

MINISTRY UPDATE | FIRST QUARTER 2019

SECRETS UNSEALED

A photograph of Pope Francis in his white papal attire, smiling and waving his right hand. In the background is the large dome and classical architecture of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome.

Reflections on the
PAPAL
ANTICHRIST

PART 1

Dear *friend* of Secrets Unsealed,

I trust that you have been the recipient of God's abundant blessings at the close of 2018, and we wish you a very blessed 2019.

In this issue, you will read the first of a two-part series on the Anti-christ prophecy of 2 Thessalonians 2:1-13. We are living in times where Satan's deceptive power is ever on the increase and multitudes are following cunningly devised fables. I trust that this article will help lift the fog of error from the minds of sincere souls who are searching for truth.

We praise the Lord that we are able to broadcast present truth messages 24/7/365 on our SUMTV channels and that many are taking a stand on the Lord's side.

At the end of January, Pope Francis will be traveling to Panama for the celebration of World Youth Day and some of the members of our staff along with dozens of volunteers will distribute present truth materials to hundreds of thousands that will travel there from every Hispanic country on earth. Please pray for the success of this mission trip and if you are able, please support it financially.

On March 11-16, we will be holding our Anchor School of Theology class. The topic this year is "Revelation's Seven Seals." The 24 hours of instruction will focus on Revelation 4-8. You can find more information on our website.

Finally, we have received many requests asking about David Gates' most recent post on the internet predicting specific timelines for prophetic events. My detailed 51-page response is available on our website, under Resources, Official Statements.

Once again, I wish to thank you for your prayers and financial support of Secrets Unsealed. Our passion and mission is to reach as many as possible with God's precious message for this time. What a wonderful day it will be when the redeemed will stand on the Sea of Glass rendering Him the honor, glory and praise that is His due.

Blessings,



Pastor Stephen P. Bohr
President and Speaker, *Secrets Unsealed*



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TESTIMONY TIME



“Since someone at church told me about your ministry, I’ve been blessed, over and over and over, again by Pastor Bohr’s knowledgeable and Spirit-filled sermons. His teaching has made the Bible “come alive” to me. They bring so many mysteries to a more clear light, and the words are transformed into principles, comprehension of history and visualization of what lies ahead. I praise our heavenly Father and His beloved Son for your ministry.”

SHIRLEY, FLORIDA

“Thank you so much for the inspiring and encouraging messages you send (Give-to-Give program). Chain of Command DVD very much appreciated — so in depth. Thanks again and may His blessings be continually with you.”

BEVERLY, TEXAS

“I am a keen interest of Ps. Stephen Bohr’s lectures...actually I was converted to the Seventh Day Adventist Church by some of his online preaching. Thanks for that. I was a primary school teacher, who turned evangelists by interest in Ps. Stephen Bohr’s preaching.”

DREWLENIKO, VANUATU

“I would like to thank you for the new Remnant Study Bible with the E.G. White comments. This has been a great blessing and was much more than expected. Thank you for all that you do for those of us who are locked up in prison. What you do has indeed been a blessing. I would also like to extend a special thank you to those who donate to the Worthy Viewers Fund, without which we could be lost.”

DAVID, PRISON INMATE, OREGON

“It has been my privilege to share both DVDs and books from Secrets Unsealed for many years—as gifts and ministry aids. Providing materials from Secrets Unsealed has been part of my personal ministry. The materials have never gone where the Holy Spirit has not blessed. You will be interested to know that an SDA pastor in Texas area is currently preparing a Revival series for his church, because after being exposed to Secrets Unsealed through Stephen Bohr’s DVDs that I had sent to his brother who does lay ministry, he has acknowledged that in 40 years of SDA pastoral ministry he has “gotten so much wrong” and he “must prepare the Revival series to correct his errors.” And so, I promptly ordered the collection of 7 books, *Worship at Satan’s Throne*, for him, and he is joyously using them as research. Needless to say, I will also be sending him DVDs to aid in his preparation. So, many thanks, for all that you do. It will not be until the Kingdom that the breadth of your witness will be truly known. May God continue to richly bless you and all of the Secrets Unsealed team.”

LOLETA, WASHINGTON D.C.

“My friend you and the people of Secrets Unsealed have been so good to me. I want to thank you guys for all the study notes and books you have sent me. God bless you all.”

BRYANT, PRISON INMATE, INDIANA

“Pastor Bohr as my wife and I work through your video and audio series it has been very interesting for us to notice how you have grown and are humble enough to admit it.

I would like to give you just one example of what we have noticed; you were quite adamant about the 24 elders being from earth in your 144000 audio series done many years ago, but in a future video series you had dis-



covered and admitted what sister White was trying to convey, that being, the 24 elders are representatives of the unfallen worlds. Believe it or not this simple act of humility has not only helped my wife and I to gain crystal clear understanding of issues we have encountered while pouring over God’s word but we are discovering how to get out of the way of Holy spirit, that is to say we allow Jesus center stage of every study. By following this template and deploying techniques we have learned from your ministry the power of Holy Spirit has enabled us to replace fearful thoughts of these end times with much prayer and study. 2 Timothy 2:15 be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. Though we have a long way to go Holy spirit is slowly creating detectives for Jesus out of us. We just thought you would like to know this. Thank you, Pastor Bohr.”

MITCH & MANDY, INDIANA



“As a Muslim background believer since 2015, this means a lot to me to be able to download all of your study notes. Finally, no matter what, I am in peace, on the right path to the eternal life, best way to understand the Bible and the Love of God our Creator. May the Lord Bless you and your ministry. Thank you very much for everything.”

ARTIN, SWEDEN

“I wanted to write this to express our gratitude. My name is Armando Perez and I’m currently incarcerated at Franklin CI. A number of months ago I requested a copy of your *Cracking the Genesis Code* series by Stephen Bohr. We received them last week and I wanted to send a thank you letter to let you know how much we appreciate it. The DVDs have been added to the chapel library so they will be a blessing not only for us but for any the Lord leads to them in the future as well. I thank you the Lord for generous organizations such as yourselves who are willing to see past the fact that we’ve made mistakes and reach out to help. I know that the Lord will continue to bless you as you answer His call to spread the gospel. Until we meet in those heavenly halls I will continue to pray for you all.”

ARMANDO, PRISON INMATE

“Seven Seals — Pastor Bohr’s work in all areas together with his sermons is simply the quintessential benchmark for us to all aspire to. I have learned an incredible amount. I also appreciate his work because I’m an academic and he really breaks down the nitty gritty going deep into the meaning of the Bible. Simply put; if you miss it, you’ve truly missed out.”

ANDREW



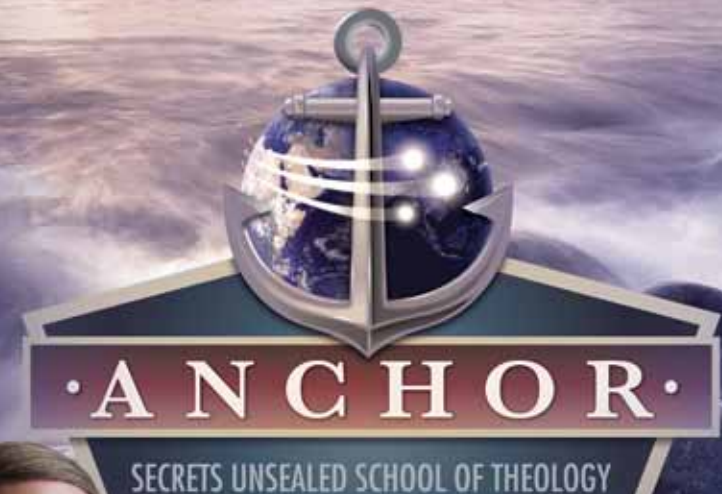
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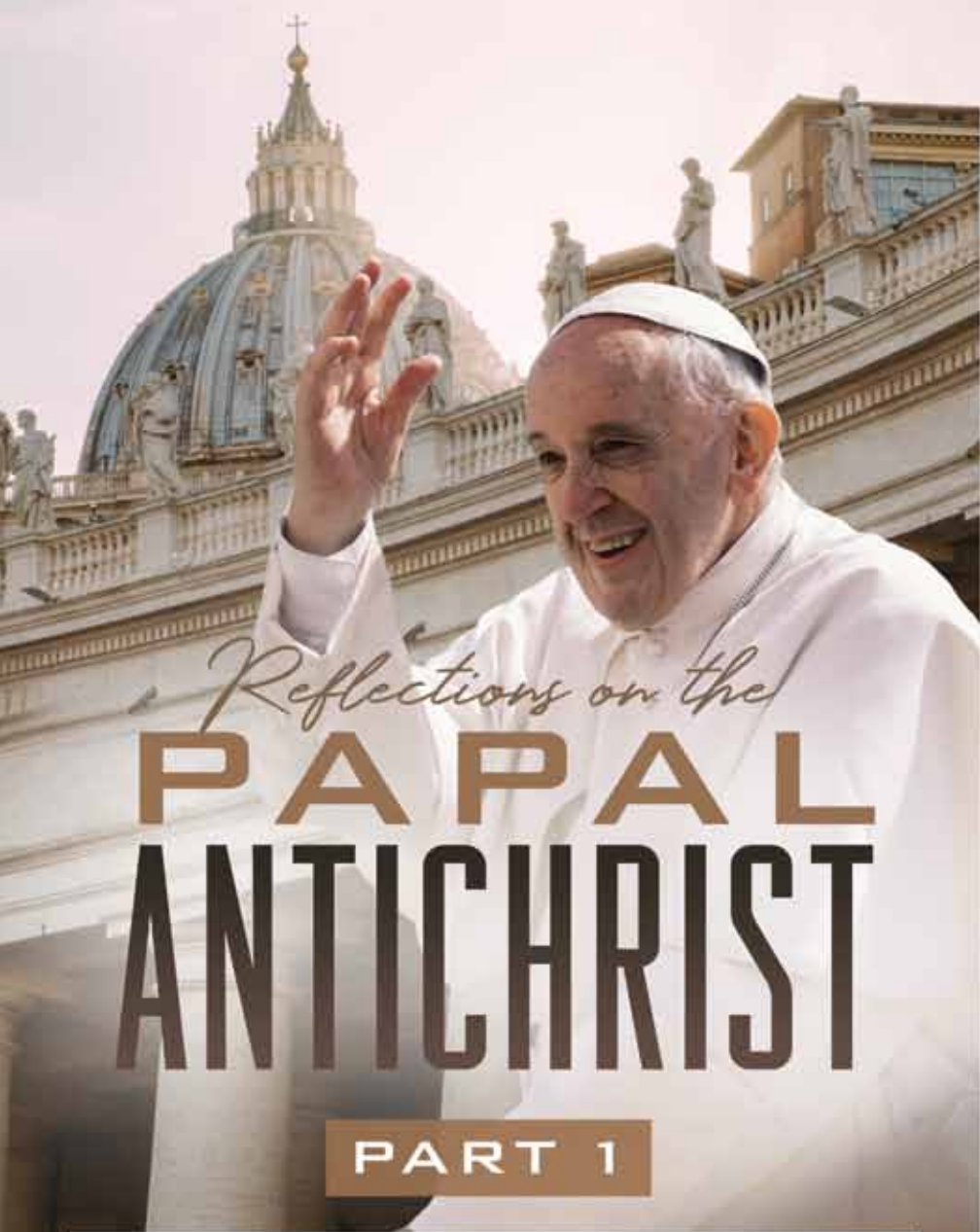
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Reflections on the PAPAL ANTICHRIST

PART 1

BY PASTOR STEPHEN BOHR

A COMFORTING PASSAGE

One of the most encouraging passages for those who grieve over the passing of a loved one is 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17. Rarely have I officiated or attended a funeral service where this passage has not been at the forefront:

“For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep.¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.”

After the apostle wrote these words of comfort to the Thessalonians, they wrongly concluded that some of them would still be alive when Jesus comes. For this reason, the apostle wrote a second letter to clear up their misconceptions. In the second letter, he warned them not to be deceived and assured them that the day of Christ’s coming would not occur until the apostasy took place first.

“Let no one deceive you by any means for that Day [of Christ’s coming] will not come unless the falling away [apostasía] comes first ...” 2 Thessalonians 2:3.

THE APOSTASY

The apostle Paul assured the Thessalonians that the ‘falling away’ would occur before the *Parousía* of Jesus. Classical Greek uses the word ‘falling away’ (*apostasía*) to describe a boat that is not well anchored and therefore is drifting away slowly from port. Obviously, a boat cannot drift away from the port unless

it was there in the first place.

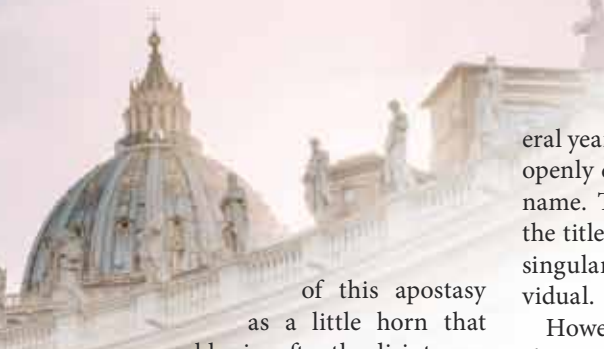
This verse refers to a slow drifting away from the apostolic gospel that in the course of time would mature into a boldfaced revolt against God. It is important to remember that the word *apostasía* has the definite article. This means that the apostle did not merely speak of an apostasy but rather the apostasy—an apostasy that was already predicted in the Old Testament book of Daniel.

THE MAN OF SIN

The apostle Paul explained that the leader in this apostasy would be ‘the man of sin’ (2 Thessalonians 2:3), so we must discover the biblical definition of sin.

The Bible gives a very specific definition: “Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness” 1 John 3:4. Or as the KJV reads, “sin is the transgression of the law.”

Being that the Bible defines sin as ‘the transgression of the law,’ the Antichrist must encourage people in some way to transgress God’s law. Later on in the passage (verse 7) this apostasy is called ‘the mystery of lawlessness’ which further confirms that central to the apostasy is the transgression of God’s law. We find further evidence for this in the prophecy of Daniel 7. Virtually all students of Bible prophecy agree that the ‘man of sin’ and the little horn of Daniel 7 represent the identical apostate power. This is significant because the prophet Daniel referred to the leader



of this apostasy as a little horn that would arise after the disintegration of the Roman Empire and would think that it could change **God's law**: "*He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time*" Daniel 7:25.

THE MAN OF SIN REVEALED

The apostle Paul continued his exposition on the 'man of sin' in verse 3: "*Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed ...*"

The antonym of the word 'revealed' (*apocalypsis*) is '**concealed**.' In the days when Paul wrote, the spirit of the man of sin was already at work but it was working under the radar, concealed. It only awaited the **specific time** when prophecy indicated that it would openly reveal itself. In the days of Paul, the Antichrist was chomping at the bit to manifest himself but he was working undercover.

There is a fundamental misconception in the minds of many concerning the nature of the Antichrist. Many evangelicals believe that the Antichrist will be a wicked atheistic **individual** who will sit in a rebuilt Jewish temple for three and a half lit-

eral years. He will persecute the Jews, openly defy God and blaspheme His name. Their main argument is that the title 'the **man** of sin' (masculine/singular) must refer to a single individual.

However, this portrait of the Antichrist is erroneous for several reasons:

- Practically all conservative Bible scholars agree that **the beast** (Revelation 13:1-10) and the man of sin (2 Thessalonians 2) represent the same Antichrist power. In symbolic prophecy, a beast always represents a kingdom, not an individual person.
- Prophecy informs us that the beast would rule for a period of 42 symbolic months or 1,260 years. It is rather obvious that no individual has lived that long!
- The man of sin was already working underground in the days of the apostle Paul, but something was restraining him from openly revealing himself. According to 2 Thessalonians 2:8, 9, Jesus will destroy the 'man of sin' by the brightness His coming. There is not a person on planet earth who was alive in the days of Paul and will still be alive when Jesus comes.
- The expression 'the man of sin' (masculine/singular) would seem to refer to an individual. However, this is not necessarily so. The masculine singular appears in other contexts for a **succession of persons** and not for lone individuals. For example, in Hebrews 9:7 the expression 'the priest' (masculine/sin-

gular) describes a succession of priests. Likewise, in 1 Samuel 8:11 the expression 'the king' (masculine/singular) is used of a succession of kings. Finally, 2 Timothy 3:17 uses the expression 'the man of God' to describe Christians of all times.

THE NATURE OF ANTICHRIST

Although **Dave Hunt** wrongly believed that the Antichrist would be an individual who would rise to power after the rapture of the church, Hunt captured well the salient features of the Antichrist's character: "*While the Greek prefix 'anti' generally means 'against' or 'opposed to,' it can also mean 'in the place of' or 'a substitute for.'* The Antichrist will embody both meanings. He will **oppose Christ while pretending to be Christ**. Instead of a **frontal assault** against Christianity, the evil one will **pervert the church from within** by posing as its founder. He will cunningly misrepresent Christ while **pretending to be Christ**. And right here is where the plot thickens. If the Antichrist will indeed pretend to be the Christ, then his **followers must be 'Christians!'**" Dave Hunt, *Global Peace*, p. 7-8 [bold emphasis supplied].

The Greek word **antichristós** has the same basic meaning as **Vicarius Christi** in Latin. Most people assume that the word Antichrist means 'one who stands against Christ.' Although it is true that in Greek the preposition *anti* can mean 'against' when it is used with a **verb**, it is equally

The Antichrist is an enemy from within, a traitor, a hypocrite.

true that when the preposition appears as a **prefix to a noun** it can mean 'instead of,' or 'in place of.'


Notice the following examples:

- In classical Greek, the word **anti-basileús** means 'one who occupies the place of the king.'
- In the New Testament, the name **Herod Antipas** means that Herod ruled 'in place of his father' (Revelation 2:13).
- The word **antitype** means 'that which takes the place of the type.'
- Paul described Christ as one who gave His life as a ransom 'in place of (**antilutrón**) all' (1 Timothy 2:6).
- Thus, the word **antichristós** (one who occupies the place of Christ) in Greek and **Vicarius Filii Dei** (one who occupies the place of the Son of God) in Latin bear a synonymous meaning!

Therefore, the Antichrist will **not be** an **atheistic and blasphemous** individual who **openly attacks** Christianity but rather a system that claims to act **in the place of** and **in the name of** Christ. Satan seldom works by openly revealing himself. He most often works covertly by deception, stealth, camouflage, and disguise. The Antichrist is an enemy from within, a traitor, a hypocrite.

THE SON OF PERDITION

The apostle Paul next referred to the Antichrist with the enigmatic name, the 'Son of Perdition': "*Let no one*



deceive you by any means;
for that Day will not come unless
the falling away comes first, and the
man of sin is revealed, the **son of per-**
dicion ..." 2 Thessalonians 2:3.

The specific title 'Son of Perdition' appears only here and in John 17:12. In the Bible, a name is indicative of a **person's character**: "In Biblical thought a name is **not a mere label** of identification; it is an expression of the **essential nature** of its bearer. A man's name **reveals his character**. Adam was able to give names to the beasts and birds (Gen. 2:20) because, as Milton says, he understood their nature." *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, volume 3, pp. 500, 501

In John 17:12 Jesus described Judas Iscariot with the name 'Son of Perdition': "While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except **the son of perdition**, that the Scripture might be fulfilled."

If Judas and the Antichrist bear the same name, they must also be similar in character because the name is an indication of the character of the person who bears it.

The Scriptures teach that the Antichrist would be a political/religious system possessing the identical character qualities as Judas. It would be ambitious, covetous of power and money, and desirous of an earthly

kingdom. While overtly professing loyalty to Christ, the Antichrist would work covertly to betray Him. We shall find in the course of our study that this portrait of the Antichrist fits the Papacy perfectly.

THE CHARACTER OF JUDAS

Being that the papacy reflects the character of Judas, we must examine what Judas was like. The gospels portray him as a shrewd politician and a sharp businessperson, who carried the **moneybag** and **craved the praise** of the world.

Ellen White vividly described this evil character trait: "He had come more into contact with the world than they [the other disciples], he was a man of **good address**, of **discernment** and **executive ability**, and, having a **high estimate of his own qualifications**, he had led the disciples to hold him in the same regard. However, the methods he desired to introduce into Christ's work were based upon **worldly principles** and were controlled by **worldly policy**" *Education*, p. 93.

"But Judas was a **speculator**. He thought that he could manage the **finances of the church**, and by his **sharpness in business** get gain. He was divided in heart. He **loved the praise of the world**. He **refused to give up the world** for Christ. He never committed his eternal interests to Christ. He had a **superficial religion**, and therefore he speculated upon his Master and betrayed Him to the priests, fully persuaded that **Christ would not allow** Himself to be taken. Judas was a **religious fraud**. He held up a high standard for others, but

he himself utterly failed to reach the Bible standard. He did not bring the religion of Christ into his life" *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, pp. 1101, 1102.

Judas longed for Jesus to establish an **earthly kingdom**. Contrary to what many think, he did not deliver Jesus to the religious leaders with the intention of having Him killed. He betrayed Jesus in the hopes that He would deliver Himself, destroy the hated Romans and establish an earthly kingdom where Judas would occupy a prominent place.

When Jesus fed the **five thousand**, Judas was the ringleader who **encouraged the crowd** to take Jesus by force to make Him King. However, Jesus would have **none of it**: "Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him **by force to make Him king**, He departed again to the mountain by Himself **alone**" John 6:15.

Ellen White wrote about this episode: "Judas **was first** to take advantage of the enthusiasm excited by the miracle of the loaves. **It was he** who set on foot the project to take Christ by force and make Him king. **His hopes were high**. His disappointment was bitter" *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 718, 719.


She adds: "Notwithstanding the Savior's own teaching, Judas was **continually advancing** the idea that Christ would reign as **king in Jerusalem**. At the feeding of the five thousand he tried to bring this about ..." *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 718, 719.

When Jesus **washed the feet** of His disciples, Judas was disgusted:

"If Jesus could so humble Himself, he thought, **He could not be Israel's king**. All hope of **worldly honor** in a **temporal kingdom** was destroyed. Judas was satisfied that there was nothing to be gained by following Christ. After seeing Him **degrade Himself**, as he thought, he was confirmed in his purpose to disown Him, and confess himself deceived. He was **possessed by a demon**, and he resolved to complete the work he had agreed to do in betraying his Lord" *The Desire of Ages*, p. 645.

Judas not only coveted political power, he also **coveted money**. When Judas first met Jesus, he offered to become one of His disciples. From the start, Jesus warned him that there would be no financial benefit from following Him: "Then a certain scribe came and said to Him, Teacher, I will follow You, wherever You go. ²⁰ And Jesus said to him, Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the **Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head**" Matthew 8:19-21.

Judas revealed his covetous spirit when Mary anointed Jesus' feet with the expensive perfume in the alabaster jar at Simon the Leper's house. He not only coveted money and was a thief, but in the process, he also feigned a love for the poor: "But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who would betray Him, said, ⁵ Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and **given to the poor?** ⁶ This he said, **not that he cared for the poor**, but because he was **a thief**, and had the **money box**; and he used to take what was put in it" John 12:4-6.



Moreover, who can forget that Judas betrayed Jesus **for money**? “Then **Satan entered Judas**, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among the twelve. ⁴ So he went his way and conferred with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray Him to them. ⁵ And they were glad, and **agreed to give him money**. ⁶ So he promised and sought opportunity to betray Him to them in the absence of the multitude” Luke 22:3-6.

Ellen White described the covetous spirit of Judas: “Judas had naturally a strong **love for money**; but he had not always been corrupt enough to do such a deed as this. He had fostered the evil spirit of **avarice** until it had become the ruling motive of his life. The **love of mammon** overbalanced his love for Christ. Through becoming the slave of one vice he gave himself to Satan, to be driven to any lengths in sin” *The Desire of Ages*, p. 716.

While Judas claimed to represent Christ, he actually was the devil’s representative. After feeding the five thousand, Jesus referred to him as ‘a devil’ and Luke 22:3 tells us that ‘Satan entered Judas’ when he left the Upper Room.

“Jesus answered them, Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is **a devil**? ⁷¹ He spoke of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, for it was he who **would betray Him**, being one of the twelve” John 6:70, 71.

Just as Satan had done in heaven, Judas **feigned support** for Jesus while he was **secretly undermining** Him. When Judas was sitting at the table in the Upper Room, he still had the opportunity to repent. Satan had put the idea of betraying Jesus into his heart, but he had **not yet passed** the point of no return: “And supper being ended, **the devil** having already **put it into the heart** of Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, to betray Him ...” John 13:2.

Yet after the Last Supper, Satan possessed Judas and he became Satan’s vicar: “Now after the piece of bread, **Satan entered him**. Then Jesus said to him, What you do, do quickly” John 13:27.

Ellen White well wrote: “Judas became **a representative** [the word means the same as ‘vicar’] of the enemy of Christ” *The Desire of Ages*, p. 295.

It is noteworthy that during the entire ministry of Jesus, Judas **never openly revealed himself** for what he really was. Like the ‘man of sin’, he did not reveal his true character. He constantly worked at **cross-purposes** with Jesus while **claiming to support Him**. As with the ‘man of sin’, no one was able to discern his stealth opposition to Christ until he went into perdition.

The character of Judas was very similar to that of the Papacy. Judas had the variable appearance of the chameleon, but beneath the attractive veneer he hid the invariable venom of the serpent. He did not openly war against Jesus, but as Ellen White explains it, he manifested a “continu-

ous, secret and subtle antagonism” *Education*, p. 92.

“Judas possessed a **form of godliness**, while his character was **more satanic** than divine. He **professed** to be a disciple of Christ, but in words and in works **denied Him**” *The Sanctified Life*, p. 59.

At the Last Supper Judas sat on **Jesus’ left side** while the beloved disciple John sat on the right. As we can see in the parable of the sheep and the goats (Matthew 25:31-46), the right side is the side of God’s favor while the left is the side of His disfavor: “Judas pressed next to Christ on the **left side**; John was on the right. If there was a **highest place**, Judas was determined to have it, and that place was thought to be **next to Christ**. And Judas was a traitor” *The Desire of Ages*, p. 644.

The word ‘**traitor**’ conjures thoughts of a person who **professes loyalty** to someone and yet works by **subterfuge** to undermine him.

When Jesus affirmed that one of His own disciples would betray Him, Judas hypocritically asked, “**Rabbi, is it I?**” to which Jesus answered, “You have said it” (Matthew 26:25). Remarkably, at this point the rest of the disciples still did not discern the true character of Judas.

So blinded were the other disciples concerning the character of Judas that when Jesus clearly identified him as the traitor, they thought that Jesus was sending him on an errand:

“Jesus answered, **It is he** to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped it. And having dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the

son of Simon. ²⁷ Now after the piece of bread, **Satan entered him**. Then Jesus said to him, **What you do, do quickly**. ²⁸ But no one at the table **knew for what reason** He said this to him. ²⁹ For **some thought**, because Judas had the money box, that Jesus had said to him, Buy those things we need for the feast, or that he should give **something to the poor**” John 13:26-29.

After the Last Supper, Jesus went with His disciples to the Garden of Gethsemane where He agonized in prayer and would drink the cup of His Father’s wrath. While He was there, the temple guard came to arrest Him, and Judas betrayed Him with a kiss!

“And while He was still speaking, behold, a multitude; and he who was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them and drew near to Jesus **to kiss Him**. ⁴⁸ However, Jesus said to him, Judas, are you **betraying** the Son of Man **with a kiss?**” Luke 22:47, 48.

The end of Judas is well known. The Bible tells us that he was sorry that his plan had backfired and he went and hung himself. This is why Jesus referred to him as the Son of Perdition. The word ‘perdition’ means ‘destruction’ or ‘annihilation.’

“Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, **was remorseful** and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, ⁴ saying, I have sinned by betraying innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? You see to it! ⁵ Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and **hanged himself**” Matthew 27:3-5.



Before continuing our study of 2 Thessalonians 2, let us summarize the character qualities of Judas:

- He was a shrewd **politician** and sharp **administrator**
- He coveted **political power** and desired Christ to set up an **earthly kingdom**
- He was **covetous of money** and **earthly display**
- He feigned an interest in helping **the poor**
- He was actually the **vicar** or representative of Satan
- His hypocrisy deceived even those who were members of Christ's **inner circle**
- He betrayed Jesus with **a kiss**
- He opposed Christ insidiously from the inside while he outwardly feigned to love Him

THE PAPAL ANTICHRIST

Francis is the **first Jesuit** to occupy the papal chair in the history of the Roman Catholic Church. He comes across as a **very pious and caring person** manifesting great regard for the poor, the outcasts, the misplaced and the environment. He aspires to establish an earthly kingdom with a theocratic rule.

Reformed scholar John Robins

wrote in 1999: “*What the Roman Catholic Church-State accomplished on a **small scale** during the Middle Ages is what it desires to achieve on a **global scale** in the coming millennium*” John W. Robbins, *Ecclesiastical Megalomania*, p. 187 (1999) [bold emphasis supplied].

Yet it is all a deceptive veneer. Ellen White gave us a portrait of the Jesuit Order: “*When appearing as members of their order, they wore a **garb of sanctity**, visiting **prisons and hospitals**, ministering to the **sick and the poor**, professing to have **renounced the world**, and bearing the sacred name of Jesus, who went about **doing good**. But **under** this blameless **exterior** the most criminal and deadly purposes were **concealed**”* *The Great Controversy*, pp. 234, 235.

The **best description** of the stealth character of the Papacy that I have ever read is in the book *The Great Controversy*: “*It is a part of her [the papacy’s] policy to assume the character which will best accomplish her purpose; but **beneath** the variable **appearance** of the chameleon she **conceals** the invariable **venom** of the serpent*” p. 571.

HIS OPPOSITION TO GOD

Let us continue our study of 2 Thessalonians 2. Verse 4 tells us that the ‘man of sin’ would **oppose God** and exalt himself above Him: “... **who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped** ...”

The papacy would never admit that it stands in opposition to God; it actually claims to defend the cause of

God. However, we must ask the question, what does it mean to ‘oppose God’? Evangelicals and many television evangelists see the Antichrist as a single person who **would openly defy** God, oppose Christianity and persecute Christians. However, the character of Judas clearly shows that the opposition of the Antichrist would **not be overt** but rather **covert**. Judas **professed to love** Jesus and support Him while **stealthily opposing** Him. The enemy was an insider, not an outsider!

Some of the greatest enemies of God in the course of Christian history actually claimed to love Him. Saul of Tarsus claimed to be a defender God’s cause, and yet he was actually betraying it. The system represented by the Son of Perdition claimed to serve the true God but in its torrid history persecuted and killed millions in the name of God. The Roman Catholic Church would never admit that in killing the saints, it was opposing God, but in fact it was.

In His last meeting with the disciples in the Upper Room, Jesus predicted that after His departure many of His followers would be killed **in the name of God**: “*They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he **offers God service***” John 16:2.

When Peter and John healed a paralytic at the entrance of the temple in the name of Jesus, the Jewish leadership was intent on killing them. However at a meeting of the Sanhedrin, the wise scholar Gamaliel warned them that while claiming to serve God, by killing Peter and

John they might actually be opposing Him: “*And now I say to you, keep away from these men and let them alone; for if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing;³⁹ but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it—lest you even be found to **fight against God***” Acts 5:38, 39.

According to the book *Education*, p. 92, Judas manifested a ‘**continuous, secret and subtle** antagonism’ against Christ while claiming to be His disciple. He did not openly oppose Christ but rather opposed Him by stealth. In like manner, the papacy has a spirit similar to Judas and ultimately to Satan. Ellen White explained that Lucifer in heaven worked with ‘**mysterious secrecy**’ and for a time **concealed** ‘**his real purpose under an **appearance** of reverence for God**’ *The Great Controversy*, p. 495.

SITTING ON THE KATHEDRA

Verse 4 continues the description of the Antichrist by telling us that he would sit in the temple of God: “... **who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he **sits** as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.**”

Two questions we must answer are these: What does the word ‘sit’ mean? And is the apostle Paul referring to the literal Jewish temple in Jerusalem?

Matthew 23:2 will help us understand what the word ‘sit’ means. In his woes upon the Scribes and Pharisees, Jesus said that they “**sit in Moses’ seat.**”

The Greek word for ‘sit’ is *kathizo*, and the word for ‘seat’ is *kathedra*.

Moses' *kathedra* was not a literal seat. It was a **symbolic expression** meaning that when the Scribes and Pharisees spoke *ex cathedra*, that is, from the throne, the people were to accept their teachings **as infallible** because they had supposedly received them in an **unbroken line** of oral tradition from the time of Moses.

The Roman Catholic Jerome Bible Commentary explains the meaning of the expression: "The phrase [sit on Moses' Seat] is most probably a **metaphor** for the **authority** of the scribes to teach. In rabbinical tradition, the interpretation of the Law was carried on in a scribal tradition that theoretically went back through an **unbroken chain** of scribes to Moses. This view is, of course, entirely **unhistorical**" The Jerome Bible Commentary, volume 2 (New York: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1968), p. 102 [bold emphasis supplied].

The Roman Catholic Church teaches that when the Pope speaks *Ex Cathedra*, that is, from the throne, his declarations are infallible. Time and space will not allow me to explain the amazing parallel between the Jewish view of tradition and that of Roman Catholicism.



They are virtually identical.

Perhaps one quotation would be in order: "But in order to keep the gospel forever whole and alive within the Church, the apostles **left bishops as their successors; handing over** their own teaching office to them and so the apostolic preaching, which is expressed in a special way in the inspired books, was to be preserved by a **continuous succession** of preachers until the end of time. Therefore, the apostles **handing on** what they themselves had **received**,

warn the faithful to **hold fast** to the **traditions** which they have learned either by **word of mouth** or by **letter** (cf. 2 Th. 2:15), and to fight in defense of the faith **handed on** once and for all (cf. Jude 3). Now what was **handed on** by the apostles includes everything which contributes to the holiness of life and the increase in faith of

the People of God; and so the Church, in her teaching, life, and worship, perpetuates and **hands on** to all generations all that she herself is, all that she believes" Vatican Council II, Dei Verbum.

If you are interested in pursuing this subject in detail, I suggest that you watch my series *The Bible or Tradition* available from Secrets Unsealed.

IN THE TEMPLE OF GOD AS GOD

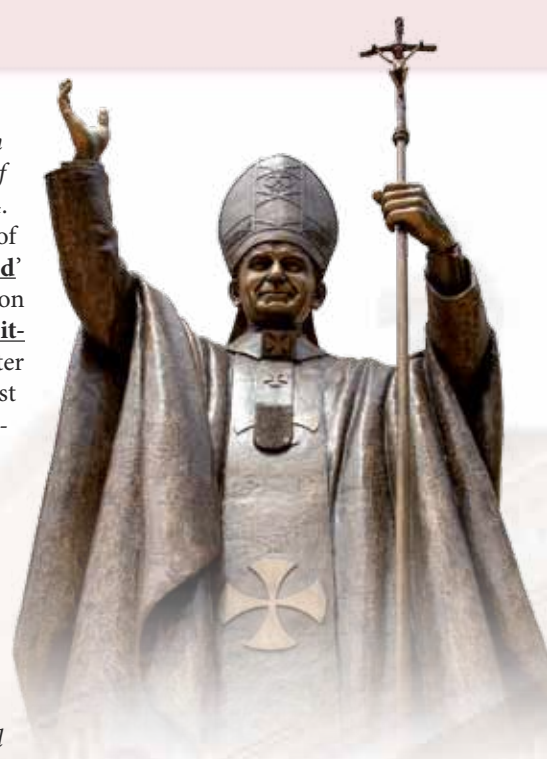
"... who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is

worshiped, so that he sits as God in **the temple of God**, showing himself that he is God" 2 Thessalonians 2:4.

The apostle wrote that the man of sin would sit **'in the temple of God'** claiming to be God. Is the expression 'temple of God' a reference to a **literal rebuilt** Jerusalem temple after the rapture of the church, or must we understand the temple in a spiritual sense?

At the conclusion of the Triumphal Entry, Jesus referred to the literal Jerusalem temple as the 'temple of God' and called it 'My house.' At this point, the Jewish temple was the 'temple of God' and Jesus' house: "Then Jesus went into the **temple of God** and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves.¹³ And He said to them, It is written, **My house** shall be called a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves" Matthew 21:12, 13.

After entering the temple, Jesus had several discussions with the leaders of the various Jewish sects. In these discussions, he told parables about the removal of the kingdom from the literal Jewish nation. The parable of the barren fig tree (Matthew 21:18-22), the parable of the two sons (Matthew 23:28-32), the parable of the wicked vinedressers (Matthew 21:33-46), and the parable of the wedding feast (Matthew 22:1-14) all taught that God was about to take away the kingdom from national Israel and give it spiritual Israel. The teaching of Jesus in the temple



culminated with His woes upon the scribes and the Pharisees (Matthew 23), and when He concluded His speech, He ominously told the Jewish leaders, "See! **Your house** is left to you desolate" Matthew 23:38.

Jesus, the living Shekinah, then left the Jewish temple never more to return and immediately spoke about the destruction of the Jerusalem temple (Matthew 24:1-3). The Jewish temple was no longer the temple of God. Jesus would nevermore refer to it as 'My house.'

The **apostle Paul** used the word 'temple' (*naós*) several times in his writings and without exception applied it spiritually **to the Christian church** and **never to the literal** Jewish temple (1 Corinthians 3:16, 17; 6:19, 20; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 2:21).

The New Testament uses two

Greek words that are translated 'temple.' One is the word hieron and the other is naós. The apostle Paul never used the word naós to refer to the literal Jewish temple. Without exception, he used the word as a reference to the spiritual temple, the Christian church. The book of Acts refers to the literal Jewish 'temple' 25 times and never calls it naós. Furthermore, not even once in any of the epistles do the writers use the word naós to refer to the literal Jewish temple.

In Ephesians 2:19-22 the apostle Paul explained the spiritual nature of the temple: "Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God," ²⁰ *having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, ²¹ in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, ²² in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit."*

In summary, in this passage the apostle Paul clearly explains that the temple is spiritual and refers to the Christian Church:

- The foundations of the temple: Apostles and Prophets
- The Chief Cornerstone: Jesus
- The stones built upon the foundation: Believers

- The Shekinah: The Holy Spirit

Therefore, we must conclude that the 'man of sin' who sits in the temple of God must sit within the Christian Church. There is a clear link between the little horn and the man of sin. The man of sin sits in the church and claims to be God and the little horn speaks blasphemies against God and even claims to have the power to change God's law. Does the papacy claim to occupy God's place on earth? The Bible mentions several titles and functions that belong to the true God alone and the papacy has claimed each one of these titles and functions as her own:

- The representative of Christ on earth is the Holy Spirit (John 14:16). The Papacy claims that Christ's representative is the Pope, thus usurping the positions of Christ and the Holy Spirit.
- Jesus taught that we should call no man on earth our Father (Matthew 23:9). The multitudes call the Pope 'holy father.'
- The Bible teaches that we can only bow in reverence to God (Acts 10:25, 26). The multitudes bow before the Pope and render him homage.
- God alone can forgive sins (Mark 2:7). The Papacy claims to have the power to forgive sins.
- God alone is infallible in his proclamations (James 1:17). The Papacy in 1870 proclaimed the dogma of papal infallibility.
- God alone has the right to set up kings and depose them (Dan-

iel 2:21). The Papacy in its history has claimed the right to set up and remove kings.

- God alone can judge all and can be judged by none (John 5:22, 27). The papacy has stated that the pope can judge all but none can judge the pope.
- God established the seventh day as His memorial of creation (Exodus 20:8-11) but the Papacy teaches that Sunday is the day of worship.

On January 25, 2011, Pope Benedict XVI, at the conclusion of the Week for Christian Unity in the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls, sat on a great white throne and on each side of the throne was a cherub. On April 13, 2013 Pope Francis I sat on the same throne when he officiated Mass for the first time. To those who are acquainted with the Scriptures, this papal symbolism was a blasphemous and boldfaced usurpation of the LORD'S position because the Psalmist tells us that it is God Himself who sits between the cherubim (Psalm 80:1; 99:1; Isaiah 37:16).

PAUL NOT TO BLAME

Paul was not to blame for the misunderstanding of the Thessalonians. He was surprised that they did not remember that he had taught them these things about the coming Antichrist when he was with them:

"Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things?" 2 Thessalonians 2:5

THE RESTRAINER

As we have seen, the spirit of the

'man of sin' was already operational during the lifetime of the apostle Paul but was acting under the radar, just waiting for the opportune time to reveal himself. In this second article, we will notice that in the days of the apostle Paul, something/someone was restraining the 'man of sin' from openly revealing himself until the appointed time had arrived.

In the words of Paul: "*And now you know what [neuter: 'something'] is restraining, that he [the man of sin] may be revealed in his [the man of sin's] own time. ⁷ *For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He [masculine: someone] who now restrains will do so until He [masculine: someone] is taken out of the way"* 2 Thessalonians 2:6, 7.*

Clearly, in the times of the apostle Paul, someone/something was preventing the 'man of sin' from openly rising to power. What was restraining the 'man of sin' in the days of Paul?

The answer is that the Roman Empire and its individual emperors ruled the world from Rome at the time and had in their possession the reins of civil power and the sword. The 'man of sin' could not occupy the throne of civil power until the Roman Empire and its emperors were 'taken out of the way.'

To be continued in Part 2 of this article.



PASTOR STEPHEN BOHR



Breathing & Sleeping

(at the same time)

BY MILTON TESKE, M.D.

Sleep is essential to life — for humans about 8 hours per day (bats sleep over 20 hours per day). Normal central nervous system function requires that the brain shut down all of its usual conscious thoughts and actions so that organizing, sorting, filing and saving of data from the previous day can take place as well as deleting non-essential data. A deep power washing cycle also washes out all the metabolic debris and waste that accumulated during the day. During sleep a special switching station in the thalamus shuts off all sensory input to the brain and motor output can also be shut off (during dream sleep we become completely paralyzed).

Every cell in our entire body must carry on certain basic func-

tions to stay alive and they must do so 24/7, awake or asleep, every day of your life. These metabolic functions require energy (glucose) that is delivered though the blood with every beat of your heart. And to burn this fuel requires oxygen that is also transported in the blood. As the glucose is burned using the oxygen, it produces carbon dioxide, a waste product, that is transported back to the lungs by the blood where it is then exhaled. The heart must continue to beat, and the lungs must continue to breathe — always. Life depends on these two processes never stopping.

And so God built in certain automatic control centers in your brain stem that keep your heart beating and your lungs breathing even when you are sleeping. They have uninter-

rupted access to a network of sensors that monitor heart rate, blood pressure, oxygen levels and carbon dioxide levels so we always maintain the right cardiac output and respiratory rate to supply the needs of every cell.

Whales Don't Dream

During REM sleep we dream and our motor output is paralyzed so that we don't act out our dreams. If a whale started dreaming it would become paralyzed and drown. So whales don't dream. They do not have a REM stage of sleep. Sea lions who spend months at sea do not have REM sleep at sea, but upon returning to land they resume normal REM sleep.

But no creature can go without sleep, and so whales do sleep. They go through all the usual stages of Non-REM sleep like we do every night. But like us, they also must continue breathing while they sleep. Apparently, swimming is just too complex of a process to accomplish that it cannot be done while one is sleeping. You cannot swim and sleep at the same time and neither can a whale. So God designed them to have *unihemispheric* sleep. They sleep with one hemisphere of the brain while they stay awake and swim with the other hemisphere. After a few hours they switch over so the other half can sleep.

Did you know that birds can also have unihemispheric sleep? But for a different reason. They can sleep

with one eye open and half the brain awake and watching for predators while the other half of the brain sleeps, and then later they switch over like the whales do. Have you seen a small flock of birds sleeping together on a wire or twig? The two birds on the two outside ends sleep with the outside eye open watching for danger. During the night, when they switch hemispheres for sleep they

will turn around 180 degrees on the perch so that the open and awake eye is still facing out. While all night the birds that are in between them

will have normal *bihemispheric* sleep like we do with both eyes closed and both sides of the brain sleeping at the same time. The amazing complexities that go into creating a world with so many varied creatures in it.

We Aren't Whales

So we can just go to sleep with normal bihemispheric sleep and breath automatically all night long with no problem, or at least that was the plan in a perfect world. But today, thousands suffer from breathing problems while sleeping — we call it **sleep apnea**. Or more specifically: **Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA)** where the airway becomes obstructed during sleep blocking normal breathing.

There is also something called *central sleep apnea* where instead of an airway obstruction blocking the breathing, the automatic breathing centers in the brain just stop send-



SLEEP APNEA



ing the messages to breathe. An opiate overdose would be an example of this type of apnea. Too much heroin or methadone or oxycodone will put the automatic breathing centers to sleep. They stop sending the message to breathe, and when the breathing stops death will soon follow. So unless someone quickly intervenes and starts breathing for them or gives them an emergency shot of Narcan to reverse the opiate, respiratory arrest will be the cause of death.

Obstructive Sleep Apnea

OSA is more common as we get older and gain more weight, and snoring becomes a problem. Here is what happens: As we fall asleep, all of our muscles relax and the tongue can fall back and the soft palate and uvula sag back into the throat. If we have gained some increased fat in the tissues of our neck and throat then this airway through which we must breathe can partially or completely block.

Snoring is the loud noise created when our breathing tries to force air through this narrowed, blocked space. As it worsens, it can be completely

blocked off preventing air movement. Then the oxygen level starts to drop and the carbon dioxide level rises and the sensors start sending emergency alarm signals to the brain “Wake up! We need oxygen! We need to breathe!” So our brain arouses us from our deepening sleep, we tighten up the airway muscles and gasp some air through this space and then drift back to sleep only repeating this cycle over and over throughout the night. We might not fully wake up and remember these awakenings the next morning, but we never are able to get past the early, shallow phases of sleep down into the really deep sleep we so desperately need because we are constantly being awakened. OSA leaves one in a perpetual state of sleep deprivation.

OSA Symptoms

- Loud snoring, especially snoring that is loud enough to disturb you or others trying to sleep near you.
- OSA snoring is usually loudest when lying on your back and improves when turning on your side.
- Abrupt awakenings accompanied by gasping or choking.
- Intermittent pauses in your breathing while sleeping are often very noticeable to another listening to you sleep.
- Do you have a big neck or are you overweight or obese?
- Excessive daytime sleepiness.
- Drowsiness which may cause you to fall asleep while working, read-

ing, watching TV or even while driving.

- Difficulty concentrating during the day.
- High blood pressure.
- Nighttime sweating.
- Awakening with a dry mouth, sore throat, headache or gasping feeling.

OSA is associated with high blood pressure, heart attacks, heart failure, strokes, diabetes, obesity and high cholesterol — all of the usual metabolic syndrome diseases that are so common here. While the same lifestyle factors that lead to these diseases lead to OSA, it is also true that OSA and its associated ongoing sleep deprivation contribute to and worsen all these other diseases. OSA can be effectively treated, and if you do have it I would highly recommend that you get it treated.

Diagnosis

If you or your spouse think you might have OSA, see your doctor, an ENT specialist, or a sleep specialist. They can order a sleep study to see if you have OSA or not. You will go to a sleep lab at bedtime and they will hook you up to multiple monitoring devices that will measure your brain electrical sleep waves, heart rate, respiratory rate, oxygen level, larynx movement, camera, etc. With all these concurrent measurements, it will be easy to see if you are apneic, if your oxygen is dropping, and if you are disrupting your normal sleep.

If you are having frequent episodes of OSA, the second step is to try a

CPAP machine either on a subsequent night or even that same night in a split study. CPAP stands for Continuous Positive Airway Pressure. It is a machine with a mask that fits over your nose or entire face and blows air in continuously while you sleep. It maintains a positive pressure inside your airway while you sleep. This air pressure holds the airway open even when your tongue and other tissues relax. This way you can continue to breathe in and out without being blocked. This normal breathing will allow your sleep to progress through its normal deep sleep cycles as it should. This part of the study will tell them what pressure setting you need to hold your airway open, so they can set the machine to the right setting for you.

OSA Treatment

Lifestyle measures, particularly significant weight loss, can help to restore a normal airway. For some, even a 10% weight loss may be enough to push things back far enough to restore normal sleep. Sleeping on your side can help some. Avoid alcohol and sleeping pills or tranquilizers as these will always worsen sleep apnea. A few have been benefited by oral devices that hold the jaw forward while sleeping. But most people will benefit from a CPAP machine every night. Your insurance should cover this after a positive sleep study has been done. Some may require some surgical procedure to correct some anatomic problems causing the obstructed airway. Enlarged tonsils or a deviated septum or enlarged turbinates can contribute to airway obstruction. Extra soft palate tissue

In Memory Of



Don Oltman
from his wife Jeanne Oltman

Ron Chamberlin
from Jeanne Oltman

Carroll Monroe Shoffner
from his wife JoDee Shoffner

Joseph Malmede
from Jan A. Greve

Mona L Belczyk
from her husband Stanley Belczyk

Pastor Harold Bohr
from Esther Goetzke

Pastor Harold Bohr
from Connie Montgomery

can be removed and the back of the tongue can be reduced.

Normal, Uninterrupted Deep Sleep

The quality of your life depends on the quality of your sleep. To awaken in the morning with a clear mind, rested and ready to commune with God, your brain must go through the deep sleep cycles that organize and save the important things, delete the stuff you don't need, as well as go through the deep power washing

cycles that wash out the waste products that have built up the day before. This is when you restore your essential neurotransmitters. You need these deep stage 4 sleep cycles, so do whatever it takes to get them. If you have OSA, change your diet, exercise, lose the weight, get rid of the sleeping pills (ask your doctor about tapering off if they are prescription drugs), get a sleep study, get and use the CPAP machine. It will be worth it in the quality of life you will recover.



MILTON TESKE, MD

"The greatest bridge from despair to hope is a good night's sleep."

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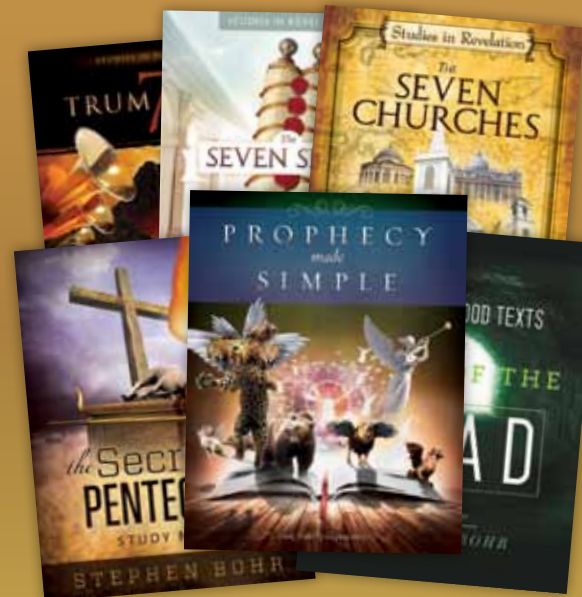
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In Battles of The Heart Part One, the young Psalmist Asaph wrote a song that allowed us to peer into his inner world. His struggle with doubt, envy and loneliness almost consumed him. He had experienced the goodness of God, but now, with eyes blinded by #emotions and feet wearied by trials, he found himself in a battle to hold on to faith that God was still with him. Though he was well versed in scripture and a gifted leader, like the rest of us he was not immune to life's challenges and personal discouragements. #discouragement.

As the words flowed from his heart, Asaph probably did not realize they would become a source of encouragement and inspiration down through the ages. Only in heaven will we understand the impact of the testimonies we share and why at times God allows us to endure the fires of affliction.

His song began with the words, "Truly **God is good** to Israel, to such as

are pure in heart." But the tone quickly changed, "...**But as for me**, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped" Psalm 73:1-2. His plea was, God how come you seem to be blessing everyone but me? If you are struggling, it may be comforting to know that people who were used by God in biblical times also had their moments of wrestling with challenging feelings. We are about to discover that while difficulty can sometimes shake our foundation, complete emotional and spiritual recovery is **#possible** with **#Jesus**.

When in despair, our perception of God and of people can become skewed. When this happens, making accurate judgements can be difficult. It is wise to avoid making major decision when in that place. Despair caused Asaph to compare himself to the people around him which impacted his experience and view of God negatively. Some of us may make the same mistake today. In the

CHALLENGE

Study the Sanctuary:

1. Find anything inspiring?
2. Share what you find with a friend.

Study Galatians 5:25-26:

1. Does Social Media make this more difficult?
2. How can utilize the positives of Social Media while avoiding the pitfalls?

Read 4SP 283.1 by EGW • Gather friends and pray for our leaders and our Church.

midst of trials, we should look up, not out! **#lookupnotout**

By the third verse in Psalm 73, Asaph was comparing himself not only to people in Israel, but also to a group he called "the ungodly." That mistake can have eternal consequences, knowing that by beholding we become changed (2 Cor. 3:18). Before long, Asaph exclaimed, "Surely I have cleansed my heart in vain..." vs 13. Taking time to observe the lives of the ungodly, especially when facing difficulty, can lead to a devaluing of the work that God has been doing and wants to continue in our hearts. It heightens our desire to explore the things of the world. Hebrews 11:25 reminds us that the pleasures of sin lasts for a short time. The apparent ease and pleasure of "the ungodly" that Asaph envied is attained at a cost.

So Asaph, seemingly **#alone** and apparently unsure of the future, made a decision that altered his course this time for the better. Psalm 73:16-17 says, "When I thought to know this, It was too **#painful** for me; Until I went into the **#sanctuary** of God..."

In the sanctuary, he found something practical and life changing! It inspired faith, cleared his foggy #perception, and suddenly he knew that God was and had been with him. **God never left; He was on the sunny side of a passing cloud!** His view and experience changed though his circumstance seemed unchanged. What a powerful reminder that our

circumstance does not have to determine our experience.

In verses 22 and 28 the Psalmist said, "So foolish was I, and ignorant... Thou hast **holden** me by my right hand...there is none upon earth that I **desire** beside thee...it is **good** for me to draw **near** to God..."

So here we are standing on the cuffs of eternity, some of us #discouraged. It's time to take our eyes off circumstances, personal difficulties, Facebook, Instagram, and look up for our redemption draweth nigh!

Later in his experience, Asaph wrote these words, "**Thy way, O God is in the sanctuary.** Who is so great a God as our God?" Psalm 77:13. Asaph found much more than a head knowledge, more than articles of furniture. He found the living Jesus. If you desire to share in the joy Asaph found, I encourage you to study the Sanctuary beginning with John 14:6.

BONUS:

Find #asaph post on Instagram @ secretsunsealed. Follow our page. Comment on the #'s from this article that resonated with you and share your thoughts.



MAURICE GRAHAM



The VINE

and the BRANCHES

LESSON 25

John 15; DA 674-677; 5BC:1142-1144; ISM 336-339; SC 68-73; 5T 354-355

In this lesson we will study the beautiful allegory of the vine and the branches. As we proceed, we shall find in this parable a richness which can never be exhausted and divine lessons which tax our human wisdom to the utmost.

It would be helpful to remember that in Israel, branches that do not bear fruit are cut off in February/March. "Sometimes the vines are so completely cut back that one sees in the vineyard only the stalks bereft of branches. Later (August) when the vine has put forth leaves, comes the second stage of pruning, as the vinedresser pinches off the little shoots so that the main fruit-bearing branches get all the nourishment." (Raymond Brown, The Gospel According to John, volume 2, p. 675)

Let's begin by examining the parable's historical background, its occasion and its symbols.

Occasion and Place of the Parable

1 When and to whom did Jesus speak the parable of the vine and the branches? "*And he [Jesus] said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My _____ is at hand; I will keep the Passover at thy _____ with my disciples.*" (Mt. 26:18)

NOTE: A careful comparison of John 13-17 with Matthew 26:18-45 reveals that they are chronologically parallel. The events described in these sources are taking place on Thursday evening and Jesus is speaking to His disciples. Both Matthew and John begin with the last supper in the Upper Room and end with the prayer of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. But John adds many details which are not found in Matthew. The foot washing (chapter 13), the discourse on the Holy Spirit (chapter 14), the parable of the vine and the branches (chapter 15), and further instruction on the Holy Spirit (chapter 16) are unique to John. The prayer of Jesus as described by Matthew covers only three verses (26:39, 42, 44) but in John it covers the whole of chapter 17.

2 To what destination were Jesus and His disciples traveling when He told this parable? "*Jesus and the disciples were on the way to _____, at the foot of Mount _____, a retired spot which He had often visited for meditation and prayer.*" (DA 674)

NOTE: Ellen White's comment is corroborated by John 14:31 where, after the events in the Upper Room, Jesus told His disciples: "Arise, let us go hence." Matthew 26:36 explains that they departed for the Garden of Gethsemane.

3 More specifically, where were Jesus and the disciples when He told the parable? "*The moon is shining bright and _____ to Him a flourishing _____.* Drawing attention of the disciples to it, He employs it as a _____." (DA 674)

The Parable's Symbols

1 Why did Jesus choose the vine as an illustration instead of a tree? "*Instead of choosing the graceful _____, the lofty _____, or the strong _____, Jesus takes the vine with its clinging _____ to represent Himself. The palm tree, the cedar, and the oak stand _____. They require no _____. But the vine entwines about the trellis, and thus climbs heavenward.*" (DA 674)



2. What is represented by the husbandman, the vine and the branches? Jesus said: “I am the _____ and my Father is the _____. . . . I am the vine, ye [the disciples] are the _____.” (Jn. 15:1, 5)

3. What is represented by the fruit? “But the fruit of the _____ Spirit is _____, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, _____, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no _____.” (Gal. 5:22-23)

NOTE: It is noteworthy how many times Jesus underlined the need to bear fruit. John the Baptist had said: “Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance” (Mt. 3:9), Jesus said: “Ye shall know them by their fruits” (Mt. 7:16; cf. Mt. 12:33). Toward the end of His ministry Jesus cursed the fruitless fig tree (Mt. 21:19) and denounced the husbandmen for not rendering God the fruit of the vineyard in its season (Mt. 21:33-47)

4. Why did Jesus emphasize that He is the true vine? “But Jesus says, I am the _____ Vine. Think not that through a connection with _____ you may become partakers of the _____ of God, and inheritors of the promise. Through Me _____ is spiritual life received.” (DA 675)

NOTE: In the Old Testament God had spoken of Israel as His vineyard. From this, Israel had developed the wrong impression that a connection with Israel was sufficient for salvation. But Jesus is saying that Israel is not the real vine, He is! In the same vein, Jesus said to the Jews: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven” (Jn. 6:32). The noted commentator, Leon Morris, concurs with Ellen White: “As we have seen, the vine is often the symbol of Israel, and this adjective [alethinós] may point to Israel as the degenerate vine (Jer. 2:21) now replaced by the true.” (*The Gospel According to John*, p. 668-669)

The lesson for today is clear. A formal link with the Seventh-day Adventist church through church membership is worthless unless it is accompanied by a vital, personal and continuous connection with Jesus.

The Vine is Planted

1. As a human being, from whence did Jesus derive His power? “So _____ Christ in His _____ was dependent upon _____ power. ‘I can of Mine own _____ do nothing,’ He declared.” (DA 674-675)

2. Where did the Father plant Jesus? “On the hills of _____ our heavenly Father had planted this goodly Vine, and He _____ was the husbandman.” (DA 675)

3. How did the multitudes look upon this Vine? “Many were _____ by the beauty of this Vine, and declared its _____ origin.” (DA 675)

4. What did the Jewish leaders do with the Vine? “But to the leaders in Israel it appeared as a root out of _____ ground. They took the plant, and _____ it, and _____ it under their unholy feet. Their thought was to _____ it forever.” (DA 675)

5. What did the husbandman do with the bruised Vine? “But the heavenly Husbandman never lost _____ of His plant. After men thought they had _____ it, He took it, and _____ it on the other side of the _____.” (DA 675)

6. When the Husbandman replanted the Vine in heaven, could human beings still be grafted into it? “The vine stock was to be no longer _____. It was hidden from the rude assaults of men. But the _____ of the Vine hung over the wall. They were to represent the _____. Through them _____ might still be united to the Vine. From them fruit has been obtained. There has been a harvest which the passers-by have plucked.” (DA 675)

NOTE: The meaning of all of this is clear: The Father planted Jesus in this world. Though many discerned His heavenly origin, the Jewish leaders trampled on Him and bruised Him. But the grave could not retain Jesus, and when He came forth, the Father transplanted Him to heaven. From there, the disciples who had already attached themselves to Jesus, preached the gospel of salvation to others. These others were then grafted into Jesus.

Abiding in the Vine

1. Who chose us to be grafted into the vine? “You did not choose Me, but I chose you and _____ you that you should _____ and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.” (Jn. 15:16)

NOTE: In the times of Jesus it was customary for students to seek out the most renowned rabbis as teachers. But the disciples did not choose Jesus, He chose them.



2. How is union with the Vine established? “The *scion* is _____ into the living vine, and _____ by fiber, vein by vein, it _____ into the vine stock. . . . So the soul _____ in trespasses and sins receives _____ through connection with Christ. By faith in Him as personal Saviour the union is formed.” (DA 675)

3. What happens when this union is established? “The sinner unties his weakness to Christ’s _____, his emptiness to Christ’s _____, his frailty to Christ’s enduring _____. Then he has the mind of Christ. The _____ of Christ has touched our humanity, and our humanity has touched his _____.” (DA 675)

4. What must we do after we have been grafted into the Vine? “_____ in me and I in you.” “This union with Christ, once formed, must be _____. . . . This is no casual touch, no off-and-on connection. The branch becomes a part of the living vine. . . . Separated from the vine, the branch cannot _____. No more, said Jesus, can you live _____ from Me. The life you received from Me can be preserved only by _____ communion.” (Jn. 15:4; DA 676)

NOTE: The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary remarks: “Riding high on a wave of religious fervor one day, only to fall low into a period of neglect the next, does not promote spiritual growth.” (5BC 1042)

5. Which other synonyms help us understand what it means to abide in Christ? “As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: _____ ye in my love. . . . Hereby know we that we _____ in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. . . . These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might _____ in you. . . .” (Jn. 15:9; I Jn. 4:13; Jn. 15:11)

NOTE: The words “continue,” “dwell” and “remain” are all the same Greek word that is translated “abide.” The emphasis of the Greek word *meno* falls upon a habitual permanence in Christ.

The Secret of Abiding

1. What is the secret to abiding in Christ? “If ye abide in me, and my _____ abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.” (Jn. 15:7) “It is through the _____ that Christ abides in His followers.” (DA 677)

2. With which other metaphor did Jesus illustrate what it means to abide in Him? “He that eateth my _____ and drinketh my blood, _____ in me, and I in him. . . . It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing. The _____ that I speak unto you, they are _____, and they are life.” (Jn. 6:53, 63)

NOTE: It is by prayerfully studying and assimilating the Word of God that we abide in Jesus. The purpose of Bible study is not mere intellectual knowledge but rather to develop a deeply personal spiritual experience with Jesus.

3. What should be the purpose of Bible study? “And this is _____ eternal, that they might _____ thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. . . . But these are _____, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that _____ ye might have _____ through his name.” (Jn. 17:3; 20:31)

4. What counsel does Ellen White give concerning the method and purpose of Bible study? “The words of Christ must be _____ upon and cherished and _____ in the heart. They should not be repeated _____, finding no place in the memory and having no influence over the _____ and life.” (4T 355)

5. How did the John, the beloved disciple, learn to abide in Christ? “But as the character of the Divine One was manifested to him, he saw his own _____ and was humbled by the knowledge. . . . Day by day his heart was _____ out toward Christ, until he lost sight of _____ in the love for his Master. His resentful, ambitious temper was _____ to the molding power of Christ.” (Steps to Christ, p. 73)

6. How does the apostle Paul describe the results of a habitual contemplation of Jesus? “But we all, with open face _____ as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are _____ into the same _____ from glory to glory, even as by the _____ of the Lord.” (II Cor. 3:18)

NOTE: “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.” *Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 337.



7. How else did the apostle Paul describe his life of abiding trust in Christ? *"I am crucified _____ Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth _____ me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the _____ of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."* (Gal. 2:20)

8. Is abiding in Jesus always an easy endeavor? *"We are to grow _____ in spiritual loveliness. We shall _____ often in our efforts to copy the pattern. We shall often have to bow down to _____ at the feet of Jesus, because of our shortcomings and mistakes; but we are not to be _____; we are to _____ more fervently, believe more _____, and try again with more steadfastness to grow into the likeness of our Lord."* (Selected Messages, Volume 1, p. 337)

9. What will Christ's true followers do when they have ingrafted the Word? *"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall _____ on me through their _____."* (Jn. 17:20)

The Evidence of Abiding in Him

1. What is the greatest evidence that we are abiding in Christ? *"He _____ that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much _____: for without me ye can do _____."* (Jn. 15:5). The fruit is identified as the "fruit of the Spirit" in Galatians 5.

2. Wherein is the Father glorified? *"Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear _____ fruit; so shall ye be my _____."* (Jn. 15:8)

3. Must we labor to bear fruit? *"Yet the Saviour does not bid the disciples _____ to bear fruit. He tells them to _____ in Him."* (DA 677)

NOTE: In the same vein, Jesus does not tell his disciples to strive to shed light upon the world. He simply states, *"Let your light shine"* (Mt. 5:16). When we are truly linked with Jesus, fruit and light will spontaneously appear.

4. Does keeping Christ's commandments bear any relationship to abiding in Him? *"If ye keep my _____, ye shall abide in my _____, even as I have kept my Father's commandments and _____ in his love. . . . Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I _____ you."* (Jn. 15:10, 14; see also, Jn. 14:14-16)

5. To which commandment was Jesus particularly referring? *"This _____ is my commandment, that ye _____ one another, as I have loved you."* (Jn. 15:12)

6. How did the apostle Paul define true love? *"Owe no man any _____ thing but to love one another, for he that _____ another hath fulfilled the law. For this, 'thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness, thou shalt not _____, and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly _____ in this saying, namely, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.'" (Rom. 13:8-9)*

7. What other evidence indicates that we are abiding in the Vine? *"These things have I spoken unto you, that my _____ might _____ in you, and that your joy might be _____."* (Jn. 15:11; for what Jesus meant by "joy", study Jn. 14:28; 16:20-24; Heb. 12:2; Isa. 53: 11)

8. What lesson on unity did Jesus teach in the parable of the vine and the branches? *"The branches of the vine cannot _____ into each other; they are _____ separate; yet every branch must be in _____ with every other if they are united in the same parent stock. . . . So every branch of the True Vine is _____ and distinct, yet all are _____ together in the parent stock. There can be no division."* (Ellen White, The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, volume 5, p. 1143)

9. How did Jesus further amplify this lesson in His intercessory prayer of John 17? *"That they all may be _____; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be _____ in us: that the world may believe that thou hast _____ me. . . . I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made _____ in one, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."* (Jn. 17:21, 23)

10. How will the world look upon those who are abiding in Jesus? *"If the world _____ you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love its _____, but because ye are not of the world, but I have _____ you out of the world, therefore the world _____ you."* (Jn. 15:18-19)





The Pruning Process

1 How does John describe the pruning process? “. . . every branch that beareth fruit, he _____ it, that it may bring forth more fruit.” (Jn. 15:2)

NOTE: The Greek word “purges” here is *katharizo* from which we get the word “catharsis”. The work of pruning is thus a work of cleansing.

2 How does Ellen White describe the pruning process? “The pruning will cause _____, but it is the Father who applies the knife. He works with no wanton hand or indifferent heart. There are branches trailing upon the _____; these must be cut loose from the earthly supports to which the tendrils are fastening. They are to reach _____, and find their support in God. . . . The excessive foliage that draws away the life current from the fruit must be pruned off. The _____ must be cut out, to give room for the healing beams of the Sun of Righteousness.” (DA 677)

3 What is the knife which God uses to prune the branches of the vine? “That he might sanctify and _____ it [the church] with the washing of water by the _____, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having _____, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be _____ and without blemish” (Eph. 5:26-27)

4 According to Jesus, how are we sanctified? “Sanctify them through thy _____, thy _____ is truth.” (Jn. 17:17)

5 According to Paul, what is the Word of God like and what type of work does it perform? “For the word of God is _____, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged _____, piercing even to the dividing asunder of _____ and _____, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and _____ of the heart.” (Heb. 4:12)

6 What did king David have to say about the function of God’s word? “Wherewithal shall a young man _____ his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy _____. . . Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not _____ against thee.” (Ps. 119:9, 11)

7 What did Jesus say about His disciples in John 15:3? “Now ye are _____ through the _____ that I have spoken unto you.”

NOTE: The word “cleansed” here is used in only one other place in the gospel of John, that is in chapter 13 and verse 10. When Jesus washed the feet of His disciples, He was symbolically cleansing their hearts. But notice that Jesus said that not all had been cleaned or pruned. As we shall see later, He was speaking of Judas Iscariot (see Jn. 17:12).

8 What, specifically, needs to be pruned from our lives? “He [the Father] prunes them, because _____, self-indulgence, and _____ are cropping out in their lives.” (Testimonies for the Church, volume 4, p. 354)

9 Is the process of pruning painful? “God prunes us with _____, with disappointment and _____, that the outgrowth of strong, perverse traits of _____ may be weakened and that the _____ traits may have a chance to develop.” (Testimonies for the Church, volume 4, p. 354)

10 What two types of reactions result from the painful pruning process? “Those who really desire to _____ God will be _____ for the exposure of every idol and every sin, that they may see these evils and put them _____; but the _____ heart will plead for _____ rather than _____. ” (Testimonies for the Church, volume 4, p. 354)

11 How can we be sure that conversion is genuine? “No conversion is genuine which does not _____ both the character and the _____ of those who accept the truth. The truth works by love, and _____ the soul.” (5BC 1144)

The Fruitless Branches

1 Who was the fruitless branch in the Upper Room? “From the chosen twelve who had followed Jesus, one [Judas] as a _____ branch was about to be taken away; the rest were to pass under the pruning knife of _____ trial.” (DA 676-677)

NOTE: Raymond E. Brown concurs with Ellen White: “In the atmosphere of the Last Supper Judas may be thought of as a branch that did not bear fruit; he is now a tool of Satan and belongs to the realm of darkness.” (The Gospel According to John, volume 2, p. 675-676)

2 What characterizes the dead branches? “A profession of religion places men in the _____, but the character and



_____ show whether they are in connection with Christ. If they bear no fruit, they are _____ branches.” (DA 676)

3. What evidence do we have in this parable that saved people can choose to be lost? “Every branch _____ me that beareth not fruit he _____ away.” (Jn. 15:2, also v. 6 and Mt. 24:12; II Pet. 2:20-22)

NOTE: The noted commentator, Raymond E. Brown, has well remarked: “So also in John the branches that are burned were once united to Jesus the vine. The expression ‘withered’ occurs in Mark 4:6 in the Parable of the Sower to describe the fate of the seed that falls on rocky ground and begins to grow, only to be scorched by the sun.” (The Gospel According to John, volume 2, p. 679)

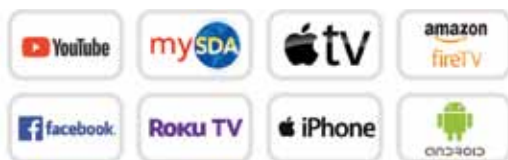
4. Who determines whether a branch remains attached to the vine or is taken away? “When Christ took human nature upon Him, He bound Himself to humanity by a tie of love that can never be broken by any power save the _____ of man himself.” (Steps to Christ, p.72)

5. What will happen when the church continuously abides in Christ? “When this condition is fulfilled in those who profess to believe the present truth, we shall see a _____ church; for its members will not live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them, and they will be _____ branches of the living Vine.” (5BC 1144)

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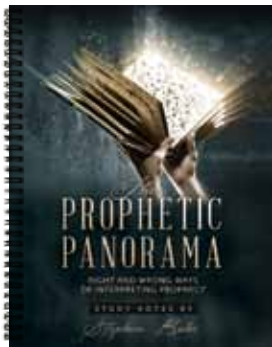
- Esau's expression when his sold birthright was given to Jacob
- God _____ us before we were born
- God will judge people with this
- Pharaoh appointed Joseph to teach his _____ wisdom
- Joseph was _____ in Egypt
- Peter denied Christ
- Noah became this by faith
- Written by John
- God's angels
- Grievous words _____ up anger (Prov. 15)
- With which to hold a place in the Bible
- Don't borrow your worries from here
- God has done this to our fears
- In lending money, we shall not be an _____
- David sinned when he did this to his people
- Israelites beat gold into _____ to cut it into wires for Sanctuary

DOWN

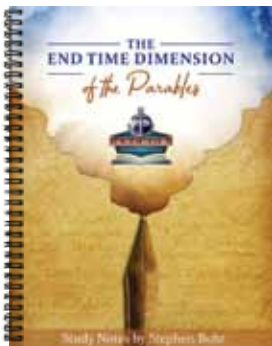
- The ark was 50 cubits in dimension
- Where the ark rested
- Hoping to _____ to the resurrection
- The door no man can shut
- A faithful minister of Christ
- Elimelech's widow
- The Most Holy Place is in this direction
- When wronged, Christians do not
- Scripture is profitable for this
- Magicians couldn't for Nebuchadnezzar
- When the Jews rejected Jesus, they were left
- Plague on cattle
- Jesus comes with these
- The widow of Zarephath gave to Elijah
- Metaphor of heaven to the Jews, Abraham's _____
- Common humble response: _____ I am

BiblePuzzles.org.uk by Philologus (Answer key on page 6.)

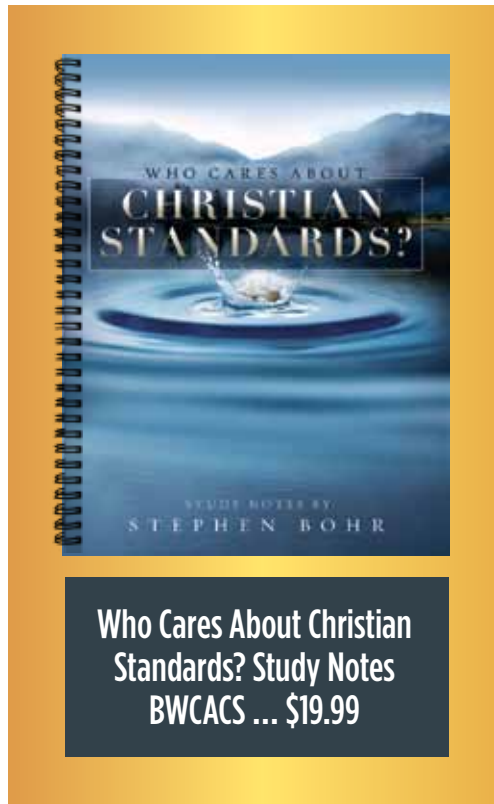
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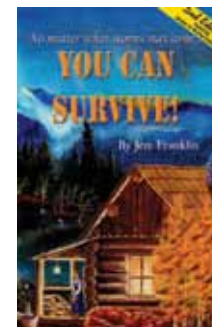
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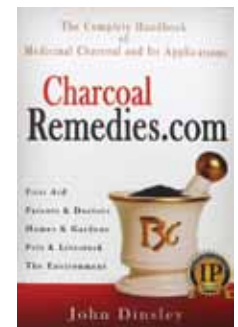
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