

# Questions & Answers

by  
Larry D. Harper



“Questions & Answers”

First published in *The Voice of Elijah*, July 1997

Copyright © 1997, 2001 by The Elijah Project

Mesquite, Texas

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture taken from the NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE,  
© 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1987, 1988.

The Lockman Foundation.

Used by permission.

Boldfaced segments of scriptural passages represent the emphasis of the author.

World rights reserved. No part of this publication may be stored in a retrieval system,  
reproduced, or transmitted in any way by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy,  
photograph, magnetic recording, or any other—without the prior written permission of the  
publisher.

Address all correspondence to:

The Elijah Project

P.O. Box 870153

Mesquite, Texas 75150



**T**he Voice of Elijah publishes articles based on the findings of The Elijah Project, a private research group headed by Larry Harper. In this column we seek answers to general-interest questions concerning the findings, purpose, and philosophy of this project.

*Editor: I'm not sure if you are willing to discuss this subject openly, but I would like to ask you an age-old question that I'm sure humans have wrestled with since the time when man was first created: What is the purpose of man's existence? In other words, why did God create man? The typical "Christian" response is to say that God created man so that He could have fellowship with him, or so that He could bestow His love upon humanity, or something like this. What do you say?*

**Elijah:** When all is said and done, what I say doesn't matter much one way or the other. The question is, what do the Scriptures say? The only problem with trying to answer that question honestly is, when you tell people what the Scriptures actually say, they respond with that goofy be-all-to-end-all response of "That's your interpretation," as though one person's interpretation of the Scriptures is just as valid as the next. The Truth is, there has to be one true meaning attached to all the scriptural texts that touch on this subject just as there must be one true meaning attached to all the texts that touch on every other subject regarding mankind. So let me tell you what I believe the text of Scripture has to say on the subject. That way, folks will know from the outset that it is just "my interpretation," and they can take it or leave it as they choose.

As far as discussing things openly is concerned, the time seems to be upon us when that is no longer as great a concern as it once was. It doesn't matter all that much what I tell people as long as I don't present certain things in a coherent form that they can easily twist and distort to achieve their own ends. Since it is impossible for most people to see how one thing in the Scriptures relates to another until they are told, I can pretty much touch on anything I care to, as long as I don't say too much. Obviously, I am not yet prepared to go around shooting holes in every "sacred cow" that Satan has people believing, but I can at least cut the tail off of one or two without anyone raising too much of a fuss. Who knows? Maybe what I say here will help a few True Believers see how ridiculous some of the current views concerning the Scriptures actually are.

The first issue you have to deal with when you talk about the creation of mankind is the apparent contradiction that exists between the account in Genesis 1 and that found in Genesis 2. Notice I said "apparent contradiction." That's just another way of saying, "Satan has most folks believing his lie." There is no contradiction at all between the two accounts. It only appears that way because Satan has deceived people into firmly believing something that is not true. Since I am not yet at liberty to openly refute his lie, I can only show you the apparent contradiction and explain the Truth as it pertains to the creation of Adam.

This is what Moses tells us happened on the third day of creation:

*Then God said, "Let the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear"; and it was so. And God called the dry land earth, and the gathering of the waters He called seas; and God saw that it was good. Then God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, {and} fruit trees bearing fruit after their kind, with seed in them, on the earth"; and it was so. **And the earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed after their kind, and trees bearing fruit, with seed in them, after their kind;** and God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, a third day.  
(Genesis 1:9-13)*

The biblical text plainly tells us two things happened on the third day. First, dry ground appeared out of the waters that had covered the earth until that time.

Then, vegetation began to grow on that dry ground. That information may seem to be nothing more than an informative description of how things came to be the way they are. Unfortunately, appearances are usually deceiving when it comes to the Scriptures. The Truth is, Moses is providing a basic historical framework into which he expects his reader to fit the things he is going to say later on. But that is not obvious until we actually come to the additional information we need to fit into that framework. Only then do the various pieces of the puzzle begin to fit together. So let me show you the things that Moses expects us to fit into the chronological framework he gives in Genesis 1. Take a look at how he describes the creation of Adam:

*This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made earth and heaven. Now no shrub of the field was yet in the earth, and no plant of the field had yet sprouted, for the LORD God had not sent rain upon the earth; and there was no man to cultivate the ground. But a mist used to rise from the earth and water the whole surface of the ground. Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. And the LORD God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden; and there He placed the man whom He had formed. **And out of the ground the LORD God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.***

(Genesis 2:4–9)

In Genesis, Moses uses the Hebrew phrase translated here as “This is the account of” as a preface to the separate sections of his account. In each case, it is an introduction that tells you he is going to provide details that you need to know about the various men who played a role in God’s scheme. You can find it in 2:4 (Adam), 6:9 (Noah), 10:1 (Shem, Ham, and Japheth), 11:10 (Shem), 11:27 (Terah), 25:12 (Ishmael), 25:19 (Isaac), 36:1 (Esau), 36:9 (Esau), and 37:2 (Jacob). In most cases, it is translated as “These are the generations of.” Some will insist the same phrase also occurs in 5:1, but that’s not true. A variant form of the phrase occurs in that verse to throw the misguided off track. That subterfuge stands in sharp contrast to its use in 2:4. As Moses plainly tells us in that verse, he is introducing a

section in which he is going to talk about the generations of the heavens and the earth. By that he means he is going to give us pertinent details we need to know about how the earth “brought forth” various forms of life. If you read the first chapter of Genesis carefully, you will find that process began on the third day and ended on the sixth.

Anyone who is not completely beguiled by Satan’s lie should be able to see that Moses wants us to understand Adam was created on the third day, after dry ground had appeared but before any vegetation had begun to grow on the earth. For those who have eyes to see but can’t see and ears to hear but can’t hear, let me point out the obvious: The text plainly says God created Adam out of the dust of the ground. That tells us dry ground must have already appeared out of the waters. The text just as plainly states there was no vegetation growing on the earth. That tells us God had not yet created vegetation. Therefore, God must have created Adam sometime on the third day after dry ground appeared but before vegetation started growing.

Now, those who prefer to believe Satan’s lie will immediately raise all sorts of objections to “my interpretation.” They may well fall back on the argument that Genesis 2:5 is talking about cultivated plants whereas Genesis 1:11–12 is describing the creation of wild plants. That’s nonsense, but those who want to go on believing a lie won’t be able to see that. They will argue that the following passage “proves” Adam and Eve were created on the sixth day:

*Then God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind: cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth after their kind”; and it was so. And God made the beasts of the earth after their kind, and the cattle after their kind, and everything that creeps on the ground after its kind; and God saw that it was good. Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. And God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” Then God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is*

*on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you; and to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the sky and to every thing that moves on the earth which has life, {I have given} every green plant for food"; and it was so. And God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.*  
(Genesis 1:24–31)

I didn't have to include what Moses wrote about God creating the animals before He created a man in His image on the sixth day. I only did that so I could point out just how ridiculous it is for anyone to believe that passage is talking about the same creation of Adam that is described in Genesis 2:4–8. How could it be? Genesis 1:24–25 plainly says God created the animals on the sixth day *BEFORE* He "created man in His own image." Yet the biblical text in Genesis 2 clearly wants us to understand God created not only the animals but also the birds *AFTER* He formed Adam from the dust of the ground. That's not just "my interpretation." Any fool with a half-open mind has to admit the text says that. Look at this:

*Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die." Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him." And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought {them} to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. And the man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him.*  
(Genesis 2:15–20)

That passage completely supports my understanding that Adam was created on the third day, *AFTER* dry ground had appeared but *BEFORE* any vegetation had begun to grow. It does not, and cannot logically be made to, support the notion that the creation of Adam and Eve is described in Genesis 1:26–27. The text of Genesis 2:18–19 plainly says that God created the birds

and all the animals in an effort to "make a helper suitable for" Adam. Now, I'm sure some folks would readily believe anything other than the Truth. But it is difficult to refute the facts. The text plainly says God created the animals and the birds *AFTER* He created Adam, yet *BEFORE* He created Eve. Did you hear what I said? I said the text says *GOD CREATED THE BIRDS AFTER HE CREATED ADAM*. I don't mean to rub salt in anyone's wounded ego, but nobody with intelligence greater than that of a moron would take the text to say God created the birds on anything other than the fifth day:

*Then God said, "Let the waters teem with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth in the open expanse of the heavens." And God created the great sea monsters, and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarmed after their kind, and every winged bird after its kind; and God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." And there was evening and there was morning, a fifth day.*  
(Genesis 1:20–23)

So there you have it. "My interpretation" of the biblical text tells me the fifth day of creation came *BEFORE* the sixth day of creation. "My interpretation" also tells me God created the birds *ON* the fifth day and the animals *AT THE BEGINNING OF* the sixth day in an effort to "make a helper suitable for" Adam. Therefore, "my interpretation" tells me He must have created Adam sometime *BEFORE* He created the birds *ON* the fifth day of creation. But "my interpretation" goes even further. It tells me exactly when He created Adam. It was *ON* the third day, *AFTER* dry ground appeared and *BEFORE* any vegetation began to grow on that ground. Therefore, any imbecile who wants to argue against "my interpretation" in order to cling to Satan's lie not only has to discount what the text says about the creation of Adam *BEFORE* the appearance of vegetation *ON* the third day, he also has to ignore what it says about Adam being created *BEFORE* the birds and the animals were created *ON* the fifth and sixth days.

In the face of all that evidence, why would anyone argue against the belief that God created Adam *IN THE MIDDLE OF* the third day of creation? Only because they prefer to believe Satan's lie concerning the things Moses tells us God accomplished when He created a

man in His image *ON* the sixth day. Since I cannot yet publicly explain those things, I can only tell you what I understand concerning the creation of Adam and Eve. But I will say that, after hearing what I just explained, only a moron would continue to insist that Genesis 1:26–27 tells us Adam was created in the image of God.

I don't mean to be facetious in talking about the stupidity enshrined in theologians' "conventional wisdom." There is nothing funny about millions of people going to hell because they prefer to believe Satan's lie. But the Truth is, the biblical text clearly wants us to understand that God created Adam *ON* the third day of creation. Then He created the birds and the animals *ON* the fifth and sixth days of creation in an attempt to "make a helper suitable for" Adam. When that proved unsuccessful, He created Eve as a helper for Adam *ON* the sixth day just as the text says:

*And the man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him. So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh at that place. And the LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. And the man said, "This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man." (Genesis 2:20–23)*

Now, you asked me why God created man. To that I respond, God did not create man. He created *a man*, the one man Adam, and He later created *a woman*, the one woman Eve. The rest of us are here only as the result of Adam's sin. Therefore, God is not responsible for our existence. Adam and Eve are. The participants in The Next Step program will soon have opportunity to understand why I say that. Those who receive your newsletter will one day have that same information made available to them, as will anyone else who is even slightly interested. Until then, everyone except the participants in The Next Step program will have to remain content with knowing what I believe concerning the creation of Adam.

In light of the things I just told you, Adam was not, as the evolutionists assume, the result of any evo-

lutionary process. Neither was he, as most Christians believe, the last and best species that God created. He was instead the first of all living creatures. As such, he was a prototype, the pattern on which God based all other creatures. That's probably why segments of the DNA structure of the human species can be found in so many other creatures. God took their DNA from Adam just as He did in the case of Eve. Yet in every case, those creatures are something other than human.

If you want to look at it in human terms, God was experimenting. Or, as Moses humorously puts it so as to mock the ignorant, He was trying to find "a helper suitable for" Adam. The Truth is, God was seeking to provide something that Adam needed—help in cultivating the Garden—while setting the stage for future developments. But the point Moses wants us to grasp is, when God created Eve, He did not set out to create another human being. That speaks loudly to anyone who has ears to hear. But it only provides an additional basis for objecting to "my interpretation" in the mind of the fool who wants to go on believing Satan's lie.

In the harsh light of *The Teaching*, it is obvious that Adam was created for only one purpose. The text tells us God created him and placed him in the Garden to cultivate it. That was not the *only reason* he was created, but it was the *sole purpose* for which he was created. That's not just "my interpretation." The text plainly says that. But it just as plainly tells us God—for His own reasons—created Adam with the potential to be much more than he was when he was created. He could become "like God, knowing good and evil" (Gen. 3:5, 22). However, Adam could attain that potential only if he sinned. Therefore, God introduced circumstances into Adam's environment so that Adam could be tested by being tempted to disobey God. Some will find fault with God for that. But those folks fail to lay the blame where it belongs. Adam was the one who sinned. God merely arranged circumstances so that he could be tested. Those who reject that Truth fail to understand God is doing the same with them today. And as James adamantly states, God does not tempt anyone to sin; He merely allows them to be tested:

*Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. (James 1:13–14)*

In Adam's case, God allowed him to be severely tested by being tempted to sin. When Adam failed the test, as God knew he would, He then initiated a plan of salvation to salvage some of Adam's descendants. However, God's plan of salvation was completely separate from His original plan for Adam. It was conditioned on the fact that Adam could freely choose to sin or not to sin. That is, Adam's free choice determined whether a plan of salvation would even be necessary. As to the nature of God's plan, I can only say this: I'm not yet allowed to shoot anybody's sacred cow in public. The most I can do is cut its tail off.

In case anyone is interested in the slaughter of sacred cows, however, I should tell you that process is already well underway in The Next Step program. Yet it is not necessary for anyone to join that program to find out what I believe. My views will be published for all to read—eventually. Then everyone will have opportunity to refute my understanding of God's ultimate plan for men and women. Notice I did not say "mankind" or "the descendants of Adam." I said "men and women." I used that specific wording because God has never had any overall plan or purpose for mankind. His plan has always been restricted to individuals within the species. Participation in God's plan is, like Adam's decision to sin, a matter of individual choice. Therefore, it is not something that pertains to us as a group. It pertains only to individuals.

*Editor: In The Way, The Truth, The Life seminar tapes, you made the statement that Solomon's wisdom derived from his understanding of The Teaching. One of the great stories that demonstrates his wisdom is when he resolved the conflict between two women who sought to claim a baby as their own (1 Kings 3:16–28). Although there is probably greater meaning and significance to this story than what appears on the surface, it nonetheless suggests that The Teaching taught Solomon a lot about human nature. Beyond the fact that we are despicable, self-centered creatures, what else does The Teaching tell us about ourselves?*

*Elijah:* You're right about the *significance* of the story about Solomon and the two harlots. It has virtually nothing to say concerning Solomon other than the fact that his understanding of *The Teaching* made it possible for him to govern Israel more effectively. However, it provides several crucial details that we

need to know concerning the women who engaged in the Canaanite *zonah* ritual. But that's not what you asked about.

The purpose of *The Teaching* is to tell us what we need to know to be saved. In the process of doing that, it explains Who God is, who we are, Who Jesus Christ is, and who Satan is. That being the case, you would expect it to tell us exactly what the nature of man is, what drives him, why he acts the way he does, etc. And it does. Therefore, the one who knows the Truth quite often has difficulty dealing with the brutal insight it provides into the reality that we face down here. For example, it isn't always easy to deal with the vicious nature that people try to hide yet can't completely conceal behind a thin veneer of solicitude. When events remind me of how nasty people are, I go to John 2:23–25 for encouragement and support. John says this:

*Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, beholding His signs which He was doing. But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men, and because He did not need anyone to bear witness concerning man for He Himself knew what was in man. (John 2:23–25)*

One of the key words John uses in the Gospel of John is *witness*. Another is *light*. Yet a third is *glory*. In each case, John is referring to a *parabolic image* that God has used in the Hebrew Scriptures to depict *The Teaching*. In this case, John is using the word *witness* to allude to the fact that Jesus attained His knowledge of the nature of man through His understanding of the Hebrew Scriptures. The Scriptures are a "witness" that testifies against us in graphic detail. The evidence is all there. The only thing anyone needs to do is read it with understanding. The amazing thing in that regard is that the more True Believers understand the Truth concerning who we are, the more they come to act as Jesus acted. That is, they refuse to confide in those around them because they realize the only one they can depend on with complete confidence is God. That makes them seem a bit peculiar to most people.

As far as what else *The Teaching* has to say concerning human nature, I'd have to say you summed it all up rather nicely. We are certainly despicable and self-centered. That's why men and women who were at one time supposedly "in love" end up in divorce

court or in a bitter relationship with someone they—irrationally—can't stand to be with yet can't stand to be without. Most of them were never "in love" in the first place. They were merely "in lust." That is, they wanted something—perhaps the perfect relationship—and then found that their one and lonely was either not willing or not able to give it to them. If they understood *The Teaching*, they would realize just how stupid that approach actually is. But they don't, so they can't.

I can't go into any great detail concerning the nature of men and women. But I can tell you the Scriptures make a clear distinction between the two, and men don't realize how fortunate they are. If they did, those who are True Believers would be much more considerate and understanding of their spouses. They would treat them as Peter exhorted them to:

*You husbands likewise, live with {your wives} in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman; and grant her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.*  
(1 Peter 3:7)

Peter says the woman is a "weaker vessel" because he knows something most women will never admit. The Truth is, women endure a secret agony, one which they cannot clearly define, much less accurately understand, all because God placed a curse directly on Eve. He did that because she sinned first and then enticed Adam to sin. Sexual union with a man, whether in marriage or outside, invokes that curse. That's why Paul says it is better not to marry (1 Cor. 7:26–28).

The curse of God affects a woman both psychologically and emotionally, and it has some incredibly deleterious effects on her relationship with any man to whom she joins herself so as to become "one flesh" with him. While the one-flesh concept may appear to be just another *parabolic image*, it isn't. It graphically describes that single-most horrific obstacle that men and women must overcome to have a completely satisfying and rewarding relationship with one another. Few couples ever do because a woman cannot live completely free from the curse of God except through a knowledge of *The Teaching*. The situation is, after all, exactly as Jesus said it was:

*Jesus therefore was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you abide in My word, {then} you are truly dis-*

*ciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."*

(John 8:31–32)

**Editor:** *Speaking of things that Jesus said, why did John the Baptist deny that he was Elijah (John 1:21) when it's obvious from Jesus' statement in Matthew 17:11–13 that he was? Did he not yet understand who he was at the time when the question was posed, or did he have another reason for his denial?*

**Elijah:** The first passage you mentioned says this:

*And this is the witness of John, when the Jews sent to him priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" And he confessed, and did not deny, and he confessed, "I am not the Christ." And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" And he said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." They said then to him, "Who are you, so that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?" He said, "I am A VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, 'MAKE STRAIGHT THE WAY OF THE LORD,' as Isaiah the prophet said."*  
(John 1:19–23)

It is obvious that John the Baptist knew he was not the Elijah mentioned in the Hebrew Scriptures. That is not surprising. According to Malachi, that individual will minister to the people of God immediately before the wrath of God is poured out at the Second Coming:

*"Remember the law of Moses My servant, {even the} statutes and ordinances which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel. Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD. And he will restore the hearts of the fathers to {their} children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse."*  
(Malachi 4:4–6)

Malachi says "Elijah" is going to "restore" something to God's chosen people before God in His wrath destroys all of mankind. The text is intentionally enigmatic in describing what that is. However, Jesus mentions it in the text you pointed to in Matthew:

*And six days later Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and brought them up to a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. And Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, I will make three tabernacles here, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah." While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!" And when the disciples heard {this}, they fell on their faces and were much afraid. And Jesus came to {them} and touched them and said, "Arise, and do not be afraid." And lifting up their eyes, they saw no one, except Jesus Himself alone. And as they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, "Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man has risen from the dead." And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" And He answered and said, "**Elijah is coming and will restore all things**; but I say to you, that Elijah already came, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they wished. So also the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands." Then the disciples understood that He had spoken to them about John the Baptist.*  
(Matthew 17:1–13)

I included the account of the transfiguration because that is what caused Peter, James, and John to ask about the coming of Elijah. They had just seen Elijah alive on the mountain. So when Jesus warned them not to tell anyone what they had seen, they asked Him why the scribes were teaching that Elijah would come first. That's when He told them that Elijah had already come in the person of John the Baptist.

The key to understanding what Jesus meant lies in knowing that Malachi used the image of Elijah to speak *parabolically* concerning a person who would minister to God's chosen people right before the End. Yet some folks in Jesus' day (and lots in our own) ignorantly assumed Malachi was speaking literally concerning the Prophet Elijah who had been taken up alive in a chariot of fire (2 Kings 2:11). They thought Elijah was going to come back to earth. Therefore, Jesus was emphasizing that Elijah is merely a *parabolic image* the Prophets used to describe the activity of the one who

heralds the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. The image of Elijah tells you what that person's ministry is *LIKE*.

Jesus' point is, the *parabolic* image of Elijah could easily be applied to John the Baptist because he was the herald of the First Advent of Christ. But the *parabolic* imagery the Prophets used does not refer specifically to John the Baptist. John was merely a *parabolic* fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies concerning Elijah. Those prophecies actually describe how the Last Days, the days leading up to the Return of Christ, are *LIKE* the days of Elijah. At that time, as it will be at the End, one man who knew the Truth stood his ground against a whole horde of false prophets while God "cut off from Israel" all who refused to have anything to do with the Truth.

Having told you that John the Baptist was not the ultimate fulfillment of the prophecies concerning Elijah, however, I should also tell you that the "restoration" work that "Elijah" does at the End is essentially the same thing that John the Baptist did in his generation. It is the same thing that the Prophet Elijah was doing when he confronted the ignorance of Ahab, Jezebel, and the prophets of Baal. God called those men to "restore" *The Teaching* that Israel lost. That's why the angel of the Lord mentioned the *parabolic image* of Elijah when he spoke to John's father concerning John's ministry:

*But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will give him the name John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and he will drink no wine or liquor; and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, while yet in his mother's womb. And he will turn back many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God. And it is he who will go {as a forerunner} before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, TO TURN THE HEARTS OF THE FATHERS BACK TO THE CHILDREN, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous; so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."*  
(Luke 1:13–17)

The basic difference between John the Baptist and the "Elijah" to come is, John the Baptist gained his insight—as did Elijah and all the other Prophets—by means of direct revelation from God. That was necessary because the Scriptures had been sealed. The one

who is parabolically *LIKE* Elijah at the End will have no need of any direct revelation from God because in his day, the Scriptures are going to be unsealed so that anyone who wants to understand the Truth can do so. All he is going to do is read the Scriptures as they are unsealed and teach what he understands to those who are willing to listen. Therefore, although he does the same work that the Prophets did, he requires only the authority of a Teacher to complete his ministry.

In his Gospel, Matthew makes it clear that the only way to understand what Jesus said is to think in terms of the *parabolic* images that He used. He knows that one of those images is the image of Elijah. So he tries to make his point by telling us what Jesus said about Elijah. We have already seen how Jesus corrected His disciples' mistaken assumption that the Elijah they saw alive on the mountain was the same Elijah who would come at the End. But Matthew also tells us He had mentioned the same thing earlier:

*And as these were going {away}, Jesus began to speak to the multitudes about John, "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? But what did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft {clothing}? Behold, those who wear soft {clothing} are in kings' palaces. But why did you go out? To see a prophet? Yes, I say to you, and one who is more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written,*

*'BEHOLD, I SEND MY MESSENGER BEFORE YOUR FACE,  
WHO WILL PREPARE YOUR WAY BEFORE YOU.'*

*Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen {anyone} greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and violent men take it by force. For all the prophets and the Law prophesied until John. And if you care to accept {it}, he himself is Elijah, who was to come. He who has ears to hear, let him hear."*

*(Matthew 11:7-15)*

Did you hear what Jesus said? He said, "if you care to accept it." What kind of nonsensical statement is that? He tells His disciples that John the Baptist is Elijah only "if you care to accept it." His point is, Elijah is a *parabolic image*. That image can and does apply to

John the Baptist, *if* you want to apply it to him. But John the Baptist is not the ultimate fulfillment of the prophecies in the Hebrew Scriptures that speak concerning events that lead up to the Second Coming. The "Elijah" to come is. Therefore, a man who is called of God just as Elijah was will one day step forward to do all the things the Prophets said he would do. John the Baptist knew that. That's why he did not claim to be Elijah. Jesus Christ knew exactly the same thing. That's why He said Elijah would eventually come to "restore all things." The Early Church Fathers Justin Martyr, Irenæus, and Hippolytus also knew the *parabolic image* of Elijah fits but one man perfectly. That's why they said what they said about Elijah appearing shortly before the Second Coming. In the case of that man, it is not a matter of "if you care to accept it." God is going to do exactly what He told the Prophets He was going to do through the one called "Elijah."

*Editor: As our subscribers are no doubt aware, we have often fallen behind when it comes to the timely delivery of the newsletter. For instance, most subscribers did not receive the April 1997 issue until the first week in June. To their credit, we have received few, if any, complaints from our subscribers; most seem to be very patient with us. Just so people can be better informed and have a greater appreciation for what you are doing, would you tell us something about your typical day, week, or month and also tell us some of the obstacles you must continually deal with?*

*Elijah:* I have fallen behind because it has been well over two years since I have had a "typical" day, week, or month. Two and a half years ago I had surgery and lost a couple of weeks. Last year, I caught a nasty viral infection and lost the better part of three months. Then, where I used to be able to sit down and write all day at least five days a week, I seldom average more than three. That severely limits the amount of work I get done.

Things have begun looking up over the past month, however. The credit for that goes to generous contributions of the participants in The Next Step program. Their gifts have made it possible for me to finally get control of the video-editing process that we use to produce the educational videos we distribute to them. Not only should I soon be able to get back on schedule, but over the next year those folks should see an even

greater improvement in the quality and educational impact of those tapes.

I would have to say the greatest challenge I face on a daily basis is overcoming my own ignorance. The more I understand of the Truth, the more I realize I can't see how specific details in the biblical message fit together. So I spend a lot of time gathering evidence and thinking about what I have learned, trying to understand how it all makes sense. Sometimes things fall together quickly. Other times it is impossible for me to see what is causing the lack of coherency. But that doesn't apply just to the Scriptures. It applies to every area of knowledge in which we are currently involved.

I spent fifteen years gaining the expertise necessary so that I could do biblical research in the original languages of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures. Since I didn't (and still don't) have the money to hire all the people I need to help me, I have now spent fifteen years working with computers and software, seven years in desktop publishing and printing, four years in audio production, and now two years in video production. Every new area of expertise has its own peculiar learning curve, and it is not easy to master any one of them. Consequently, I haven't. But I do attend technical seminars. Then I train others to take over the work after I know just enough to be dangerous.

In areas other than the Scriptures, I make do with little more than whatever minimum level of knowledge is necessary to accomplish what I have been called to do. I don't have time to acquire much more. I have found that in every area of knowledge, there are those who know and will only reluctantly tell you what they know. Then there are those who don't know but will readily tell you what they think they know. The few who actually know are a distinct minority. Yet they are mingled with a multitude who think they do.

Most of the time I find that no one person can tell me everything I need to know anyway. But even finding a person who knows the truth can sometimes be an exercise in futility. I attended a seminar recently where the lecturer told a joke that I found to be an apt description of reality. Question: How can you tell when a salesman is lying? Answer: When his lips are moving. I've found the same to be true of just about anyone who works in any area where time is money. They will tell you whatever is necessary to get you off the phone or give you the impression that they know what they are talking about. But that seems to be a greater prob-

lem with start-up companies than with major corporations and with new products rather than established ones. Consequently, I've learned that it is best to pay a little more for name brands and stay a bit behind the cutting edge of technology. Unfortunately, I only came to that realization this past year. Before that, I spent a lot of time trying to track down information on new products that nobody seemed to have.

Too large a part of my time over the past two years has been consumed by acting on things people told me, only to find out later what they said was not true. The most frustrating experiences have involved trying to return equipment that was either defective when it arrived or else not what I ordered. From some of the incredibly amazing things that have happened in that regard over the past two years, it is obvious that Satan is well aware of what we are doing and is using others to try to stop it. But I realized a few months ago that he stood against the leaders of the Early Church in exactly the same way. That's why the Apostle Paul had such a difficult time fulfilling his calling. None of the frustration I have experienced even comes close to the things he went through:

*Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine {lashes}. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. {I have been} on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from {my} countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; {I have been} in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. Apart from {such} external things, there is the daily pressure upon me {of} concern for all the churches.*  
(2 Corinthians 11:24-28)

The work God has called me to do is essentially mental. I have to do nothing but read, write, and think—hopefully not in that order. Knowing what I must do, I have tried to insulate myself from outside distractions and forces that are beyond my control. It has not been easy, but I have almost gotten things together so that I can focus completely on the task: Publishing my understanding of the Scriptures in a form that anyone can understand. That is all I have any desire to do, and it is certainly all I intend to do. ■