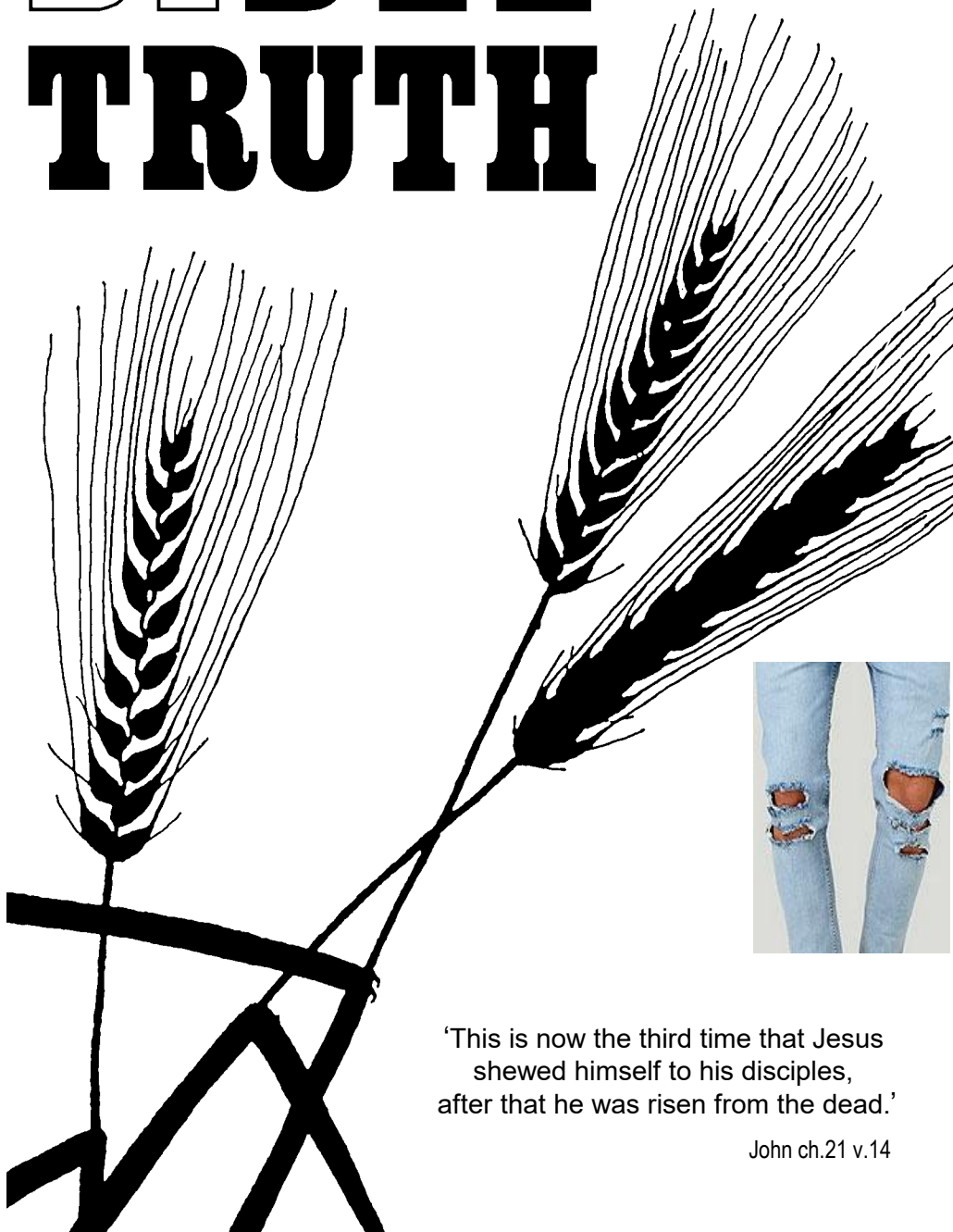


BIBLE TRUTH

No. 294
April / June 2019



'This is now the third time that Jesus
shewed himself to his disciples,
after that he was risen from the dead.'

John ch.21 v.14

ANTICHRIST

by Arthur Eedle

‘Understanding is a wellspring of life
unto him that hath it: ...’

Proverbs ch.16 v.22



Words change their meaning

In the process of time some words are inclined to change their meaning and there are examples of this in the Bible's *Authorised Version*. Look at this quotation.

‘For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.’

1 Thessalonians ch.4 v.15

‘Prevent’? In 1600 the word ‘prevent’ meant ‘go before’. There is an old Anglican prayer, ‘Prevent us O Lord in all our doings by Thy most gracious favour’. The meaning is ‘Go before us O Lord’. So in this case the word has undergone a dramatic change in meaning through four centuries.

But this article is about the Antichrist. And this is where another important change has come about. In these days we use the prefix ‘anti’ to denote that which is against something else. But the true meaning of the Greek word, according to Lexicons is ‘that which stands in place of another’.

In John ch.1 v.16 we read ‘**And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace**’. The Greek text reads **charis anti charis**. Obviously it cannot mean ‘grace against grace’. No, it means ‘grace in the place of grace’. Here the picture is ‘grace taking the place of grace’ like the manna fresh each morning, new grace for each new day. Wonderful!

There was a certain man of King Herod's family who was known as Antipater. The word 'Pater' is still used for Father, so on today's understanding, this man would have been 'against his father'. But as understood in Herod's day, it simply means 'he who has come in the place of his father', that makes sense.

The Apostle Luke tells us,

'If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?'

Luke ch.11 v.11

The Greek text reads 'a serpent anti a fish'. The *Authorised Version* gives the correct meaning, 'a serpent in the place of a fish.'

Antichrist churches

With that short prologue, let us now consider the word Antichrist. Churches, and the majority of Christians think of the Antichrist as a man who comes against Christ. Not so. It means 'one who comes (stands, promotes himself) in the place of Christ'. The importance of that must not be lost.

'For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.'

Matthew ch.24 v.5

Early history records the fulfilment of this, according to *Adam Clarke's Commentary*.

1. Josephus says, (War,b.ii.c.13) that there were many who, pretending to Divine inspiration, deceived the people, leading out numbers of them to the desert, pretending that God would there show them the signs of liberty, meaning redemption from the Roman power: and that an Egyptian false prophet led thirty thousand men into the desert, who were almost all cut off by Felix (see Acts ch.21 v.38 where 4000 are mentioned). It was a just judgment for God to deliver up that people into the hands of false Christs who had rejected the true one. Soon after our Lord's crucifixion, Simon Magus appeared, and persuaded the people of Samaria that he was the great power of God (see Acts ch.8 vv 9-10), and boasted among the Jews that he was the son of God.
2. Of the same stamp and character was also Dositheus, the Samaritan, who pretended that he was the Christ foretold by Moses.

3. About twelve years after the death of our Lord, when Cuspius Fadus was procurator of Judea, arose an impostor of the name of Theudas, who said he was a prophet, and persuaded a great multitude to follow him with their best effects to the river Jordan, which he promised to divide for their passage; and saying these things, says Josephus, he deceived many: almost the very words of our Lord.
4. A few years afterwards, under the reign of Nero, while Felix was procurator of Judea, impostors of this stamp were so frequent that some were taken and killed almost every day (Jos. Ant. b. xx. c. 4. and 7).

Originally, I felt led to quote the following article substantiating the definition in respect of the Pope and the Roman Catholic Church. It purported to come from *The New York Catholic Catechism*.

'The Pope takes the place of Jesus Christ on earth ... By divine right the pope has supreme and full power in faith and morals over each and every pastor and his flock. He is the true Vicar of Christ, the head of the entire church, the father and teacher of all Christians. He is the infallible ruler, the founder of dogmas, the author of and judge of councils; the universal ruler of truth, the arbiter of the worlds, the supreme judge of heaven and earth, the judge of all, being judged by the one, God himself on earth.'

But I was subsequently alerted to the fact that the *New York Catechism* does not exist. Instead some author had 'cherry picked' phrases from various Catholic sources and pieced them together as with Catholic Authority. Therefore I am now rejecting it, preferring rather to quote from an actual Catholic document. The following are presented for consideration, and they do indeed suggest a form of magisterium fitting the definition of Antichrist - in other words, one who claims to come 'in the place of Christ'.

Papal infallibility

The infallibility of the Pope was formally defined in 1870, although the tradition behind this view goes back much further. In the conclusion of the fourth chapter of its Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Pastor Aeternus*, the **First Vatican Council** declared the following.

'We teach and define that it is a dogma Divinely revealed that the Roman pontiff when he speaks *ex cathedra*, that is when in

discharge of the office of pastor and doctor of all Christians, by virtue of his supreme Apostolic authority, he defines a doctrine regarding faith or morals to be held by the universal Church, by the Divine assistance promised to him in Blessed Peter, is possessed of that infallibility with which the Divine Redeemer willed that his Church should be endowed in defining doctrine regarding faith or morals, and that therefore such definitions of the Roman pontiff are of themselves and not from the consent of the Church irreformable.

So then, should anyone, which God forbid, have the temerity to reject this definition of ours: let him be anathema.'

Vatican Council, Sess. IV, Const. de Ecclesiâ Christi, Chapter iv

Note: *Ex cathedra* means with the full authority of office (especially that of the Pope, implying infallibility as defined in Roman Catholic doctrine). *Anathema* is a formal curse by a pope or Church council, excommunicating a person or denouncing a doctrine.

Lumen gentium

The dogmatic constitution *Lumen gentium* of the **Second Vatican Ecumenical Council**, which was also a document on the Church itself, explicitly reaffirmed the definition of papal infallibility, so as to avoid any doubts, expressing this in the following words.

'This Sacred Council, following closely in the footsteps of the First Vatican Council, with that Council teaches and declares that Jesus Christ, the eternal Shepherd, established His holy Church, having sent forth the apostles as He Himself had been sent by the Father; and He willed that their successors, namely the bishops, should be shepherds in His Church even to the consummation of the world. And in order that the episcopate itself might be one and undivided, He placed Blessed Peter over the other apostles, and instituted in him a permanent and visible source and foundation of unity of faith and communion. And all this teaching about the institution, the perpetuity, the meaning and reason for the sacred primacy of the Roman Pontiff and of his infallible magisterium, this Sacred Council again proposes to be firmly believed by all the faithful.'

Instances of infallible declarations

1. Immaculate Conception

It was not until 1854 that Pope Pius IX, with the support of the overwhelming majority of Roman Catholic bishops, whom he had consulted between 1851–1853, promulgated the papal bull *Ineffabilis*

Deus (Latin for Ineffable God), which defined ex cathedra the dogma of the Immaculate Conception:

‘We declare, pronounce and define that the doctrine which holds that the Blessed Virgin Mary, at the first instant of her conception, by a singular privilege and grace of the Omnipotent God, in virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of mankind, was preserved immaculate from all stain of original sin, has been revealed by God, and therefore should firmly and constantly be believed by all the faithful.’

Pope Pius IX, Ineffabilis Deus, December 8, 1854

2. Assumption of Mary

On 1 November 1950, in the *Apostolic Constitution Munificentissimus Deus*, Pope Pius XII declared the Assumption of Mary as a dogma.

‘By the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, and by our own authority, we pronounce, declare, and define it to be a divinely revealed dogma: that the Immaculate Mother of God, the ever Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory.’

Reformation

The primacy of the Roman Pontiff was challenged in 1517 when Martin Luther began preaching against several practices in the Catholic Church, including some itinerant friars' abuses involving indulgences. When Pope Leo X refused to support Luther's position, Luther claimed belief in an ‘invisible church’ and called the pope the Antichrist.

Luther's rejection of the primacy of the Roman Pontiff led to the start of the Protestant Reformation, during which numerous Protestant sects broke away from the Roman Catholic Church. The Church of England also broke away from the Catholic Church at this time, although for reasons different from Martin Luther and the Protestants.

Conclusion

I am fully aware that my writing may be classed as yet another example of ‘church bashing’, which is deplorable. Let me say that I have no quarrel with those Catholic friends with whom I share pleasant fellowship, and who have no desire to attack my Protestant position. But as a student of Greek, in particular concerning the use

of 'ANTI', as it was understood two millennia ago, I felt I had no alternative but to expose our present day erroneous position, and declare what the scriptures say about the one who comes in the name of Christ. Jesus said,

'I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive'.

John ch.5 v.43

The warning has continued down the corridors of time to our present day. Surely we must heed it.
