



REFLECTIONS ON
THEATER
ATTENDANCE



SECRETS
UNSEALED



MINISTRY UPDATE
Second Quarter 2013



Pastor Stephen Bohr

PRESIDENT/SPEAKER | SECRETS UNSEALED

Dear Friend of Secrets Unsealed,

There are two institutions that God established at the very beginning before sin, marriage between a man and a woman and the Sabbath. Both of these institutions are under a relentless attack today by the secular media, particularly the institution of marriage. Daily we are bombarded with the idea that gay marriage is just as acceptable as heterosexual marriage. Just in the last few days, a sports figure came out of the closet and the media almost unanimously praised and glorified his courage in revealing his gay sexuality.

United States congressmen and senators are under severe pressure to favor gay marriage and the Supreme Court of the United States is presently hearing arguments pro and con. I am certain that the justices feel strongly pressured to declare the Defense of Marriage Act unconstitutional. Just recently *Time Magazine* published an issue where on the cover two women were kissing and the subtitle explains that no matter what the Court decides on the matter, the majority of the American people favor it.

Sadly, the Seventh-day Adventist church has not been totally immune to this relentless attack on the institution of marriage. A recent movie has been produced titled *Seventh-Day Adventists* where the producers attempt to persuade the viewing audience that gay marriage and being Seventh-day Adventist are fully compatible.

In this issue I have written an article on the impact of the secular media upon our minds. It is a psychological law that we are changed by what we behold. The question is: **Will we fill our minds with the Word God or will a misguided media be our source of authority?** I pray to God that we will hide the Word of God in our hearts that we might not sin against Him.

Praying and working for Christ's soon return,

Stephen Bohr



BOMBARDED

by the MEDIA

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TESTIMONY TIME

Blessings in Daniel 11

"Praise God for this just in time note of encouragement. It was the past week that I received the brochure on Daniel 11, and the Lord had taken me through the material, and I was blessed. Be assured that you, your family, and your ministry will be in my prayers. You will also receive some financial support as the good Lord blesses."

YANICK, NEW YORK

The Day Without a Need

"I want to thank you for all the great messages in your Secrets Unsealed magazine. I was very pleased with the one on Women's Ordination. I also enjoy all the health message and share them with many friends. Isn't it great — the signs are all moving fast to the end when we will be in heaven and no longer need any of these things. God Bless you in your joy of doing God's pleasure."

CORINNE, OREGON

Meaty Messages

"I am so grateful for this study Cracking the Genesis Code. I was a Pentecostal evangelical Christian who was very disturbed about the condition of our churches and its lack of concern about sin in the church. Also there was no meat in the messages. Through a series of events I got a hold of Cracking the Genesis Code. I was shocked at the depth and insight into God's Word. At about the fourth or fifth message, I was challenged by the Holy Spirit as to who the true church/remnant of God was. Needless to say, my wife and I studied for four years and became Adventists. Thank you for your ministry."

DARIN, MICHIGAN

Thousands Reached

"Thank you for your ministry and the blessing that you have proved to be to myself and thousands of others."

YAFENT, CANADA

Faith Comes By Hearing

"You don't know how much I am growing listening to your preaching every day, you are a blessing. The Lord made a good choice putting you there. God bless you and your family and all your children and all the staff who work for Jesus."

NOEMI, CALIFORNIA

Eager for Truth

"During 2012, I discovered Pastor Bohr's Secrets Unsealed Series through Amazing Facts Streaming TV and listened to some of the messages after coming home from work. This was some of the finest preaching of Bible truth I ever heard. I attend a local SDA church and am learning more about the Adventist belief and am eager to learn even more about it through Pastor Bohr's messages."

MR. WILLARD, ARIZONA

Knowing the How

"Thank you for your magazine ministry update. All of your articles help me to grow in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Also, your lessons have helped me to study God's word, and they also teach me *how* to study God's word."

JACK, OREGON

Signs in the Church

"Thank you for your ministry. You speak and write clearly and lovingly in regard to God's word and its prescribed course for His people. May He strengthen and uphold you — and the worldwide church — as we face the signs of increasing uncertainty and rebellion."

LAURIE, WASHINGTON

Changed by the Light

"We have been watching your program and have been so blessed by it. We have recently joined a local Seventh-day Adventist church in Portland, Oregon. We all have been keeping Sunday since the beginning of our christian walk, and thank the Lord we have seen the Light."

ROD, OREGON

Worn Out

"I have much admiration for you and your mission of carrying the word to us. I have indeed worn out several DVDs and CDs of your wonderful sermons and series... *Cracking the Genesis Code* was marvelous, *Israel and the Palestinians*, fantastic... the *Taken and Left Behind* was terrific. Many of these are just plain worn out, totally exhausted."

SUSAN, OKLAHOMA



REFLECTIONS ON THEATER ATTENDANCE

BY STEPHEN BOHR



We are seeing an unprecedented increase in violence and sexual perversion in contemporary American society. Daily we hear about spouses who kill their mate and kids and then themselves. We hear about abductions and murders, school and workplace shootings, divorce, child sexual abuse and strong media support for gay marriage. Society seems to be corrupting at its very core.

Is it just possible that this uptick in violence and immoral behavior is due to what people are watching and listening to? The entertainment industry denies that there is any relationship, claiming that there are no serious statistical studies to indicate that there is a link. However, since the Sandy Hook massacre, several of the major news media outlets have suggested that we need to take another look.

THE MIND & BEHAVIOR

I do believe that one major reason for what is happening has to do with what people are watching and listening to. Violent video games, immoral movies, lewd television programs and vile music, are all creating a wicked and perverse generation similar to the pre-flood race. Inspiration records the sad story of that society: "Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent

of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." GENESIS 6:5

Did you notice that the wickedness of man had its origin in the 'intent of the thoughts of his heart'? The word 'intent' is the Hebrew *yetser* which means 'inclination, tendency or purpose'. That is to say, a tendency toward wickedness was in the minds and hearts of men before it was manifested in the conduct. The wise man certainly had it right when he once wrote: As a man 'thinks in his heart, so is he.' (Proverbs 23:7)

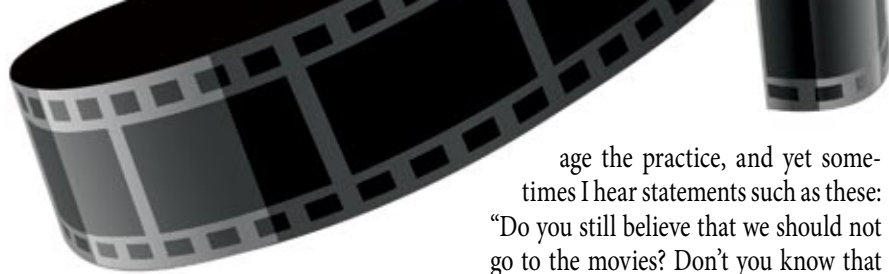
But cherishing evil thoughts seldom stays in the mind. The wickedness of the heart and mind of the antediluvians was soon translated into action. We are told in Genesis 6:11-12 that all flesh had corrupted 'their way' on the earth. The word 'way' in Scripture refers to the conduct or the actions:

"The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth."

So bad did society become in just 1,400 years after creation that we are told by inspiration that "the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart." GENESIS 6:6

Imagine! Things were so bad that even God was sorry that He had created man! Ellen White, in her classic book, *The Great Controversy*, explains how





what we put into our minds impacts our behavior: *“It is a law both of the intellectual and the spiritual nature, that by **beholding**, we become **changed**. The mind **gradually adapts itself** to the subjects upon which it is allowed **to dwell**. It becomes **assimilated** to that which it is accustomed to love and reverence.”* THE GREAT CONTROVERSY, p. 555

Referring specifically to the antediluvians Ellen White wrote: *“By **beholding evil**, men became **changed into its image**, until God could bear with their wickedness no longer, and they were swept away by the flood.”* FUNDAMENTALS OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION, p. 422

In this article I am going to address a topic that has become a lightning rod in some circles of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Actually, it should not be so controversial because it is clearly addressed in principle in the Bible and in detail in the Spirit of Prophecy and the Church Manual. I am referring to theater attendance.

THE CHURCH'S STAND ON THEATER ATTENDANCE

Traditionally, the Seventh-day Adventist church has taken a firm stand against theater attendance. As stated before, the Bible, the Spirit of Prophecy and the Church Manual clearly discour-

age the practice, and yet sometimes I hear statements such as these: “Do you still believe that we should not go to the movies? Don't you know that we are living in the second decade of the 21st century? Are you unaware that everyone goes to the movies these days?” And then I am firmly rebuked with words such as: “Come on, don't be so legalistic, catch up with the times and quit living in the Stone Age.”

I occasionally hear some young people and young adults affirm: “Well, I don't see anything wrong with it” to which I generally retort: “Well, do you see anything **right** with it?” Or I might say: “If you don't **see** anything wrong with it, maybe I need to pray that the Lord will **fix your eyesight**.”

Sadly, even some youth leaders and pastors not only condone the practice, but actually attend the theater with their young people. Yet I ask: With the passing of time, what has really changed? Have the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy **standards** changed? Have the **movies** changed or is it **us** who have changed?

EXCUSES, EXCUSES

I have heard a number of excuses that people use to justify theater attendance. One of them is: What's the difference between watching the movies at home and watching them at the movie theater? My answer is, **not much!** But the key question is this: Is it acceptable in the sight of God to justify one evil by appealing to another? Is this the excuse

that we are going to give Jesus when we stand before His judgment seat?

Another common excuse is this: There is violence, lying, immoral sexual behavior, and spiritualism in the Bible stories so what's the difference between reading it in the Bible and watching it on the big screen?

Still another excuse is that what we watch in the movies gives us a glimpse of the real world that we must live in every day and not the overprotected world that Adventists live in.

Finally, some say: “My pastor says that everyone is doing it and that there is nothing wrong with it. Furthermore he has told me that Ellen White's counsels on the matter were simply time conditioned and are a reflection of the puritanical culture of her day and therefore no longer apply today.”

TRADITIONAL ARGUMENTS AGAINST ATTENDING THE THEATER

There are certain arguments that have traditionally been used against theater attendance. Some of these are:

- The **place** is not conducive to spiritual growth
- It is a waste of **time**
- It is an improper expenditure of **money**
- It is **habit forming**—it gets you hooked
- The **content** is not conducive to **Christian growth**. By the way, have

you seen any “G” **rated** movies in the theater lately?

I grant that some of these arguments appear stronger than others, nevertheless we shall see that all of them have some validity to a greater or lesser degree.

THE ENVIRONMENT


When it comes to the place, those who favor theater attendance argue something like this: “At theaters today people are no longer allowed to smoke, drink, use foul language or make out. Theaters have a very nice, comfortable and tran-



What's the difference between watching the movies at home and watching them at the movie theater?

NOT MUCH!





quil environment.”

To this argument I would respond that the place, per se, is not the problem. The crucial thing to take into account is what goes on at the place. Is it right to go to a place where the jewel of the mind is exposed on the screen to spiritualistic sentiments, illicit sex, violence, lying, cheating, worldliness, materialism, foul language, drinking and luxury? If your answer is no, then going to the place is become a moral issue. If you say that it is not wrong, then I will pray for you!!

A series of questions might help us focus on the issues involved: Do we enjoy coming to the place called church as much or more than we enjoy going to the movies or watching TV? Do we delight as much or more in going to the place where God’s people worship Him as we do in going to the place where our mind is exposed to evil? Do we enjoy coming to the place where the Sabbath School lesson is being reviewed and to the place where the sermon is being preached as much as we enjoy going to the place where movies are being shown? Could we conscientiously invite Jesus to go to the theater with us to watch what is presented in that place?

Ellen White has clearly and unambiguously stated: “*The true Christian will not desire to enter any place of*

amusement or engage in any diversion upon which he cannot ask the blessing of God.” THE ADVENTIST HOME, P. 515

“Those who, knowing their danger, will yet venture into places of worldly, demoralizing amusement, or who will poison the mind with the literary productions of the skeptic, or the sensualist, are guilty of presumption. God does not give his angels charge to keep those who choose to walk in forbidden paths.” SIGNS OF THE TIMES, MAY 18, 1882

THE COST

Those who attend the theater often argue that the cost is minimal. This well might be true but there is more involved than just the minimal cost.

We should ask ourselves: Do we have money to spend at the theater (albeit a minimal amount) but not enough to be faithful in our **tithes and offerings**? Are we willing to spend our money on entertainment choices that defile the mind and the conduct, and yet are not willing to contribute one penny to the church budget or to evangelism?

Are we willing to spend our money (even if it is a small amount) to build up the kingdom of Hollywood rather than the kingdom of God? I find it ironic that some members will say: “I won’t give my tithes and offerings to the church because I don’t trust the way that it is used,” but they will turn right around and give their money to the entertainment industry and not think twice

about how it is used. The entertainment kingdom will soon come crashing down along with everything that we have invested in it. Are we laying up treasures in heaven where they will be secure forever, or are we investing God’s money in an industry that is built on sand?

When we spend money to attend the theater, we are depriving Christ’s church of money which could be used to save souls and build up Christ’s eternal kingdom. Satan wants to keep our money in his bank. No matter how small the amount (and a lot of small amounts make a big amount), when we leave our money at the theater box office we are contributing the money that God has given us to help build up the entertainment industry so that it can **further erode** Biblical values. The power of Hollywood is found at the **box office**. If Hollywood had no money, they would have **no power**. God will hold us **accountable** for our stewardship. Jesus said to the unfaithful steward: “Render an account of your stewardship.”

TIME

Let’s ask ourselves and be honest: How much time do we spend reading God’s word, praying, coming to prayer meeting and witnessing as compared to television and the theater? Do we enjoy spending time praying, studying the Word and telling others about Jesus as much or more than the time that we spend at the movies to entertain ourselves? Do we always make it to the theater on time or tune in to our favorite

television program on time but are always late to church?

The key question is this: If we are children of Jesus, will we not wish to spend our time as He did? Is going to the movies a waste of time? Yes it is! Do we delight more in a two hour movie than a one hour sermon? Would we sit on the edge of our seats when a basketball game goes into overtime and yet complain when the worship service goes a few minutes beyond twelve?

CONTENT

The most important downside of theater attendance has to do with the content. In 1 John 2:6 we find the basic principle that should guide us as we decide whether theater attendance is acceptable for the Christian: “*Whoever claims to live in Him must walk as Jesus did.*” In Scripture ‘walking’ is a metaphor for behavior or conduct. Our standard in deciding how we should live is WWJD, ‘What Would Jesus Do?’

So let’s ask some serious questions about Jesus: Can you imagine Jesus buying a ticket to go to the Roman Amphitheater or the Coliseum? Can you imagine him spending hours listening to the profanity, watching the lust for blood and the nudity? The only difference between then and now would be that we watch it on the tube or on the big screen while in Rome they watched it live. But the defiling influence to the mind and





the behavior would be the same.

Well, someone might say, the Bible has illicit sex (David's adultery and murder), violence (Cain killing Abel), lying (Abraham), deception and cheating (Laban), and spiritualism (the witch of Endor). True enough. But we must take two things into account when we compare the Bible record with what we watch on television or the big screen.

First, the Bible never glorifies these things—it always casts them in a **negative light** as something that should be shunned.

Secondly, the Bible always provides us with **a standard** by which to evaluate all that we see and hear, and that standard is Jesus and the Ten Commandments. In other words, Jesus and the Ten Commandments is the measuring stick that we must use to make correct ethical decisions in our life.

It must be underlined that the Bible speaks to us in **principles**. We will never find in the Bible a text which says: "Thou shalt not watch television or go to the movies." Some would use the lack of an explicit text as an excuse to go to the theater. But if going to the movies violates any of the Ten Commandments or is contrary to what Jesus would do then it is wrong.

Whatever we watch or listen to must

be screened by the **Jesus** standard and the **Ten Commandments** standard. Actually, when we look at it more carefully, the Jesus standard and the Ten Commandments standard are the same thing. You see, the Ten Commandments are really a reflection or written description of who Jesus is, they tell us what **the character of Jesus is like**. We are told concerning Jesus: "*He was the embodiment of the law of God, which is the transcript of His character.*" MANUSCRIPT 77, 1899

Hollywood and the television industry claim that they are merely reflecting the values of society, that they are merely providing what society wants. In other words the producers say: "We merely **reflect** the values of society, we do not change or transform them." But this is a lie. What the entertainment industry has done is infect society with *its* values and then has claimed that it is merely reflecting those values. It is similar to what Lucifer did in heaven. He infected the heavenly beings with *his* values, and after the heavenly beings had embraced those values he claimed that they were not merely his but their's as well.

Why don't Hollywood and the television industry confront culture and transform it for the good? The simple reason is bucks, big bucks. People will generally not watch movies which major in the finer values of life. Things like marriage loyalty, sexual purity, protection of life and respect for God are unattractive. The carnal nature of fallen

man craves the sins of the flesh and Hollywood knows it and feeds it.

REASONS NOT TO GO

What reasons, then, do we have for shunning theater attendance?



The vast majority of movies reverse what is really important in life. They focus our mind on the **here and now**, that is to say, they shift our world view from **heaven to earth**. They make us think that earthly things are all important. The external, artificial and temporal are made primary while there is no mention of the Bible, prayer, church, heaven or truth. The movies and television shows are not only questionable because of what they say, but also for what they left unsaid.



Hollywood tends to create superficial thinkers and intellectually lazy persons. Often the church is blamed for the exit of our youth. But should not the entertainment industry bear a good share of the blame? Why is church boring to many of our young people? Is it perhaps because of the way in which the mind has been educated?

In the movies, scenes change every split second, and there is suspense and excitement that keeps people on the edge of their seats. How can the church compete with something such as this? The answer is that it can't and it shouldn't.

The church should not try to compete with the entertainment industry but rather offer something better, something more elevated. And what is that 'something better' that can truly stimulate the intellect and expand our mental capacity? Try the Bible! We are told: "*As an educating power, the Bible is **without a rival**. Nothing will so impart vigor to all the faculties as requiring students to grasp the stupendous truths of revelation. The mind gradually adapts itself to the subjects upon which it is allowed to dwell. If occupied with commonplace matters only, to the exclusion of grand and lofty themes, it will become **dwarfed and enfeebled**. If never required to grapple with difficult problems, or put to the stretch to comprehend important truths, it will, after a time, almost lose the power of growth. ... In the reverent contemplation of the truths presented in his word, the mind of the student is brought into communion with the infinite mind. Such a study will not only refine and ennoble the character, but it cannot fail to **expand and invigorate** the mental powers.*" COUNSELS ON EDUCATION, p. 37

"A failure to study God's Word is the great cause of **mental weakness and inefficiency**. In turning from this Word to feed on the writings of uninspired men, the mind becomes **dwarfed and cheapened**. It is not brought in contact with deep, broad principles of eternal





truth. *The understanding adapts itself to the comprehension of the things with which it is familiar, and in this devotion to finite things it is weakened, its power is contracted, and after a time it becomes **unable to expand**.*"
LIFT HIM UP, P. 119

Sometimes I hear the youth say: "Church is boring." The simple fact is that the church cannot compete with the world of entertainment when it comes to excitement and fun, and therefore the church should offer what the world does not—spiritual values such as prayer, Bible study and sharing opportunities. We must come to terms with the fact that the major problem is with our own minds and not with the church program. After all, people who are trained to eat sweets all the time do not enjoy tofu. Yet tofu is much better for your health than sugar!!

Bible study is boring not primarily because the Bible is boring or the instructor is boring but because our minds have been trained to love the sensational and the exciting. The problem is not with the Bible or with the church but rather with our minds. We need a renewing of our minds, a change in our spiritual appetites: "*And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed **by the renewing of your mind**, that you may prove what is that good and accept-*

able and perfect will of God."

ROMANS 12:1

It goes without saying that it will take time and prayer to retrain the mind if we are hooked to the superficial and artificial excitement. After all, it is not always easy to switch from junk food to good wholesome food.



The entertainment industry feeds our **carnal** (the word means 'fleshly') **nature**, and we are told that those who are in the flesh cannot please God. The Apostle Paul wrote about the dangers of having a carnal or fleshly mind: "*For those who live according to the flesh set their **minds** on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit for to be carnally **minded** is death but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the **carnal mind** is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.*"
ROMANS 8:5-8

But what does it mean to have a carnal mind and how is the carnal mind strengthened? What is the end result of filling the mind with sinful thoughts? The apostle Paul answers that sinful thoughts bear fruit in sinful acts:

"Now the **works of the flesh** are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions,

heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God."
GALATIANS 5:19-21

Does this list sound like much of what is watched in the movies and on television today? Most, if not all, of the movies that are produced today feed the carnal nature. For example, the frequent exposure of our minds to explicit sexual material oftentimes destroys our personal lives, our marriages and our families. Who can doubt that much of the sexual depravity and violence in society today are due to certain kinds of video games, television programs, movies and music?

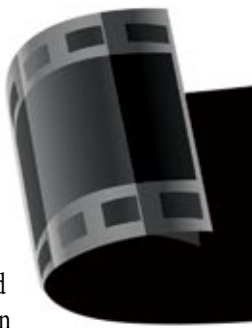
The principle is simple: If we feed our carnal nature, our carnal nature will get strong. If we feed our spiritual nature, our spiritual nature will be strong. We must starve the flesh and feed our spiritual nature with good spiritual food.


When I attended Wisconsin Academy (it's scary to think about how long ago that was!), Tarzan novels were in vogue. I developed quite an appetite for them. Reading the Bible became boring. After all, how can the Bible compete with the ape man swinging through the trees in the jungles of Africa fighting the natives and befriending the animal kingdom? Honestly, I got addicted to this type of material. Finally one day, the Spirit spoke to my heart and said to me: "This is not the way that you were brought up by your parents, your life is

going in the wrong direction. There must be a change."

Change did not come easy at first because I had a perverted appetite. I had to apply myself to open my Bible and study it. I had to pray to the Lord that He would strengthen my will and give me an appetite for good spiritual food! In the course of time, my mind was **re-trained** and I developed **new habit patterns, new tastes**. My appetite radically changed and now I cannot understand how anyone can prefer spiritual junk food to the nutritious food provided by God's holy Word.

Ellen White has provided wise counsel about the addicting and detrimental nature of theater attendance. Granted that the theater in her day was a live performance, but the principle is the same: "*Among the most dangerous resorts for pleasure is **the theater**. Instead of being a school for morality and virtue, as is so **often claimed**, it is the very hotbed of immorality. Vicious habits and sinful propensities are strengthened and confirmed by these entertainments. Low songs, lewd gestures, expressions, and attitudes deprave the imagination and debase the morals. Every youth who habitually attends such exhibitions **will be corrupted in principle**. There is no influence in our land more powerful to **poison the imagination**, to **destroy religious impressions**, and to **blunt the***





*relish for the tranquil pleasures and sober realities of life than **theatrical amusements**. The love for these scenes increases with every indulgence as the desire for intoxicating drink strengthens with its use. The only safe course is to shun the theater, the circus, and every other questionable place of amusement.”* THE ADVENTIST HOME, P. 516

4 The entertainment industry does not prepare us to enjoy the simple and holy pleasures of **heavenly society**. What will **heaven be like**? Will there be adulterous relationships, violence, dishonesty, foul language, irreverence and an emphasis on the need to be rich and famous? No. All will be pure, holy and righteous there, and we must prepare *here* to live *there*. The Bible constantly affirms that the life must be cleansed here in order to prepare to live there:

*“Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which **no one will see the Lord**”* HEBREWS 12:14.

*“Blessed are the **pure in heart** for they shall **see God**”* MATTHEW 5:8.

*“And everyone who has this hope in Him **purifies himself**, just as He is pure”* I JOHN 3:3.

If we find spiritual things boring here, what makes us think that they will

be interesting there? God is not going to change our tastes on the way to heaven. Overcoming these things must take place on earth before probation closes. Revelation 22:11 informs us that character will be forever fixed before Jesus comes. When probation closes, the awesome declaration will be made from the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary: *“He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still.”*

Sometimes I hear youth and young adults say that we must learn to live in the real world, obviously referring to the world of the here and now. But this world is not the real world. The apostle Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 4:17, 18: *“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are **seen** are **temporary**, but the things which are **not seen** are **eternal**.”*


The apostle John assures us under inspiration that the world is passing away, disappearing and vanishing away (I John 2:15-17). Why would we want to invest our time, money, strength and talents in a system that is illusory and soon to be dissolved?

Hollywood and the television industry promote the artificial and the temporal—the here and now aspects of

life—glitz, glamour, extravagant homes, sex, the lifestyle of the rich and famous. But Jesus said, *“What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his soul?”* In heaven there will be no lying, cheating, adultery, violence, foul language, stealing, etc. We should be training our mind for heavenly society on this earth.

The prophet Isaiah explained who will be able to live in the presence of a God whose holiness is as a consuming fire: *“Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?”* He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly, he who despises the gain of oppressions, who gestures with his hands, refusing bribes, who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed, and **shuts his eyes from seeing evil**: He will dwell on high; his place of defense will be the fortress of rocks; bread will be given him, his water will be sure” ISAIAH 33:14-16.

5 The Hollywood culture transforms us into the **image of Satan** rather than into the **image of Jesus**. As stated before, our mind is molded by what we allow to enter it, and the condition of our mind is what determines our actions or behavior. The apostle Paul expressed the principle: *“But we all, with unveiled face, **beholding** as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, **are being transformed** into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord”* 2 CORINTHIANS 3:18.



*“Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—**meditate on these things**.”* PHILIPPIANS 4:8.

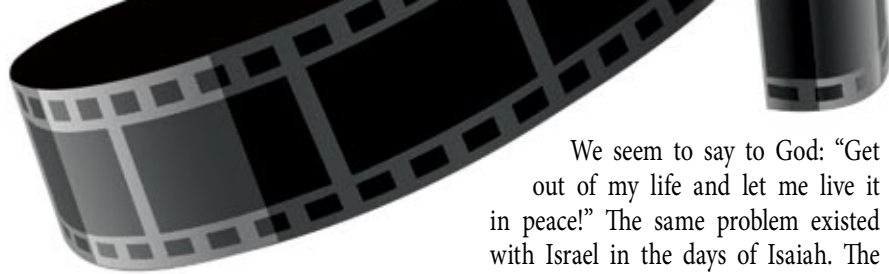
Ellen White explains: *“By **beholding** Christ, by talking of Him, by **beholding** the loveliness of His character **we become changed**. Changed from glory to glory. And what is glory? Character, — and he becomes **changed** from character to character. Thus we see that there is a **work of purification** that goes on by **beholding** Jesus.”*

But the opposite side of the coin is also true. If we behold that which exalts the kingdom of Satan, the result is a work of defilement where we come to reflect his character.

6 The Bible makes it abundantly clear that God will hold us **accountable for our stewardship**. That is, He will hold us accountable for the way in which we use time, talents, strength, influence and financial resources.

Says the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 4:2, *“Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.”*

The prophet Isaiah quoted God ask-



ing a very important question of Israel, “Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance” ISAIAH 55:2.

God has given us a mind to develop, resources to invest in the cause, time to dedicate to prayer, to Bible study and to witnessing and talents to develop for His glory. If we do not wisely use these, we will certainly be declared wicked and evil servants.



Movies and television viewing are more often than not addicting or **habit forming**. Ellen White even says that exposing the mind to these things becomes like intoxicating liquor: “The love for these scenes increases with every indulgence as the desire for intoxicating drink strengthens with its use. The only safe course is to shun the theater, the circus, and every other questionable place of amusement.” ADVENTIST HOME, P. 516

IDON'T CARE

One of the greatest tragedies in the church today, is not that people don't know the difference between right and wrong but that they don't really care.

We seem to say to God: “Get out of my life and let me live it in peace!” The same problem existed with Israel in the days of Isaiah. The people were tired of being rebuked by the prophets for their behavior: “Now go, write it before them on a tablet, and note it on a scroll, that it may be for time to come, forever and ever: That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children who will not hear the law of the LORD; who say to the seers, “Do not see,” and to the prophets, “Do not prophesy to us right things; speak to us smooth things, prophesy deceits. Get out of the way, turn aside from the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us.” (Isaiah 30:8-11)

IS IT LEGALISM?

Some claim that this is all legalism. They say that preaching standards of behavior in things such as diet, dress and entertainment choices is judgmental and legalistic. They say that we are saved by grace through faith and that our conduct has nothing to do with our salvation. It is true that our works cannot save us, but it is also true that we cannot be saved without true repentance which leads us to hate sin and love righteousness. Notice the following two statements: “While we are to be in harmony with God's law, we are not saved by the works of the law, yet we cannot be saved without obedience.” FAITH AND WORKS, PP. 95-96

“Repentance includes sorrow for sin,

and a turning away from it. We shall not renounce sin until we see its sinfulness; until we turn away from it in heart, there will be no real change in the life. Repentance is the only process by which infinite purity reflects the image of Christ in His redeemed subjects.” SIGNS OF THE TIMES, JUNE 28, 1905

Ellen White has stated that those who are truly converted will manifest a change in their lives: “There is no evidence of genuine repentance unless it works reformation.” THE GREAT CONTROVERSY, P. 462

Think about it: Jesus died because of those very sinful things that we watch on television and at the theater — things like lust, covetousness, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, irreverence, greed, taking the name of the Lord in vain and cheating and lying. If grace had to die because of these things, why would we still want to delight in watching them? Paul was absolutely clear: “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?” ROMANS 6:1, 2

Grace does not give us a carte blanche to continue in sin: “What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!” ROMANS 6:15 After the apostle Paul lists a catalog of sins, he assures us that those who practice these types of things will not enter the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:10). Do we actually think that we will be able to say to Jesus, “Well, Lord, I did not actually practice these things

I only watched and listened to them”? Jesus underlined that a thought can be sinful even before it produces a sinful act. Thus whoever looks upon a woman to covet her as already committed adultery with her in his heart (Matthew 5:27, 28).

Jesus went to the cross for those things that people are watching on the screen. Would **Jesus** enjoy going to watch things that glorify sin? Would He who said ‘thou shalt not commit adultery’ enjoy seeing a man in bed with another man's wife? Would Jesus who came not to destroy men's lives but to save them enjoy going to a place where His beloved creatures are being blown away right and left, albeit in make believe fashion? Would Jesus, who is the Truth, relish going to a place where lying is commonplace? Would Jesus enjoy sitting through a movie riddled with spiritualistic sentiments? Would Jesus, who had no guile in His mouth, sit and relish the crude language and lewd gestures that are used by the actors? Is any answer really needed to these questions?

LOVE, ONLY LOVE

I have heard some say that love should be the standard of our ethical decisions and not rules and regulations. I could not agree more as long as we properly define what love is. Love is not some sentimental feeling but rather a divine principle that puts God first, our fellow





and stronger.

human beings second, and puts ourselves last. Is there really a dichotomy between love and law? Love is a willing obedience of the heart to God's holy Law. Notice the balance that was provided by Jesus, John, and Paul:

*"If you **love Me, keep My commandments**"* JOHN 14:15.

*"For **this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments**. And His commandments are not burdensome"* 1 JOHN 5:3.

*"Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore **love is the fulfillment of the law**"* ROMANS 13:10.

The questions that beg to be asked are these: Is our respect for marital love enhanced when we observe a person going to bed with someone else's wife? Does love for our neighbor increase as we see people being blown away right and left on the screen? Is our love for God enhanced when we consistently hear God's name taken in vain? What ever reduces our love and concern for our fellow human beings is sin because the law commands us to love our neighbor as ourselves.

THE END OF THE MATTER: PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

Pray for will power: If your will is weak, pray that the Lord will strengthen it and then by exercise it will become stronger

PLACE:

Come to church on a regular basis for the worship service, prayer meeting and the youth meeting.

TIME:

Use your time to read the Bible, good books and to pray and witness.

COST:

Invest your money in God's cause so as to lay up treasures in heaven.

CONTENT:

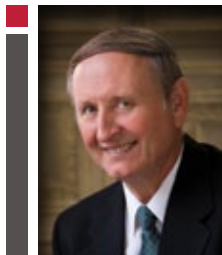
Be a critical viewer. Put before your eyes only that which will feed your spiritual nature.

HABIT:

Develop habits that will increase your desire for spiritual things. Place only holy things before your eyes and the more you do, the more you will enjoy them.

WWJD:

Before you watch or listen to anything, ask yourself: **"Would Jesus watch or listen to this? Could I invite Him to listen and watch it with me?"**



PASTOR STEPHEN BOHR



We are in Phase 3 stage of our Building Fund:

Phase 3 is the final stage and it will consist of purchasing all the state of the art equipment, lighting and HD cameras for the studio. The sooner we can purchase this equipment the less it will cost. We're anticipating this cost to be in the neighborhood of \$250,000.

As of May 7, 2013 we have received \$27,539.49 in designated donations towards Phase 3 of our building fund. We still need **\$222,460.51** to complete our final building phase. With your help and by God's grace, we will reach our final goal. All overflow will go towards evangelism.

GOAL
\$250,000

PASTORAL DEPARTMENT

Need someone to pray with you? After much research, do you still have a specific Biblical passage you are struggling with? Contact our pastoral team to help!

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(PACIFIC TIME)

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10:00am - 12:30pm

TUESDAY
1:00pm - 5:00pm

THURSDAY
8:30am - 11:00am
&
1:00pm - 5:00pm

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Allen Goede from Jeanne Bigsby
Arnie Sparks from Ruth Sparks

An Epidemic of **EPIC** Proportion

YOUNG & GODLY

by Pastor Justin Torossian

While looking through his grandpa's clothes dresser for a pair of socks that might fit him, a young boy uncovers something that will forever be burned in his memory. A 12-year-old boy searches the internet for a school project. He clicks on the link to a fuzzy, unlabeled video, clueless

marriage.

Pornography.

As you read these words, pornography is at an all-time high. More than any time in history, obscene and explicit materials are having a global effect, with each day worse than the one before. Videos, magazines, the printed page and websites are multiplying like the flies of Egypt, leaving millions of people shackled in the chains of addiction. Do you think the three scenarios above are unrealistic? Think again. The average age for a child's first exposure to pornography is 11.¹ With its sheer volume and with access being easier than ever, running into moral filth on the internet seems to be no longer a question of *if* but *when*.

Purity Under **ATTACK**

Sex is a gift from God. Yes, you read that right. A gift to be saved until the special time of marriage, physical intimacy is meant to help unite husband and wife in an emotional bond that is stronger than any other human relationship. When a loving husband and wife have Christ in the center of their hearts and home, that home is a little picture of heaven on earth. Their relationship is a reflection of the triune God. Considering this, it should be no wonder to us why the devil is assaulting the home.

Ever since his fall from heaven, Satan has bitterly hated and opposed everything that reminds him of the God that he once served and the home he has forever lost. Therefore—because a Christ-centered home can be “a little heaven on earth,”²

and because a happy and healthy union between a husband and wife reflects God and His character³—a united, Christ-centered home is the object of Satan's greatest hatred. Remember, sex and physical intimacy play an important role in unity within marriage. This is why we see the devil attacking through things like pornography. Rather than the accurate, Biblical picture of physical intimacy being a beautiful gift from God, pornography distorts peoples' view of sex by abusing that gift and making it degrading, dirty, and shameful. This direct attack from the enemy is wreaking havoc on the world on two different levels.

A Two-Fold Strategy

First, for those caught in its trap, pornography directly affects marriage, and therefore society. Jesus said in the sermon on the mount, “...*whosoever looks on a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart.*”⁴ By way of impure movies, TV shows, the internet, and countless other avenues, husbands and wives are allowing themselves to be captivated by lust and are mentally cheating on their spouses! This form of adultery—often fueled by pornography—eats away at the heart of marriages. It inevitably leads to a disconnectedness in the home and family, often ending in divorce. In fact, according to the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, 56% of divorce cases involve one party having “an obsessive interest in pornographic websites.”⁵ Thus, by attacking marriages and splitting millions of homes, the devil is corrupting entire societies, which are based upon the strength of families.

The second way that pornography is tearing the world apart is by its affects on a person's mind and body. What many of us don't often stop to think about is this: whatever affects our mind also affects

our body. The reverse is also true: if anything affects our bodies, it also affects our minds. Pornography wages war on both mind and body. Here's one example. A study in 2007 revealed that the cases of individuals who had severe sexual addictions were very similar as those who had cocaine or methamphetamine addictions in this way—the frontal lobe of the brain (responsible for judgement, decision-making, and spirituality) actually shrunk!⁶ While we would expect brain damage from external drugs, rarely do we realize what an impact the human brain can have on itself! So pornography and other sexual addictions actually cause a re-wiring of the brain's circuits, harming the brain. The *good news* is that our brain is what scientists call neuro-plastic. That means that it can be remolded and reshaped. In other words, if you're struggling with sexual addictions (or any other brain-damaging addiction), know that there is hope for you!

Maybe you're thinking, “Well if my brain is ‘neuro plastic’ and has the ability to heal and be reshaped, I'll just wait until later to stop looking at pornography and fully surrender to Jesus.” Friend, who is to say that later you will be able to? With each sin that a person commits, the Holy Spirit's voice grows softer, and the desire in our hearts to stop sinning grows weaker. If

Some **STARTLING** Statistics

- 28,258 Internet users are viewing pornography every second.¹³
- 12% of the 43 billion websites in existence are pornographic.¹⁴
- The global pornography industry makes \$97 billion each year.
- That's more than our country's NFL, NBA, MLB, and NHL sports leagues combined!¹⁵
- 93% of boys and 62% of girls have seen online pornography before age 18.¹⁶
- In public universities, 67% of the guys and 49% of the girls believe that pornography is acceptable.¹⁷

as to how the next 90 seconds will change his life. A bright, young fifth-grader with a love for books pulls one off the shelf in the “Novels” section of the library, flipping it open. Her pulse quickens, and her eyes seem glued to the page as the book in her hands describes things reserved for



These will not save you...but they will give God a fighting chance to save you!

PREPARING FOR BATTLE

- Memorize God's Promises (Ps. 119:11)
- Limit your internet use, especially at night (Prov. 4:23)
- Determine to say no to temptation (Dan. 1:8)
- Learn Scripture Songs (Matt. 26:30)

WHEN TEMPTED

- Pray out loud (Ps. 55:16)
- SING! (2 Chron. 20:22)
- Leave the place of temptation (Gen. 29:12)
- Recite Scripture out loud! (Matt. 4:4)

you're held tight in the tentacles of sexual addiction, determine to break free **today!** Like Job, determine to make a covenant with your eyes not to look upon someone of the opposite sex lustfully (Job 31:1). But at the same time, know that real victory goes far beyond just not taking a look.

STOPPING the Plague

If you grew up surrounded by the beautiful outdoors like I did, then you probably know what it means to weed a garden... by experience! Anyone who has ever pulled weeds knows, you can get a garden looking pretty clean and weed-free in no time by just mowing them down. But what do you have in two weeks? A garden plagued with weeds again.

Sexual addiction is the same way. You may stop looking at pornography... stop reading dirty books, or being physical with your girlfriend or boyfriend. But if your change starts and ends there, you've

only mown down the weeds. The problem is not external, but internal. Sexual addictions are the **fruit**, but for permanent change, those weeds must be torn out by the **roots!** And that is something that only the Heavenly Gardener can do—Jesus Christ.⁷ As we see that our habit of sin is what crucified the Savior, we cry out along with David who prayed after his great sin, “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me!”⁸

Remember, God is the one who *created* your brain. He knows how to empty it of impurity and strengthen it as you fill it with His holy word. “And **be not conformed** to this world: but **be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind**, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”⁹ As you hide God's word in your heart, He will rework the circuitry of your mind, transforming you to reflect the character of Jesus to those around. “*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.*” And if you are *in Christ*, that includes you!

A Cry for **HELP**

Once as I was traveling to hold a short series of meetings, a college student told me of something he had just experienced. One night he had a dream, and didn't think much of it. But before long, the dream was taking place every night. Soon it was a few times each night. Only a couple of seconds long, the “dream” began running through his head even as he was wide awake in class! In the dream, a friend of his was alone in a room, crying hysterically. The lights were off, but somehow he could see him clearly. He looked up at him and said, “Dave,¹⁰ help me! I need your help! *Help me!*”

Realizing that God was trying to get his attention, Dave decided to speak with this friend from his dream. He told me, “One night I took him aside and said,

‘Hey bro, we need to talk.’ After explaining my dream to him, he started to tear up. He explained how he had been heavily addicted to pornography for a long time and every time he tried to quit, he would fail. Then he said, ‘I have been begging God to send me help! And I believe you're the answer to my prayer.’ ”

Friend, you may not be having a recurring dream. But know that *there are* those around you who are fighting the same foe, and praying the same prayer as that young man. Whether someone has come to you seeking help in this area or not, God wants to use you as an answer to their prayers. He may open up the door for them to open up to you, but that may not happen. Either way, determine to pray for those who are struggling with sexual addictions. Praying is not the *least* you can do, it is the *most* you can do! This is because “*prayer moves the arm of Omnipotence,*”¹¹ and enables God to work wonders on their behalf!

Perhaps as you read this, you find yourself in this young man's shoes. You're addicted to pornography, and you've been crying out to God for deliverance. Seek help! Go to your pastor, or someone else in your church who you trust. Speak to one of your teachers or friends who really cares and can hold you accountable.

Much of sin's power is in its secrecy. Most often, once the silence is broken, the chains of addiction begin to break as well. Know that there is hope for you, and **real victory** in Jesus! He longs more than anything for you to be free and happy, walk-

ing with Him. Let Him hold on to your hand, and He promises that he will keep you from falling.

*“Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever.” Amen.*¹²

RESOURCES

gycweb.org/resources

Valuable audio presentations for guys & girls. (Search for presentations by Alan and Nicole Parker, as well as Phil Mills.)

beggarsdaughter.com

For girls struggling with any sexual addiction.

cybersentinel.com

Software that helps protect your family.

covenanteyes.com

A website with valuable articles and accountability software.

enough.org

The national leader in educating & equipping parents and churches.

fightthenewdrug.org

This website explains what happens in the brain of someone viewing pornography from a scientific viewpoint.

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4. Matthew 5:28
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9. Romans 12:2
10. Name has been changed.

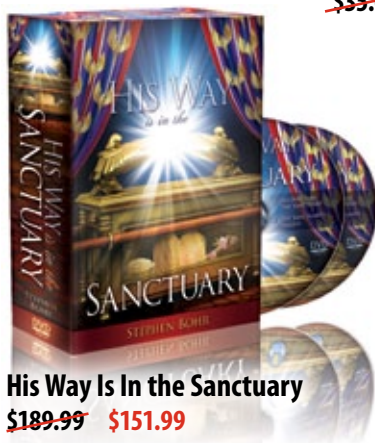
11. Ellen White, Christ's Object Lessons, (p. 172)
12. Jude 24, 25
13. <http://edition.cnn.com/2007/US/04/04/porn.addiction/>
14. Catharine Smith, “Seven Ways Tech is Changing Sex,” Huffington Post. June 10, 2010.
15. Internet Pornography and Loneliness: An Association? Vincent Cyrus Yoder, Thomas B. Virden III, and Kiran Amin. Sexual Addiction & Compulsivity, Volume 12.1, 2005.
16. Chiara Sabina, Janis Wolak, David Finkelhor, “The Nature and Dynamics of Internet Pornography Exposure for Youth,” CyberPsychology & Behavior. December 2008, 11(6): 691-693.
17. “Generation XXX.” Journal of Adolescent Research January 2008 vol. 23 no. 1 6-30



Pastor Bohr's Five Book Special

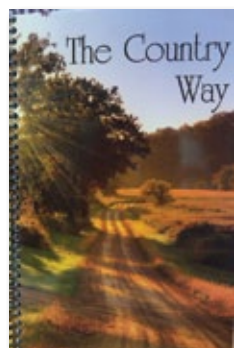
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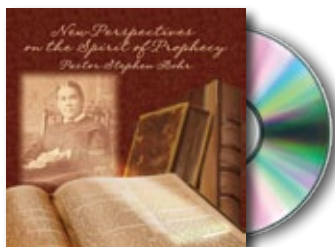
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Stephen Bohr.

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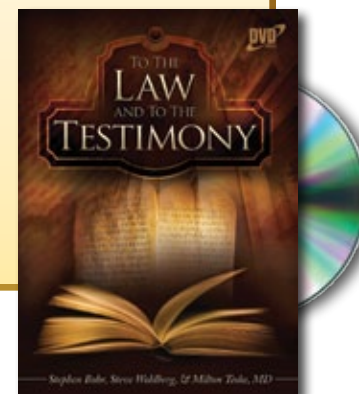
Stephen Bohr, Steve Wohlberg, & Milton Teske, MD. In this series, Pastor Bohr deals with hot issues in Adventism including the pantheistic crisis in the early 20th century, the holy esh fanaticism, the role of the Spirit of Prophecy in the remnant church, and more. Steve Wohlberg presents a fascinating series on the righteousness by faith message from 1888. Dr. Teske speaks about our character, conscience, and choices, explaining about the huge potential for change that exists within the mind. *Individual 'speaker only' sets are available.*

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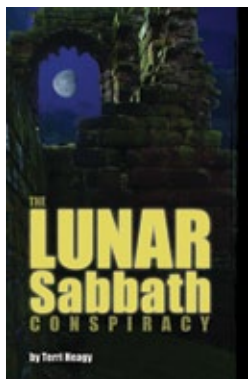
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ANNOUNCEMENT:

Weekly online streaming has resumed.

Be sure to watch every Sabbath morning from 11:00am to 12:45pm Pacific time, or log on to our website at your convenience and tune in.



The Lunar Sabbath Conspiracy

Terri Heagy. Have the Jews, Seventh-day Adventists, and other Saturday Sabbath-keepers been fooled into regarding an evil, pagan day instead of the true Sabbath for the past 2,000 years? Did God's original Sabbath really coordinate with the moon instead of being on a continuous weekly cycle? The belief that the Lunar Sabbath was God's original creation is circling the globe, taking in many unsuspecting people. Exploring the past, God's Word, and the Spirit of Prophecy, this book shares a wealth of interesting information to help answer these questions. (153 pages)

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Scattered within the book *The Great Controversy* Ellen White makes reference to many people, places and events that have taken place throughout history. Now you can use your smart phone to scan the history as you read through this book! (394 pages)

BKIGC \$9.99

Reflections on Women's Ordination

Stephen Bohr. A movement has been steadily, but stealthily, building over the past several years and is now dangerously close to reaching groundswell proportions in the North American Division and beyond. This movement would accomplish the objective of ordaining women as full-fledged ministers of the Gospel. Make the right decision at this momentous time in our church's history. May the Holy Spirit be your unfailing Guide and Counselor.

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Country Living CHANGES the BRAIN

BY MILTON TESKE, MD

While passing through an airport recently, I picked up a copy of Scientific American Mind at a newsstand for some extra reading on a long flight across country. So while other passengers were occupied watching the inflight movie, I had my sound-canceling headphones plugged into my iPod as I read through a number of fascinating articles on various aspects of neuroscience. But one article particularly caught my attention — it described the evidence showing that city living can harm our brains.

It has long been known that among those who live in large cities there is more depression, more anxiety disorders, more schizophrenia and more violence. There is something in the physical and social environment of a large metropolis that has a powerful negative effect upon the brain. This fact of life has been verified by a number of different epidemiological investigations that have looked

at the incidence of various psychiatric disorders and after statistically adjusting for different variables, it is clear that children who grow up in cities are two to three times as likely to develop a serious emotional disorder as those who grow up in a small town or the rural countryside.

the STRUCTURE of the BRAIN ACTUALLY CHANGES

While the above studies were based on individuals with a psychiatric diagnosis, the author of this article along with his associates chose a different approach to investigate the effects of city living on the mind and to actually elucidate what changes actually take place inside the brain while living in a city. So they chose as their subjects healthy normal college students.

They assigned each of them a score

based on where they had lived during their life so far. Three points for every year they lived in a large urban center, two points for every year living in a smaller town and one point for every year they had lived in a rural country setting. Then they placed them in a stressful situation while obtaining a functional magnetic resonance tomography scan (fMRI) of their brains. An fMRI is a scan that can measure very accurately the activity of different parts of the brain by measuring the usage of oxygen in the neurons. The result was a map of the brain showing the activity of all the neurons while the students were involved in a stressful experimental situation.

The results were a startling revelation — there was a direct correlation between the activity of the amygdala and their degree of city living. They had not been expecting such a strong correlation so they repeated the study using a much larger group of subjects and again the same powerful results. They could accurately predict every city dweller by measuring the degree of hyperactivity of the amygdala.

the AMYGDALA: STRESS CENTER of the BRAIN

The amygdala is a structure about the size of an olive located near the center of the brain in the temporal lobe — one on each side of the brain. Here is our **danger sensor**, here is where we feel **fear**. It is also where we experience **anxiety** — this is where we know something is not right about our situation. Here is where

we can trigger our sympathetic nervous response, our “flight or fight” system. It is also at the center of and modulates many of our emotional responses. It is a part of our limbic system, also known as our emotional brain.

So what was discovered was that the amygdalae of those from rural villages were almost immune to stress while those from the smaller towns had only a moderately activated response. But, for those from the urban centers, well, their amygdalae really kicked into overdrive.

the PACC CONTROLS the AMYGDALA

There was another spot in the brains of city dwellers that became hyperactive under stress — the perigenual anterior cingulate cortex (PACC) located in the front of the brain. Like the amygdala, the degree of hyperactivity of this region could accurately identify where a person had lived. The PACC is closely connected to the amygdala and its job is to inhibit the activity of the amygdala — sort of a control center to run the amygdala. The investigators in this study suggest that: “If the PACC is damaged through chronic stimulation during a city upbringing, it might then fail to quell an overactive amygdala in an urban adult.” Interestingly, other researchers have found that people with schizophrenia have structural alterations in the PACC, and in those with a genetic risk for schizophrenia they have found dysfunctional feedback between the PACC and the amygdala even though they did not yet have schizophrenia. And now we see that city

living is pushing the brain down this same dysfunctional road to an unbalanced mind.

Where you live, especially during childhood and youth, makes powerful structural and functional changes in the brain that will influence your emotional tone and your cognitive balance throughout your life.

GOD'S CHOICE *for you* YOUR HOME

God placed our first parents in the Garden of Eden as a precedent for all future parents. And throughout history, many of the greatest spiritual heroes have come from country homes.

In God's providence, Moses spent 40 years in the desert mountains caring for flocks of sheep as a preparation for one of the greatest works ever given to men. David developed a heart after God's own heart as he grew up as a shepherd living with and caring for his sheep in some of the wilderness regions of his home country. Elijah came from a home in the mountain country, and Elisha grew up on a farm. John the Baptist lived in the wilderness. Abraham was called to move to the country, and Isaac, Jacob and Joseph grew up in country settings. God led the children of Israel through the wilderness for 40 years before establishing them in a country setting. There is something about country living that can assist in developing a sound mind that God can use in His service.

"Jesus came to this earth to accomplish the greatest work ever accomplished among men. He came as God's ambassador, to show us how to live so as to secure life's best results. What were the conditions chosen by the infinite Father for His Son? A secluded home in the Galilean hills; a household sustained by honest, self-respecting labor; a life of simplicity; daily conflict with difficulty and hardship; self-sacrifice, economy, and patient, gladsome service; the hour of study at His mother's side, with the open scroll of Scripture; the quiet of dawn or twilight in the green valley; the holy ministries of nature; the study of creation and providence; and the soul's communion with God,—these were the conditions and opportunities of the early life of Jesus."
MINISTRY OF HEALING, P. 265

GOD'S COUNSEL *to the* FINAL GENERATION

Over a century ago God gave much advice to His people preparing to live through the last days of earth's history about the importance of country living. Read in the book *Ministry of Healing* the following chapters: "With Nature and With God," "In Contact With Nature," and "Choice and Preparation of the Home." Also the little booklet *Country Living* is full of powerful and insightful wisdom sent to us directly from God.

"I could not sleep past two o'clock this morning. During the night season I was in council. I was pleading with some families to avail themselves of God's appointed means, and get away from the cities to save their children. Some were loitering, making no determined efforts." COUNTRY LIVING, P. 6

"It was not God's purpose that people should be crowded into cities, huddled together in terraces and tenements. In the beginning He placed our first parents amidst the beautiful sights and sounds He desires us to rejoice in today. The more nearly we come into harmony with God's original plan, the more favorable will be our position to secure health of body, and mind, and soul." COUNTRY LIVING, P. 6

*"Who will be warned? We say again, **Out of the cities.** Do not consider it a great deprivation, that you must go into the hills and mountains, but seek for that retirement where you can be alone with God, to learn His will and way. I urge our people to make it their lifework to seek for spirituality. Christ is at the door. This is why I say to our people, Do not consider it a privation when you are called to leave the cities and move out into the country places. Here there await rich blessings for those who will grasp them. By beholding the scenes of nature, the works of the Creator, by studying God's handiwork, imperceptibly you will be changed into the same image."* COUNTRY LIVING, P. 14

"He wants us to live where we can have elbow room. His people are not to crowd into the cities. He wants them to

*take their families out of the cities, that they may better prepare for eternal life. In a little while they will have to leave the cities... **If we place ourselves under objectionable influences, can we expect God to work a miracle to undo the results of our wrong course?** —No, indeed. Get out of the cities as soon as possible, and purchase a little piece of land, where you can have a garden, where your children can watch the flowers growing, and learn from them lessons of simplicity and purity."* COUNTRY LIVING, P. 17

It is not just a matter of fleeing from the impending destruction that is soon to come upon the cities — but city living profoundly affects the actual structure of your brain in a very measurable way. We need the peace and serenity that God would like to give us through His appointed means of living among the green hills and the trees and flowers, the fresh air and sunlight. Watching the light of dawn spread across the quiet dew covered meadow as it lights the treetops and mountain peaks as you commune with God will create new neural patterns in your brain in a way that nothing else can do.

Jesus loved to be alone with God in nature, and at the very end of time He invites us to meet Him there — it is His chosen location to prepare us for what is coming upon the world.



MILTON TESKE, MD



Lesson 13

(Christ's Object Lessons, p. 185-192; Luke 15:1-7; John 10:1-18, 25-29; Psalms 23; Ezekiel 34; 1 Peter 5:1-8)

The Lost Sheep Is FOUND

Introduction

Luke 15 contains a triplet of parables which we will call "God's Lost and Found." These parables have three things in common: 1) Something was lost; 2) What was lost was found; 3) There was rapturous joy when it was found.

Even though the parables are similar, they are also different. They illustrate three types of lost people. The **sheep** represents people who are aware that they are lost, want to return to the fold but do not know how. The **coin** represents people who must be sought because they are lost but do not know it. The lost **son** represents people who have gone astray and must be drawn back to the household by the love of God.

The Setting and Purpose of These Parables

1. Why did Jesus tell these particular parables and to whom? "Then drew _____ unto him all the publicans and sinners for to _____ him. And the Pharisees and scribes _____,

saying, this man receiveth sinners, and _____ with them." (Luke 15:1, 2)

2. What perplexed the Pharisees and scribes about Jesus? "The scribes and Pharisees felt only _____ in that pure presence [of Jesus]; how was it, then, that publicans and sinners were _____ to Jesus?" (Christ's Object Lessons, p. 186)

3. Why were the publicans and sinners attracted to Jesus? "The Pharisees had only _____ and condemnation for them; but Christ greeted them as _____ of God, estranged indeed from the Father's _____, but not forgotten by the Father's _____." (Christ's Object Lessons, p. 186)

4. Did Jesus take his audience and the geographical setting into account when he told the parable of the Lost Sheep? "He appealed to the witness of their own _____. ... In the company about Jesus there were _____, and also men who had _____ invested in flocks and herds, and all could appreciate His illustration." (Christ's Object Lessons, p. 186-87)

The Old Testament Background

1. Who was perceived as the model shepherd in the Old Testament? _____ (1 Samuel 16:11-13; 17:34-37) When David was anointed king, he became the shepherd of _____.

2. In Ezekiel 34 we find a description of the unfaithful shepherds of Israel after the death of David. Who spoke to these apostate shepherds? "And the word of the _____ [YWHH] came unto me saying: 'Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel.'" (Ezekiel 34:1)

3. What were these shepherds doing to the sheep? "Ye eat the _____, and ye clothe you with the _____, ye _____ them that are fed: but ye _____ not the flock." (Ezekiel 34:3)

4. What else were the shepherds failing to do? "The _____ have ye not strengthened, neither have ye _____ that which was sick, neither have ye _____ up that which was broken,

neither have ye brought _____ that which was driven away, neither have ye _____ that which was _____; but with force and with cruelty ye have _____ over them.” (Ezekiel 34:5)

5. In what condition were the sheep as a result of the unfaithfulness of the shepherds? “My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, my flock was _____.” (Ezekiel 34:5)

6. To whom did these sheep really belong? “As I live, saith the Lord God, surely because _____ flock became a prey, and _____ flock became meat to every beast of the field, because there was _____ shepherd, neither did _____ shepherds search for _____ flock, but the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not _____ flock.” (Ezekiel 34:8)

7. What did the LORD promise to do for His scattered sheep? “I, even I, will both _____ my sheep, and _____ them out.” (Ezekiel 34:11)

8. What else did the LORD promise to do for His sheep? “I will _____ my flock, and I will cause them to _____ down, saith the Lord God.” (Ezekiel 34:15)

9. What task did the LORD promise to perform with His sheep? “I will _____ between cattle and cattle, between _____ and the he _____.” (Ezekiel 34:17)

NOTE: Please notice that there were not only **false shepherds** in Israel, but there were also **false sheep**. This is why the LORD needed to separate the sheep from the goats. (See Matthew 25:31)

10. Whom did the LORD promise to send to shepherd Israel? “And I will set up _____ shepherd over them, and he shall _____ them, even my servant _____, he shall feed them and he shall be their _____. And I the LORD will be their God, and my servant _____ a prince among them; I the LORD have spoken it.” (Ezekiel 34:23-24)

NOTE: This cannot be speaking about literal David because he had been dead for over 300 years. The New Testament identifies Christ as the fulfiller of this prophecy.

11. Who is the flock over which David was to rule? “Thus shall they know that I the LORD their God am with them, and that they, even the house of _____, are my _____, saith the Lord God. And _____ my flock, the flock of my pasture, are _____, and I am your God, saith the Lord God.” (Ezekiel 34:30-31)

Jesus, the Good Shepherd

1. What evidence do we have that David knew that he was not the real shepherd? “The _____ [YHWH] is my shepherd; I shall not _____.” (Psalms 23:1)

2. What condition was the flock of Israel in when Jesus came? “But when he saw the _____, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were _____ abroad, as _____ having no _____.” (Matthew 9:36; see also Mark 6:34)

NOTE: Obviously, the leaders of Israel had become the false shepherds of Ezekiel 34. This necessitated the coming of Jesus to gather Israel, lead them and feed them.

3. Who is the good shepherd who was promised in Ezekiel 34? Jesus said: “_____ am the Good Shepherd.” (John 10:11; Hebrews 13:20; 1 Peter 2:25)

4. What are some of the characteristics of Jesus, the Good Shepherd?

- ✓ The sheep recognize his _____ and _____ him. (John 10:3-4)
- ✓ He _____ His sheep and they follow Him because they know his _____. (John 10:4)
- ✓ He owns the sheep and defends them from the jaws of the _____. (John 10:12)
- ✓ He lays down his _____ for his sheep. (John 10:11, 15)
- ✓ He is the _____ that leads to green _____. (John 10:9)

- ✓ He knows his sheep individually by _____. (John 10:3, 14)
- ✓ No one is able to _____ them out His hand. (John 10:28)

5. In John 10 Jesus was speaking to literal Jews. What did Jesus say to them? “But ye _____ not, because ye are _____ of my sheep, as I said unto you.” (John 10:26)

NOTE: It is remarkable that Jesus should tell the Jews that they were not his sheep. What He is saying is revolutionary. He is stating that the leaders of Israel were not His shepherds and that the people of Israel were not His sheep. It becomes clear that true Israel is defined by its relationship to Christ and not by its ethnicity!!

6. What does it mean to be one of Jesus’ sheep? “My sheep _____ my voice, and I know them, and they _____ me.” (Jn. 10:27)
To be true Israel means to obey Jesus!!

7. Who gave Jesus charge over the sheep? “My _____, which gave them to me, is greater than all; and no man is able to _____ them out of my _____ hand.” (John 10:28) Both David and Jesus cared for their fathers’ sheep.

8. THOUGHT QUESTION: Who are “the other sheep” that Jesus referred to in John 10:16? _____

9. THOUGHT QUESTION: Who do you think Jesus was referring to when he spoke about the strangers, the thieves, the robbers and the hireling shepherds? (John 10:4, 8, 10, 12-13; the clue is in verse 6) _____

Application 1: Christ’s Love for the Individual Sinner

1. According to Isaiah 53:6, by what act would the Messiah save His straying sheep? “All we like _____ have gone _____; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on _____ the iniquity of _____ all.”

2. How does the prophecy of Zechariah 13:7 express the same idea? “Awake, o sword, against my _____, and against the man that is my _____, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the _____, and the sheep shall be _____.”

3. How and when was this prophecy of Zechariah 13:7 fulfilled? (Study Mark 14:27) _____

4. Who is represented by the lost sheep? David said: “_____ have gone astray like a _____ sheep; _____ thy servant.” (Psalms 119:176)

5. For how many would Christ have given His life? “So if there had been but _____ lost soul, Christ would have _____ for that one.” (Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 187)

6. When Adam and Eve sinned, did they seek God or did God seek them? (Genesis 3:8-9) _____
Regarding this, Ellen White states: “God has made the _____ advance.” (Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 189)

7. In what sense is the sinner’s sense of orientation similar to that of a lost sheep? “The sheep that has strayed from the fold is the most _____ of all creatures. It must be _____ for by the shepherd, for it cannot find its way back. So with the _____ that has _____ away from God; he is as helpless as the lost sheep, and unless divine _____ had come to his rescue he could never find his way back to _____.” (Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 187)

8. How does Ellen White describe the shepherd’s search expedition? “With what relief he hears in the distance its first faint _____. Following the sound, he climbs the steepest _____, he goes to the very edge of the _____, at the risk of his own _____.”



Thus he searches, while the cry, growing fainter, tells him that his sheep is ready to _____.” (Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 188)

9. How does the shepherd treat the sheep once he has rescued it? “Then he does not _____ it because it caused him so much _____. He does not drive it with a _____. He does not even try to _____ it home. In his joy he takes the _____ creature upon his _____, if it is bruised and wounded, he gathers it in his arms, pressing it close to his _____, that the warmth of his own heart may give it life.” (Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 188)

10. What erroneous view did the Jews of Christ’s day entertain? “In _____ their view, repentance is a _____ by which men _____ the favor of heaven.” (Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 189)

11. How does the parable of the lost sheep correct this erroneous concept? “But in the parable of the lost sheep, Christ teaches that salvation does not come through our _____ after God but through _____ seeking after us. ... We do not repent in order that God may _____ us, but He reveals to us His love in _____ that we may repent.” (Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 189)

12. What other false view did the rabbis hold? “The rabbis had a saying _____ that there was rejoicing in heaven when one who has _____ against God is _____.” (Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 190)

13. How do many today share the same spirit as the rabbis? “When _____ one who has wandered far in sin seeks to _____ to God, he will encounter _____ and distrust. There are those who will doubt whether his repentance is genuine, or will whisper, ‘He has no stability; I do not believe that he will hold out.’ These persons are doing not the work of God but the work of _____, who is the _____ of the brethren.” (Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 190)

Application 2: Christ’s Love for the World

1. In the wider meaning of this parable, what is meant by the lost sheep? “The one _____ that has apostatized and has been _____ by sin.” (Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 190)

2. In the broader meaning, what is represented by the ninety nine sheep who were left safe in the fold? “This little _____ world—the one lost sheep—is more precious in His sight than are the ninety nine that went not _____ from the fold. ... For this [lost world] He left the _____ worlds on high, the ninety nine that loved Him, and came to this earth.” (Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 190-191)

3. In the cosmic setting of the parable, what is meant by the shepherd leaving the fold? “Christ, the loved Commander in the heavenly courts, _____ from His high estate, laid aside the _____ that He had with the Father, in order to save the _____ lost world.” (Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 190-191)

4. Did Jesus risk His own existence to save the one lost world? “He [the Father] permitted Him [Jesus] to meet life’s peril in common with every human _____, to fight the battle as every _____ of humanity must fight it, at the risk of _____ and eternal _____.” (Desire of Ages, p. 49)

5. When the lost sheep was brought to the fold there was an explosion of joy in the household. When will this be fulfilled with God’s people? “I beheld, and, lo, a great _____, which no man could _____, of all nations, and kindreds, and people and tongues, stood before the throne. ... And cried with a loud voice, saying, ‘Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the lamb.’” (Revelation 7:9-10)

6. How do we know that this will be the final fulfillment of the parable of the lost sheep? “For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall _____ them, and shall _____ them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.” (Revelation 7:17;

see also the explosion of praise in Revelation 19:6-7)

NOTE: The shepherd/sheep terminology is clear in this passage. Jesus will **feed** His sheep and **lead** them to the still waters (Psalm 23:1-2). Paradoxically, Jesus is both the Shepherd and the Sheep in Revelation 7:9-10. The same paradox is seen where Jesus is the Shepherd and the door in John 10.

Application 3: We Should All Rescue Lost Sheep

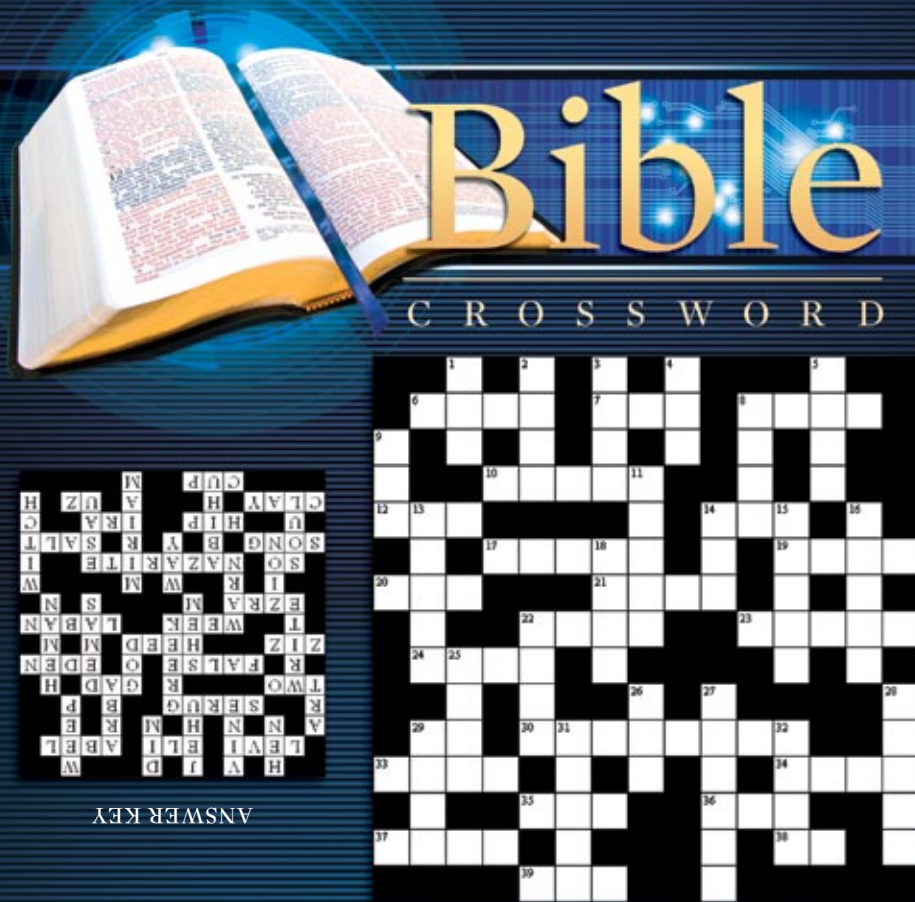
1. According to the apostle Peter we should also be faithful under shepherds in the service of the Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5:4). How should we care for God's flock? "_____ the flock of God which is among you, taking the _____ thereof, not by _____, but willingly; not for filthy _____ but of a ready mind. Neither being _____ over God's heritage, but being _____ to the flock." (1 Peter 5:2-3)

2. What is the role of every member of the church? "Every soul whom Christ has _____ is called to work in His name for the saving of the _____. This work had been neglected in Israel. Is it not neglected today by those who profess to be Christ's followers?" (Christ's Object Lessons, p. 191)

3. Are there lost sheep even within our own congregation? "In _____ assembly for worship, there are souls _____ for rest and peace. They may appear to be living _____ lives, but they are not insensible to the influence of the Holy Spirit. Many among them might be won for Christ." (Christ's Object Lessons, p. 191)

4. How do angels look upon these precious souls? "Angels _____ these wandering ones. Angels _____, while human eyes are _____ and hearts are closed to pity." (Christ's Object Lessons, p. 192)

5. Were the words of Christ in this parable lost upon deaf ears? "The Pharisees understood Christ's parable as a rebuke to _____. ... Now many rejected Christ's reproof; yet to _____ His words brought _____. Upon these, after Christ's ascension to heaven, the Holy Spirit came, and they _____ with His disciples in the very work outlined in the parable of the lost sheep." (Christ's Object Lessons, p. 192)



ACROSS

6. Moses was of this tribe
7. High Priest who had Samuel as a student
8. He offered a more-excellent sacrifice
10. Son of Reu
12. Number of thieves crucified with Christ
14. Jacob's 7th son, born of Zilpah
17. Bad type of prophet
19. First home of Adam & Eve
20. Cliff in 2 Chron. 20:16
21. "Therefore let him who thinks he stands take _____ lest he fall"
22. The creation account took one literal _____
23. Brother of Rebekah, father of Rachel
24. Book before Nehemiah
29. "Thus Noah did, according to all that God commanded him, _____ he did."
30. Samson was one
33. _____ of Moses & the Lamb (Rev. 15)
34. Dead Sea is full of this
35. Part of the body on which Samson smote the Philistines
36. One of David's mighty Men
37. The feet of the statue in King Nebuchadnezzar's dream were partly made of this
38. Job's homeland
39. Jesus took and gave thanks (Matt. 26:27)

DOWN

1. Son of Zephaniah (Zechariah 6:14)
2. Where grapes grow
3. Known for his furious driving
4. Condition of eyes (Lamentations 5:17)
5. Rejoice with those who rejoice, and _____ with those who _____
8. Anak's father
9. Skill or handicraft
11. The language of the New Testament
13. John was told (Revelation 1:11) to "_____ in a book" that which God was going to tell him
14. Creator of all things
15. Forsook Paul, having loved this present world
16. Solomon was wiser than this man who was one of the wisest men
18. Japheth's brother
22. For three years Paul ceased not to "_____ people" Acts 20
25. Another name for Jerusalem
26. Before he was converted, Paul persecuted "the _____"
27. Moses' sister
28. Medium of Endor, also known as a _____
29. Fear not those who kill the body but cannot kill the _____
31. One of two sons of Aaron who died in disobedience to God
32. Joseph's uncle

OCTOBER 10-13, 2013

KNOWLEDGE SHALL BE INCREASED

SPEAKERS

Stephen Bohr
Christian Berdahl
Milton Teske, MD

TOPICS

The controversial issues in the study of prophecy, including the Daily, 1260, 1290, 1335, the year/day principle and the 2520 prophecy. Christian Berdahl will present a series on music and the end time.

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