

Carolyn Roth Ministry

Newsletter

Volume 2, Issue 8



Watch Out! Be on the Lookout!

It is much too early—its still summer—but ready or not Advent is coming and a new Church Season starting.

Advent is the first Season in the church year. It begins on the Sunday nearest the feast of St. Andrew, the Apostle (30 November). When I want to know when Advent occurs, typically, I look at Christmas Day (December 25) and count backward four Sundays.

In Christian minds, Advent symbolizes Jesus in our hearts and looks forward to his second coming; yet, most of us become overwhelmed during Advent with preparations for Christmas. Advent has important implications beside being the month leading up to Christmas. Advent anticipates the coming of Jesus from three different perspectives: a) his coming in glory at the end-of-time, b) his coming in our hearts, and c) Jesus, the Christ, born in flesh in Bethlehem.

Some Church scholars contended that Advent was founded by St. Peter; yet definitive conclusions about the origin of Advent are shrouded in history. We know that Gregory the Great (Pope from 590 – 604 AD) was the first notable cleric to identify four weeks for Advent. Martin Luther encouraged families to observe Advent as a time to teach children about the coming of Jesus. Luther opposed the secularism, i.e., giving gifts, raucous feasting, of the Christmas season.

Want to learn more about the Church calendar? Check my recent book: *Connecting the Church Calendar*. Jim Forney is the photographer.

What is that flower?

Myrtle flower (*Myrtus communis*).

Vision among Myrtle Trees

Zechariah's vision of angels among myrtle trees was recorded in Zechariah 1.1-17. Zechariah received eight visions in one night. In the first vision, Zechariah saw a man riding a red horse. The man stood among myrtle trees in a ravine. The man explained to Zechariah that God sent riders throughout the earth. The riders came back and reported that the world was at peace. Hearing the riders' reports, the angel of the Lord asked God how long he was going to withhold mercy from Jerusalem. With kind and comforting words, God explained that he would punish the offending nations and turn to Jerusalem with comfort and mercy. God promised that Judah's towns would again overflow with prosperity.

The *Bible* myrtle is the *Myrtus communis*. At one time the wild myrtle tree was common throughout Palestine and Lebanon; however, today in Israel, most myrtle bushes are cultivated and used for ornamental purposes. Myrtle flowers bloom May - August in Israel. Fruit is a purplish-black berry, known as *mursin*. *Mursins* are dried then ground to flavor stews or boiled for jelly or beverages.

If you live in the Roanoke area and do not have a home church, please visit St. John Lutheran Church, 4608 Brambleton Avenue, Roanoke, VA 24018. 540-774-0712. Services at 8:15 and 11:00 a.m.

Last month for Summer Special

Still time to get your beach (lake, cabin, pool, deck) books. Why read a useless book when you can read one that enhances your spiritual life? I am running a special on two of my books on Bible Characters -- *Restoring Relationships* (the Bible way) and *Out of the Shadows, Exposing the power of Bible women*. Both books sell for \$10.00 each plus \$4.00 shipping and handling per book. If you buy now, I pay the S & H. Such a deal. Go to my website to make a purchase (www.CarolynRothMinistry.com).

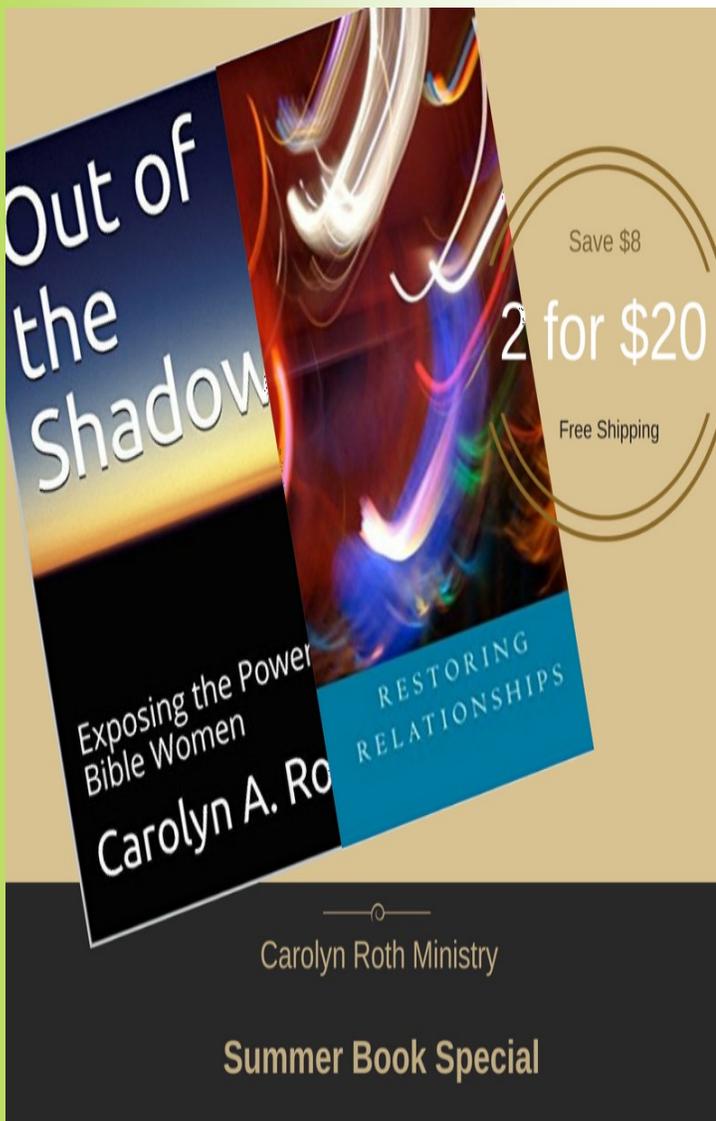


Wrong-Doing Before the Law

Before the Levitical prostitution laws, concepts of whore and rape were present. Probably, they were culture-based. In Genesis Jacob's sons heard that Prince Shechem, son of King Hamor, seized their sister Dinah, lay with Dinah, and violated Dinah (Genesis 34.2-7). Jacob's sons, working out in the fields, heard what happened to Dinah, and came back to the tents. The sons were "very angry" because Shechem did such an "outrageous thing by lying with their sister" (Genesis 34.7). Dinah's brothers concluded "such a thing must not be done" (Genesis 34.7). Subsequently, Dinah's brothers killed the people of the land and returned Dinah to her mother. When Jacob reprimanded them for killing the people of Shechem, they said, "Should he treat her like a prostitute?" (Genesis 34.31).

The word "prostitution" used by Dinah's brothers to Jacob could have been a repudiation of Jacob leaning toward permitting Prince Shechem to marry Dinah. Readers of Genesis chapter 34 (8-12) note that King Hamor was willing to pay Jacob a large sum of money which he called a bride price for Dinah. It was Dinah's brothers, not Jacob, who objected to Dinah marrying an "uncircumcised" male. Further, the brother's noted that if they allowed Dinah to marry Shechem it would be a disgrace to them (Genesis 34.14).

Read more in *Restoring Relationships*



Out of the Shadows
Exposing the Power of Bible Women
Carolyn A. Roth

RESTORING RELATIONSHIPS
The Bible Way

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Summer Book Special