chapters 12,13,15 and 2 Timothy 4:11. The John we will study today was one of Jesus' twelve apostles.

John wrote five of the New Testament books: the Gospel of John, 1st John, 2nd John, 3rd John, and Revelation. In the four gospel accounts (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) there are several places where John is mentioned. It appears that he and Andrew were introduced to Jesus by John the Baptist (John 1:35-39). Jesus called John and his brother James from their job as fishermen to become "fishers of men" (Matthew 4:21; Mark 1:19-20; Luke 5:9-11; Acts 1:13). Jesus chose John as one of his twelve apostles (Matthew 10:2; Mark 3:17; Luke 6:14).

Peter, James, and John were some of Jesus' closest friends. As one of the three, John is mentioned as a witness to many of Jesus' miracles, including the healing of Peter's mother-in-law (Mark 1:29-31), the transfiguration (Matthew 17:1; cf. Mark 9:2; Luke 9:28),

and the raising of a girl from the dead (Mark 5:37; cf. Luke 8:51). In the week before the crucifixion, John heard Jesus answer questions (Mark 13:3-4) and was with Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14:33-34). Both before and after the resurrection, John and Peter are frequently found working as a team (Luke 22:8; John 13:23-26; John 20:1-20; John 21:7; Acts 3:1,11; Acts 4:13,19; Acts 8:14; Galatians 2:9). John's brother James was the first apostle to be martyred (Acts 12:1-2).

Once, John and his brother James asked Jesus if they could be seated at his right and left hand in his kingdom (Mark 10:35-37; cf. Matthew 20:20-21). Jesus told them they would indeed suffer for his sake, but that they should not seek glory for themselves (Mark 10:38-45; cf. Matthew 20:22-28). Another mistake these brothers made was seeking to destroy Jesus' enemies. After a Samaritan village had rejected Jesus, John and his brother asked if they should call down fire from heaven to destroy the village. However, Jesus told them "the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them" (Luke 9:51-56). This incident could be the reason why Jesus gave the brothers the nickname, "Sons of Thunder" (Luke 9:54; Mark 3:17). Another example of John's zealous nature is the time he rebuked someone who was casting out demons in Jesus' name, though they were not in Jesus' company. Jesus told John:

Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us.
Luke 9:49-50; cf. Mark 9:38-41.

Through Jesus' ministry, John learned humility, sacrifice, and godly love. He was a witness to Jesus' first mock-trial (John 18:15-16). He was at the foot of the cross when Jesus asked him to take care of Jesus' mother Mary (John 19:26-27). He saw proof of Jesus' death (John 19:33-35)

and resurrection (John 21:24).

In his gospel, John often refers to himself as “the disciple whom Jesus loved.” In his later role as an elder (2 John 1; 3 John 1), he exhorted the flock to love one another and walk in the truth (1 John, 2 John, 3 John). In the book of Revelation, John describes the visions he saw of God’s judgement on the world and deliverance of the faithful (Revelation 1:1-9; 21:2; 22:8).

Peter once asked Jesus what would happen to John. Jesus answered:

If I will that he tarries till I come, what is that to you. You follow me? John 21:21

Because of this, some rumoured that John would never die, but John clarified that Jesus was merely saying that it was not Peter’s place to know John’s future. John ended up an exile on the island of Patmos, but even in tribulation he remained faithful to his Lord (Revelation 1:9). Jesus had transformed John from a zealous fisherman to a mature fisher of men. Though John did not write down everything Jesus did, what he did record strengthens our faith in Christ today (John 20:30-31; John 21:25).

WE SIN

Allan Ashurst - Stretford

Augustine of Hippo introduced what was called a New Theology. He used Romans 3:23 and Romans 5:12 as two of his proof texts. In the King James Version, Romans 3:23 reads:

For **all have sinned** and **come short** of the glory of God.
and Romans 5:12 reads:

Wherefore, as by one man sin **entered** into the world, and death by sin; and so **death passed** upon all men, for that all **have sinned**.

He considered that this proved that, because of Adam's sin, we are all born in sin. This idea is expressed in various ways by different theologians. For example, "for all have sinned" is interpreted to mean "in Adam all have sinned" but that is not what Paul is saying. He does not say that in Adam all have sinned. He says "all have sinned." You and I sin. It is talking about the sin we do.

This is clearer in the Greek text, because the verbs translated "have sinned", "entered", and "passed" are in what is known as the Second Aorist tense.¹ For example, if we were to translate it into ordinary English, then Romans 3:23 would be better rendered:

because **all sin** and **are coming short**² of God's glory.

and Romans 5:12 would read

therefore just as by one person sin **enters** into the world and death through sin, and so death comes¹ upon all people since all sin¹.

Because we sin, we are coming short of God's glory.

The Aorist tense is not concerned with whether a thing happens in the past, the present or even in the future. It is only concerned with the happening.³

Romans 3:23 is telling us that all sin. That is a fact of life. We do all sin. That is why baptism is not for the removal of Adam's sin or its stain, it is for the forgiveness of sins (plural), our own sins (Acts 2:38). Paul was not told to be baptised and to wash away the stain of Adam's sin. He was told to be baptised and to wash away his own sins, calling on the name of the Lord. (Acts 22:16).

In Romans 5:12 we are being told that one person caused sin to enter into the world and consequently people died. This is contrasted in the subsequent verses with the one person, Jesus Christ, who brought salvation into the world, so that as one man's disobedience caused many to become sinners, so one man's obedience caused many to be made righteous. (Compare 1. Corinthians 15:20-21).

In chapter 6 Paul goes on to say:

What shall we say then? Shall we continue to sin that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? 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 should walk in newness of life.

Adam's disobedience introduced sin into the world. We are born into an environment where sin is rampant.

James explains how uncontrolled desire leads to sin:

every man is tempted, when he is **drawn away** of his own desire⁴, and enticed. Then when desire⁴ has conceived, it brings forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, brings forth death. James 1:14,15, (cp. Romans 7:24).

Our five senses are part of our physical make-up enabling us to function as human beings. The problem is that we allow the physical desires to overrule the spirit. Instead of the spirit controlling the physical we succumb to our physical desires (Romans 7:14-23). We sin and sin until sin becomes endemic in our nature.(Romans 8:6). So Paul laments:

O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? Romans 7:24 (cp. James 1:14).

Satan attacks all of us in three ways: physical desire, visual desire, and pride, (1.John 2:16). Eve was tempted the same three ways: "good for food ... pleasant to the eyes ... desired to make one wise" (Genesis 3:5-6) The Lord Jesus knows what it is like to be tempted in all the points that we are yet He didn't ever sin [Hebrews 4:15,16]. By being sinless, even though in the flesh,[#] He proved that there is no way sin can be justified (Romans 8:3, [#]Colossians 2:9, 1.Timothy 3:16 KJV/AV). Thank God that through Jesus Christ our Lord we can be delivered, but we pass it off saying, it was Adam's fault. We must, repent of our sins if we wish to be forgiven, then obey the Gospel (Acts 2:37,38, 2.Thessalonians 1:8, 1.Peter 4:17).

Paul continues:

I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin. **There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.** For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. 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, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Romans 7:25-8:4

NOTES:

- 1) "The Second Aorist tense is identical in meaning and translation to the Normal or First Aorist tense. [The On-Line Bible (OLB), note 5780.]
"the Aorist tense is characterised by its emphasis on punctillar action, that is, the concept of the verb is considered without regard to past, present or future time." [OLB, note 5777.]
"One precautionary word. No more fruitful cause of misunderstanding the Greek verb system exists than the assumption that, because the

orist indicative is a past-tense form, therefore 'orist' connotes past time; but this is not so. The term ... means ... 'undefined', 'indefinite'." [115.(j) New Testament Greek Primer - Alfred Marshall 1962, Samuel Bagster and Sons Ltd.]

- 2) In Romans 3:23 "come short" is from a Greek verb in the continuous present tense and should really be translated "are coming short".
- 3) The Aorist tense is difficult to translate because there is no equivalent tense in English. It is, to some degree, similar to the English simple present tense. For example. Ask a boy "How do you go to school?" he might answer "I go by school bus". Neither the question nor the answer are tied to time. The verb "go" is not concerned with whether it happens in the past, the present or the future.
- 4) The word "lust" is from the same Greek word [ἐπιθυμία] translated "desire" in Luke 22:15 (qv). It simply means "desire. We consist of spirit and soul and body. (1.Thessalonians 5:23).

AS AT THE BEGINNING

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

It appeared to them that God's way did not work and the surrounding nations were successful. So instead of putting right what had gone wrong they demanded a king.

They said to Samuel, Behold, you are old, and your sons don't walk in your ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations [1 Samuel 8:5].

Then God's way was judges. Now God's way is qualified elders in each assembly who oversee, teach, train and shepherd all the flock. Ephesians 4:11ff.

We must never be complacent and assume that we have got everything right. We must search out and remove any dross and also resist the temptation to emulate the apparently successful novel ways of proliferating sects.

It up to us with love, prayer, with God's help and perseverance to be always alert and continue striving to get back, to what was intended **at the beginning** for the Lord's church and His people guided by God's word. (compare 1.Timothy 2:2).

We must not be diverted from our endeavour to achieve a total return to New Testament principles in faith and practice.

Why did Jesus have to be baptised? He didn't do anything wrong."

Allan Ashurst

Learning how John was immersing repentant people in water for the remission of sins, (Mark 1:4) a little girl asked her mother the above question.

Jesus said:

From the mouth of infants and sucklings you have procured praise? Matthew 21:16.

"He didn't do anything wrong." True. He bore our sins:

Christ ... **did not sin**, neither was guile found in his mouth; ... when he was reviled, did not revile in return; when he suffered he did not threaten, ... **who himself bore away our sins**. 1.Peter 2:21-24 LO.

John was baptising repentant people in water for the remission of sins:

John did baptise in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.

And there went out to him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized by him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins. Mark 1:4,5.

So why did He, who never sinned, insist that John must baptise Him.

Jesus said it was necessary for John, and Jesus Himself, to do everything right. God had told John that the Messiah would be revealed to him when he baptised Him. For this reason alone Jesus had to be baptised by John. John 1:25-34.

However is there also a deeper reason why Jesus had to submit to being plunged in water by John?

I offer the following as my reasoned answer:

Being the son of a priest and having turned thirty years of age John was qualified to carry out priestly duties. It was then he started his ministry of heralding the imminent coming of the Messiah and baptising repentant sinners. Six months later Jesus was baptised by John when he had just turned thirty.

Temple priests had to verify that the lambs were perfect and to plunge them in the large mobile tanks before handing them back to the heads of the households to be sacrificed by them.

[see Understanding the Bible, Unit 6 charts. The temple mobile tanks, and J.C Ellicott's commentary: 2.Chronicles 4:6 "plunge"]

Having acknowledged that Jesus was perfect, by publicly plunging Jesus in the water, wasn't John preparing Jesus for sacrifice? (Matthew 3:14,15). Isn't it singularly significant that it was then that John declared Jesus to be the "Son of God" and the "Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world?"

(John 1: 29, 34,36).

[Here is something to think about:-

At the last supper Jesus was the head of the group gathered in that house and had to take the lamb to the temple have the priest examine it and then He had to sacrifice it.]

The old covenant being a portrayal of what would happen in the new ("a shadow of things to come" Colossians 2:17, Hebrews 10:1), it was because John and Jesus just turned 30 when they began their ministries that the priests had to turn 30 before they could officiate not the other way round. Also - that it was because He, who was to come, was perfect and sacrificed HIMSELF that the lamb had to be perfect and be sacrificed in order to portray HIM (Hebrews 8:5, and 9:14).

he said to them, "With desire I desire to eat this passover with you before I suffer: For I say to you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God". Luke 22:15,16.

NEWS AND INFORMATION

BAPTISMS

Kirkby in Ashfield.

Please rejoice with us at Beulah Rd, Kirkby, in the baptism of Susan Fearn on Sunday 22/02/2015.

Susan is the daughter of Betty and our late Brother John Dodsley and we were all overjoyed when she expressed a desire to be added to the Lord's church.

Betty had felt for some time that Susan was on the verge of accepting God's offer of salvation and we invite you to join with us and the Heavenly hosts in rejoicing over Susan's decision.

Please remember her in your prayers as she steps out on that straight and narrow path which leads to salvation.

Waterloo, Liverpool.

Let us also rejoice in the baptism of Michelle Alexander, the daughter of Brother Manu and Sister Ann Alexander, on Saturday the 14th. of March 2015. We commend Michelle for devoting her life to the Lord whilst in her youth.

Matthew 28:18

JESUS REIGNS

Acts 2:36

He has all authority - in Heaven - now.

He has all authority - on earth - now.

He makes the rules,

He has been made LORD OF LORDS. His kingdom is now.

True Christians are His citizens. (Revelations 1:9 Colossians 1:13)

When He appears, "then" is "the end".¹ Then He hands over His Kingdom to God the Father. He is not coming to start His Kingdom and rebuild the Temple. That Temple is defunct.³

JESUS IS KING OF KINGS.³ - HALLELUJAH!

1) 1.Cor. 15:23-28, ειτα το τελος v.24. 2) Heb. ch. 8-10. 3) Rev. 13:14, 19:16.

What Was Cyrenius doing in Syria ?

Allan Ashurst

About that time, Caesar Augustus issued an edict, that all the inhabitants of the empire should be registered. (This first register took effect, when Cyrenius¹ was president of Syria.) When all went to be registered², every one of his own city, Joseph also went from Nazareth, a city of Galilee, to a city of David in Judea, called Bethlehem, (for he was of the house and lineage of David,) to be registered, with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was pregnant. While they were there, the time came, that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her first born son...

Luke 2:1-7 Living Oracles

Apparently Varus was governor of Syria from BC 6 to BC 4/3. Herod "the Great" died in November BC4 and Jesus was born in BC5. So what was Cyrenius doing in Syria?

The Romans were busy constructing garrisons and military roads throughout the empire. Access through the Taurus mountains was hindered by a rebellious tribe, "The Homonadensians" (see the chart). Syria and Galatia would normally be required to intervene but Galatia had no army and Syria's governor, Varus, lacked military experience.

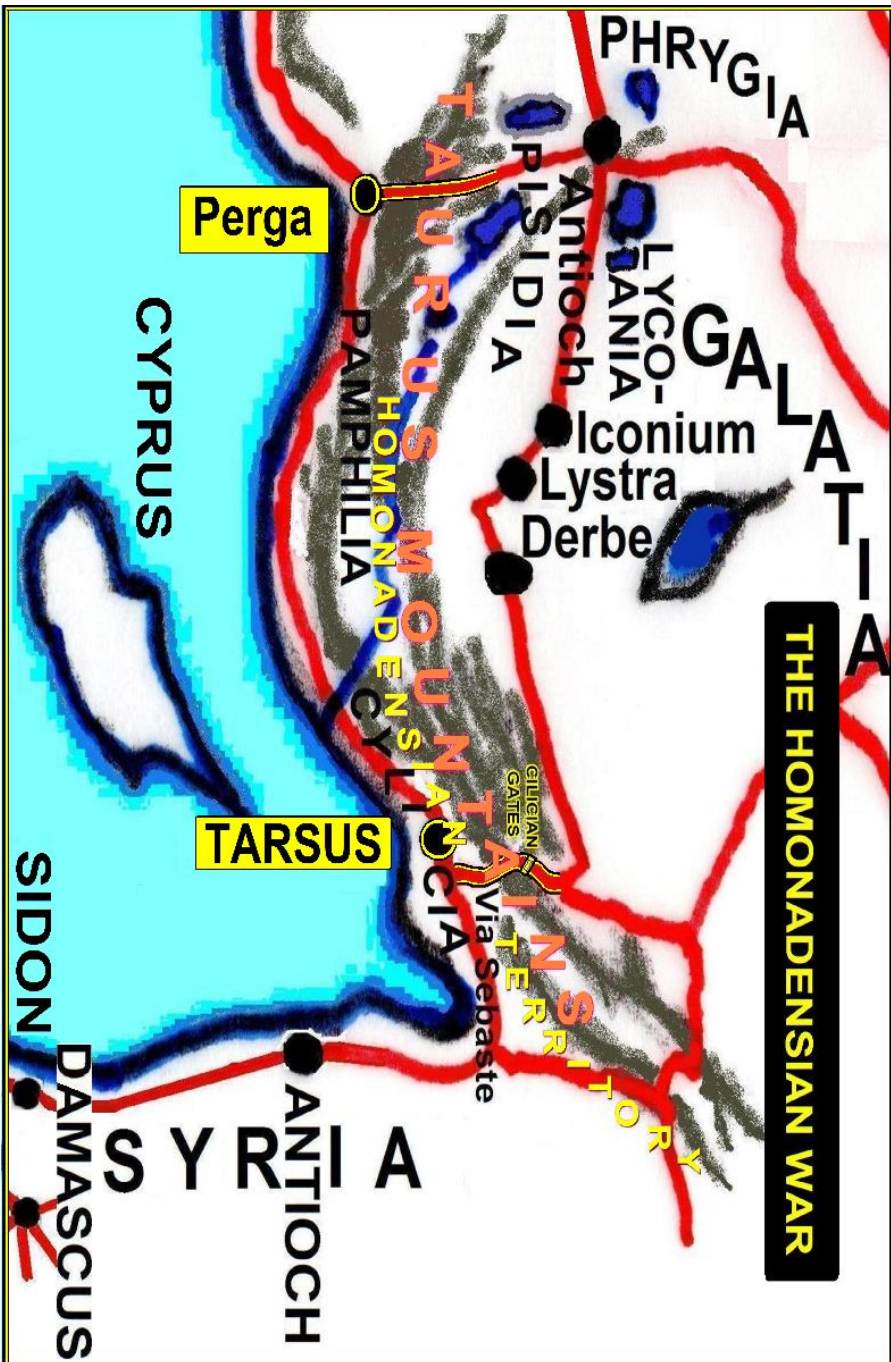
So Caesar Augustus assigned Cyrenius¹, the task of vanquishing the rebels as his vicegerent, Syria being his base.

NOTES:

- 1) Cyrenius Latin name was Publius Sulpicius Quirinius
- 2) The King James version (AV) mistakenly has "taxed"

For more detail see the A4 size page booklet: [DATING THE CENSUS. CYRENIUS/QUIRINIUS IN SYRIA AND HEROD'S DEATH]
and relevant time-chart: [HEROD "THE GREAT" TO HEROD AGRIPPA] at:
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October 17th.

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November 14th.

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