

# Man of Sin

by Stella Paterson

Over the past three years I have written several articles on the topic of "antichrist." In them we spoke of how the *antichrist* spirit has infiltrated the *church*, and must not be seen solely as some tyrant who is to come. This is not another *antichrist* article, although understanding of those may be greater with the reading of this one.

In the most recent articles we covered the folly of exalting the written record of the words of God above the Lord himself. Man's translation of His words should never be placed in authority above the absolute authority of Jesus Christ the Son of God. To do so is idolatry, and is a dreadful thing, to which man will give answer in the Day of Judgment.

The compilation of writings that make up what is commonly referred to as "the bible", is full of both physical and spiritual applications. This is especially true of the *end times* books, such as Daniel and Revelation, as well as the words of Paul in 2 Thessalonians where he speaks of the "man of sin."

What or who is this *man of sin*? Where did he originate? Is he someone who suddenly appears in these last days? Or is *he* simply exposed for what he is?

## Man of sin

The Greek word *anthrōpos* means "human being" and is translated "man" in the KJV. And the Greek word for *sin* is defined: "sin (properly **abstract**)". Because *sin* is "abstract" it does not refer to [concrete] *sin*, which is how the KJV has translated it--even pluralizing the word "sin."

What then is *abstract sin*? We covered this in earlier articles on "sin" and the Gospel, in which we showed that *sin* in many passages refers to the condition of unregenerate man. Thus we have the *man of sin*. But who is Paul referring to when he speaks of the "man of sin" in his letter to the Thessalonians? Is it one particular person, or is it all those who have exalted *self* in opposition to Almighty God--with "all" being corporate *man*?

We could see this as one of those cases where there is both a physical and a spiritual application. The spiritual application would be that every man/woman of flesh who exalts *self* against God, does so by choosing to rule in his own heart. The physical application, for these end times, would be the ultimate manifestation of *man of flesh* appearing in response to those who see only according to the flesh.

Let us examine this further.

Paul said to the Romans:

*For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For the mind of the flesh is death; but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace: because the **mind of the flesh is enmity against God**; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be: and they that are in the flesh cannot please God. **But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. But if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.** Romans 8:5-9*

Those who do not have the Spirit of Christ dwelling in them and are living in submission to Him, will see only according to the flesh. They will judge everything according to their own mind and their idea as to what the "word of God" says. In reality, only the Holy Spirit can reveal what He Himself inspired the writers to record for our benefit.

*Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Ghost teaches; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the **natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.** 1 Corinthians 2:12-14.*

The translated Greek word for "spiritually" is defined: *non-physically, that is, divinely, **figuratively**.*

Upon checking the Greek dictionary one will find that many, many definitions are intended (in numerous applications) to be translated *figuratively*. This tells us that the meaning is "spiritual," and cannot be taken literally, as is often the case in those who do not heed the Spirit of Christ--they *discern* according to the flesh.

It is tragic that so many professing Christians have closed their minds to the voice of the Spirit; at the same time judging others who walk by the Spirit. The precious Holy Spirit does not lie. One who truly is born of the Spirit will clearly hear His voice and have assurance that what he has heard is truth. The fleshly, religious person does not understand how the Spirit-filled ones walk in truth. They perceive that the Spirit-filled believers conjure up in their minds what can only be made known by the Spirit of God, and they accuse them of hearing wrong spirits. But greater is He that is in the Spirit-filled ones than he that is in the world.

### **Spiritual and physical**

A very good example of *figurative* speech is found in Galatians, where Paul actually gives an *allegory* that applies to what we have just been addressing. He

was speaking to them about the physical as opposed to the spiritual. "Tell me, you that desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law? For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was **born after the flesh**; but he of the freewoman was by promise." Paul goes on to explain how those "things are an allegory: for **these are the two covenants**; the one from the mount Sinai, which genders to **bondage**, which is Agar [Hagar]. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and **answers** [Greek: 'corresponds'] **to Jerusalem which now is**, and is in bondage with her children. With our present-day understanding of the word "answers" we might miss what Paul was saying. If we insert "corresponds" in its place we see the beauty of what he is teaching. His next words make clearer what he is getting at in his allegory. "But **Jerusalem which is above** is free, which is the mother of us all. For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bears not; break forth and cry, thou that travails not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise." (Galatians 4:21-28).

In the next three verses, Paul explains what occurs between the son according to the flesh and the one who was born of promise, or "after the Spirit." "But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, **even so it is now**. Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free." (Galatians 4:29-31).

### **Jerusalem above**

Paul spoke in the above passage how *Sinai in Arabia* corresponds to earthly Jerusalem, and how *Jerusalem which is above* is the "mother" of all who are born of the Spirit. The Greek word for *mother* once again is used figuratively. Now we see where Jesus spoke these words for John to share in his Revelation of Jesus Christ:

*He that overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go out thence no more: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the **new Jerusalem**, which cometh down out of heaven from my God, and mine own new name.*  
Revelation 3:12.

Further on, in chapter 21, John tells of what he was shown about the Bride of Christ.

*And there came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls, who were laden with the seven last plagues; and he spake with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the **wife of the Lamb**. And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and shewed*

me the **holy city Jerusalem**, coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: Revelation 21:9-11a.

### Jerusalem on earth

Jerusalem is the capitol city of Israel, the land where our Savior was born and lived His life while on earth. Even though He performed countless acts to indicate that He was God in the flesh, He was rejected for the most part by His own people. Their prophets had foretold in great detail how He would come. And His coming was the fulfillment of exactly what they had written. But, *He came unto his own, and his own received him not.* (John 1:11) In Israel, and wherever else the children of Israel happen to live, countless numbers are still looking for their messiah. The Law and the prophets show that He would come to free them from the flesh, yet they are still entrenched in the Law and flesh. While still looking for their *messiah* they will be 'ripe' for deception. Who will come to them now? Jesus spoke to those who sought to kill Him. (They were blind to the true Messiah). At that time He said to them: "*You search the scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me; and you will not come to me, that you may have life. . . . I am come in my Father's name, and you receive me not: **if another shall come in his own name, him you will receive.***" (John 5:39-40, 43).

Will it be the ultimate manifestation of *self* and flesh, a full-blown *man of sin* who comes to deceive both Jews and non-Jews? Will they receive this one who comes and appeals to their fleshly desires for a *savior* that will never call for death to *self* and flesh? Will a man *full of self* set himself up in a temple in Jerusalem, proclaiming himself to be God? "*Let no man beguile [Greek: 'wholly seduce'] you in any wise: for it will not be, except the falling away come first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, he that opposes and exalts himself against all that is called God or that is worshipped; so that he sits in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God.*" (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4).

As we said earlier, there is a physical as well as a spiritual application in most *end time* passages in the bible. The *spiritual* in the above would be *self* in man taking its place in the temple of God, which is our body. And it is the *falling away* that will cause the *man of sin* to manifest in those who have not allowed Christ to rule in them. Then the *physical* would be an actual man in an actual temple in Jerusalem. The one does not rule out the other--the bible supports both.

Who prevails in the end? As for Israel,

*When I have brought them again from the people, and gathered them out of their enemies' lands, and am sanctified in them in the sight of many nations; Then shall they know that I am the LORD their God, which caused them to be led into captivity among the heathen: but I have gathered them unto their own land, and have left none of them any more*

there. **Neither will I hide my face any more from them:** for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord GOD. (Ezekiel 39:27-29).

Let us look at more of Paul's message to the Thessalonians.

*And then the lawless one will be unveiled, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth, and will destroy by the brightness of His coming, whose coming is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and in all deception of unrighteousness among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And because of this, God will send them strong delusion, in order for them to believe the lie, so that they all might be damned who did not believe the truth, but delighted in unrighteousness.* (2 Thessalonians 2:8-12 EMTV).

Because they did not receive the love of the truth, God gives them over to delusion, so that they *believe the lie*. What is the lie? Could it be they will accept the full-fledged, self-exalting manifestation of the *self* and flesh they clung to?

Do we think it is of no consequence when we cleave to the flesh? Do we think because we profess to be born again, and quote bible passages, we can convince God that we are His? What does the fruit of our life reveal about us? Are we yet in that condition of *self* and *sin*? Or are we on the path of daily death to *self*, with full surrender to the working of the Holy Spirit?

This verse from Isaiah will help us to understand the condition of *sin*. "*All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned **every one to his own way**; and the LORD hath laid on him the **iniquity** of us all.*" (Isaiah 53:6). According to the Hebrew language, the *iniquity* that was laid on Christ Jesus is "perversity". Webster's Dictionary tells us that *perversity* is "the condition of being perverse." To be *perverse* is to "deviate from what is considered right or good."

Although Peter was referring to the same gospel message as Isaiah had prophesied, the translators used the word "sins", which comes from the Greek word that shows *sin* is "abstract." "*Who his own self bare our **sins** in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to **sins**, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.*" (1 Peter 2:24).

We need to be dead to more than "sins"! We must die to *self* whose fruit is sinful.

In his letter to the Galatians, speaking of the *fruit* of flesh, Paul said:

Now the **works of the flesh** are manifest, which are these, fornication, immorality, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, factions, envies, murders, drinking bouts, revelries, and the like; 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. What kind of fruit is evident in us, and especially when *christians* gather? Is the *man of sin* manifesting in the midst? Paul listed not only the obvious *works* that most would call "sins"; he included these: "*contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, factions, envies.*" Very sobering, is it not?

We could go on with more, but we must close for now. As we can see, our Lord will judge the *man of sin*, be it in *self* or the one man who will come in response to deceive all who have chosen *self-reign* ahead of Christ's reign.

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