



INSIDE

- Letters to the Editor . . . 2
- Questions & Answers . 18

Volume 4, Number 2

April 1993

Mystics, Meatballs, and the Marvelous Works of God

I'm sure you've heard by now how God told Vernon Howell—a.k.a. David Koresh, the leader of the Branch Davidian cult outside Waco, Texas—*not* to come out of his cult's compound. That was even after the cult leader had promised authorities he would come out on his own, provided they allowed him to broadcast a rambling, fifty-eight minute tape of his wacky religious ideas on a national radio network. They did. He did

not. Just goes to show how quick the wind can change here in Texas.

God talks to the boy, don't ya know? He must have also told him to buy a .50 caliber machine gun with armor-piercing ammunition and a veritable arsenal of other assorted weapons and explosives. Why else would he have bought them? The only big game for which you would need that kind of artillery is dino-

sours. And they've been extinct for at least twenty years. But I guess maybe he hadn't heard.

Now I know what you're saying. "Yeah. Right! And a pickle in a pig's ear." But come on now, let's give the fella the benefit of the doubt. He must have just heard wrong. Or maybe God told him he needed a .30 caliber, lever-action, and all he could get at the time was the top-of-the-line automatic.

Sometimes facts are facts, and we just got to face 'em. Seems that nowadays God talks directly to all sorts of meatballs. You can hear what He told them yourself on the radio or television at all hours of the day and night if you don't believe me. When they aren't trying to dip into your pockets on the sly, they'll be telling you right up front how "God told them" this or that.

Isn't that something? Moses must have arrived on the red-eye from Sinai while we were sleeping! Or maybe some prophet extraordinaire has appeared on the scene and didn't want to scare us by sayin' so outright. Leastwise, you would assume so. God put a real powder on Miriam for being a bit slow on the uptake concerning who gets to call collect. Listen to what He said:

*"Hear now My words:
If there is a prophet among you,
I, the LORD, shall make Myself known to
him in a vision.*

Watching Ducks Sashaying 'Round the CornerStone

At one time or another, we've all heard that nifty expression: "If it looks like a duck, walks like a duck, and quacks like a duck, it must be a duck." But did you know the same principle applies when it comes to identifying false prophets? Sure it does. Jesus said so:

*"Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. **You will know them by their fruits.** Grapes are not gathered from thorn {bushes}, nor figs from thistles, are they? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit; but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. So then, **you will know them by their fruits.**"*

(Matthew 7:15-20)

Isn't that amazing? Jesus told us exactly how to recognize false prophets. All we have to do is examine their "fruit." By the way, do you have any idea what He means by "fruit"? Never mind. No need to sweat the small stuff right now. Let's get back to those ducks.

See Ducks on Page 25

See Mystics, Meatballs on Page 4



Published Quarterly
by Voice of Elijah, Inc.

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Volume 4
Number 2
April 1993

All correspondence should be
addressed to:

Voice of Elijah, Inc.
P.O. Box 28201
Dallas, TX 75228

Subscription rates:

(1 year, U.S. Funds)

U.S.	\$24.00
Canada	\$30.00
Abroad	\$50.00

Articles published
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The Elijah Project.

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Letters to the Editor

During this last quarter things have gotten extremely hectic here at *The Voice of Elijah*. Not only have we stepped up our direct mail outreach, mailing almost 20,000 pieces in the last six weeks alone, I'm pleased to report the percent-

age of those responding has been incredible—higher than it's been for over a year. God willing, this upward trend will continue. The most exciting part is that the increased response came right after we gained access to a printing press. (We had been producing our mailing pieces on The Elijah Project's photocopier rather than paying the higher cost of having them professionally printed.) The printing press has reduced our printing costs significantly, while at the same time reducing the time it takes us to produce a mailing. What used to take us two full days to produce on the copier can be done now in a matter of hours. This means we can mail more pieces in less time. That is especially important since all of us except Larry have other full-time jobs. As always, however, we are limited mainly by the funds we have available for outreach. If you have a desire to see this ministry grow, I encourage you to give now. There will never be a better time for one individual to have a significant impact. Each and every contribution, no matter how small, remains important—each dollar you give allows us to send four more mailing pieces. Thanks to those of you who have already contributed, and especially thanks to the generous contributions of our Monthly Contributors, more Believers are discovering us every month.

On another front, seminar preparation is continuing. As many of you already know, The Elijah Project will be sponsoring its first seminar for our Monthly Contributors sometime later this year. They are currently projecting October. The Elijah Project has granted *The Voice of Elijah* permission to offer videotapes of this and all their seminars to *all our subscribers*. I'm confident the videos will provide a wonderful opportunity for everyone to actually hear *The Teaching* taught. We realize hearing the spoken word is important. As Paul says, "faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Rom. 10:17). The preparations for the first seminar are progressing, but slowly because Larry is working hard to complete *The Mystery of Scripture* first. I know many of you have been patiently waiting for your copy of that book. Please join us in praying that the writing will go quickly so we can all gain further insight from it and Larry can go on to the next project. Once *The Mystery of Scripture* has been published and is in your hands, the seminar project should pick up speed. Of course, Larry still has three more volumes of The Resurrection Theology Series to write after that, so don't stop praying for him. Orders for these publications are already coming in, and they aren't even currently being offered!

If you are beginning to get impatient, wanting to learn more, you are among an ever-growing number of readers. I'm convinced everything will be accomplished in God's Own time. I'm just as sure there will be sufficient information for True Believers to digest in the meantime. I encourage you to be diligent in learning, and living according to, the information we already have available. As Larry reminds us in this issue's "Questions & Answers," God is not nearly as concerned with *what we know* as He is with *what we do with what we know*. If we are faithful to the Word we have heard thus far, we can rest assured the remainder will come along in due time. Meanwhile, you can always help us move things along by praying for and giving to this ministry. Obviously, there is a lot of physical work that we do here—editing, printing, and distributing litera-

ture—but your prayers and contributions play an even more important part. So please pray diligently for us and give generously. Time is short, and it is imperative that we reach others quickly with the information that is now available.

Something New

I want to take a moment to point out a few new offerings on the Order Form. With this issue, we have begun offering a book entitled *A History of Heresy* by David Christie-Murray, and another entitled *A.B. Simpson and the Pentecostal Movement* by C.W. Nienkirchen that Larry mentions in one of the articles in this issue (p. 7). This is the first time ***The Voice of Elijah*** has offered outside publications to our readers. We felt it was important to begin doing this because there are a lot of books already published that provide crucial background information for those who are seeking Truth. Although, many books provide relevant information, it is sometimes difficult for us to recommend a publication because the author's own theological bias has prevented him from giving a fair treatment of objective evidence. For the most part, *A History of Heresy* provides a good evaluation of the historical evidence concerning Christian heretics and their heretical doctrines. We recommend it for anyone who has ever wondered where some of the heretical doctrines preached in churches today originated. Nienkirchen's work is a fairly even-handed treatment of the pentecostal revival(s) of a century ago.

Another offering we are excited about is a new Comprehensive Package that will allow you to acquire most of the items published by The Elijah Project and ***The Voice of Elijah*** for a single contribution. Many of you have told us you are loaning your copies of our publications to others. This offer will allow you to aid our ministry and, at the same time, obtain a full set of publications you can use to loan out to others. Look for it under *Special Offer* on the Order Form at the back of this issue.

Letters of Encouragement

Since I mentioned patience above, I thought it might help some of you if I shared a few of the positive responses we have received from readers over the last quarter. Reading letters like the ones below are always encouraging to us here, and I am sure they will accomplish the same in you.

I have read every article in V.O.E. at least once, Not All Israel several times, and likewise with The Advent of Christ and AntiChrist. Each had helped me build depth of understanding.... Sometimes I wonder if we are really learning anything from Larry. He seems to be taking so long, and when he uses the phrase, "over the next few years," one can get impatient and discouraged.... Sud-

denly so much begins to make sense. We all realize a good foundation is built, "line upon line," yet, we are impatient and want all NOW.

John S., Metairie, LA

I want to thank you [Larry] for your hard work and your faithfulness to God's calling. For the first time, many things in The Bible are beginning to make sense. I'm looking forward to more.

Gordon A., Tallahassee, FL

*I can't begin to tell you how much your publication has opened my eyes to truth that I've been looking for for many years. Though I could never put my finger on what I (and everybody else) was missing as I studied the Old Testament, I knew there was greater depth to what was written there than what the commentators were indicating.... I look forward to receiving **The Voice of Elijah** and **The Voice of Elijah Update** each month/quarter. I know I've learned a lot, but I know I've got a long way to go. I continually remind myself of Larry's admonition to be patient and wait upon the Lord.*

Allen F., Wichita, KS

I enjoy them all [the newsletters and books] very much and am experiencing lots of spiritual growth and better understanding of Scripture.... I want to live according to God's perfect will for my life and have a full understanding of the True meaning of His Word.... I will keep Larry, Michael, ... yourself, and all the staff of VOE in my prayers.

Bernard K., Ft. Leavenworth, KS

I hope these letters show you that you are not alone in wanting to learn more right away. Perhaps reading what others like yourself have written will help the next time you feel impatient.

Are You Interested?

We recently received a request from one of our subscribers, Allen F. (a quote from his latest letter appears above). Allen has written us several times asking pertinent questions, but his latest request made us stop and think how best to respond:

*I'm interested in meeting other Christians who are presently reading **The Voice of Elijah**. Is it possible to receive names of those in and around Wichita, KS who are reading the same material I am? If so, could you send me their names and addresses. Thank you.*

Allen F., Wichita, KS

This was the first time anyone had asked, and we weren't sure how to handle his request. We realize it is natural that those who are reading and believing what they read in our publications would want to meet others who feel the same way, so we certainly didn't want to let the request go unanswered. Therefore, we decided to leave it up to you. If you are interested in getting acquainted with other readers of *The Voice of Elijah*, write us and let us know. We'll circulate your names, addresses, and phone numbers (if included) to everybody who has expressed the same interest. You can take it from there. This way, we can ensure that none of our readers have their privacy invaded involuntarily. But don't be surprised if some religious zealot contacts you, trying to convince you *The Teaching* isn't true. It will happen. It's all part of the *winnowing* process.

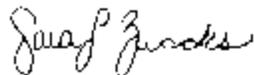
A Final Note

Within a week after Larry submitted the lead article for this issue ("Mystics, Meatballs, and the Marvelous Works of God") for editing, we received a letter from an individual who had received one of our mailing pieces. He didn't subscribe, he just sent us a letter. Some of you who have recently become subscribers will recall our mailer talks about *The Teaching* of the Early Church Fathers Polycarp, Irenæus, and Hippolytus concerning the End Times—*The Teaching* they *received* from the Apostles. It seemed rather remarkable to us that we received the letter so soon after we began preparing Larry's article for publication. I wanted to share it with you because of what is said about such people in the article. First read the letter. Then read (or reread) the lead article (esp. p. 12), and draw your own conclusions:

I am not interested in reading anything by Irenæus or Polycarp or anyone else. I have taught the Bible under the anointing of the Holy Spirit in my heart, now, for 40 years. The last 13 years of my 66-year-old life has been largely spent, just sitting submitted under the anointing in my heart, as He teaches me all things. I have written 45 books with the revelations He has taught me. Not one of them is published or ever will be. For it is not God's will that I, a God called teacher, anointed, and chosen of God, should teach any man anything, except how to hear the anointing of God's Holy Spirit in their own hearts. So that the anointing, they are all anointed with, can teach them all things. So that they will have no need that any man teach them anything, 1 John 2:27.... I write this, to you, as one of God's anointed, who listen to His voice only. I exhort you also, to only listen to and hear and pay attention to His voice in your heart. To enter into the secret place of the Most High. To subject yourself to the higher powers. To come out of literal Babylon and to enter into Spiritual ekklesia, by way of doing just exactly that. If you can hear and obey what the Spirit is saying to you, all the blessings of God be upon you. But if after hearing this short plea of the Spirit, you turn back to the beggardly elements of Babylon's systematic suicide of the letter only, Anathema Maranatha.

Interesting, isn't it? I'm reminded of the article Larry wrote about Gnosticism in the Early Church. (See "Gnostic Beliefs and Early Church Teaching," *The Voice of Elijah*, October 1991.) I didn't realize such beliefs were still alive and well today. As Larry said after reading the letter: "Why does he even bother reading the Bible?" Until next time I'm still

Yours in Him,



Mystics, Meatballs

From Page 1

*I shall speak with him in a dream.
Not so, with My servant Moses,
He is faithful in all My household;
With him I speak mouth to mouth,
Even openly, and not in dark sayings,
And he beholds the form of the LORD.
Why then were you not afraid
To speak against My servant, against
Moses?"*

(Numbers 12:6b-8)

Seems pretty simple to me. Moses got the direct line. All the Prophets who followed after him ever had were dreams and visions. Maybe that explains why the Pentateuch is always saying, "God said to Moses," and all the Prophets say, "the Word of the Lord came to me saying" or "thus says the Lord." Could be. They don't normally tell you *how* they know. They just tell you *what* they know.

But I'm sure all those folks who hear what the Lord has to say must have the Spirit (or should I say "spirit"?) in there jabbering like crazy, telling them all sorts of things God (or should I say "their god"?) has specially chosen them to know. You know how it is. The ministry of the Holy Spirit changed from the Old Testament to the New. Must have. He's talking to everybody directly now; whereas, He used to send messages by code.

However, I still can't figure out why Paul—You know Paul. He had personal revelation from God. Said so himself in Galatians 1:11-12—had a vision once, and God made him figure out what it *meant* on his own. Maybe God demoted him in the between-time. He probably busted him back to Private. Here it is. Read it for yourself:

And they passed through the Phrygian and Galatian region, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia; and when they had come to Mysia, they were trying to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them; and passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a certain man of Macedonia was standing

“If God went back to talking directly to individual Believers under the New Covenant, why would He have established the Prophet as one of the ministries in the Church?”

and appealing to him, and saying, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” And when he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them. (Acts 16:6–10)

I’d like to know how those people with Paul knew they were “forbidden by the Holy Spirit” and “the Spirit of Jesus did not permit.” God has His ways, I know. But they don’t include talking directly to an individual. Not if what He said to Miriam holds any water.

Think carefully for just a bit before you answer this next question. If God went back to talking directly to individual Believers under the New Covenant, why would He have established the Prophet as one of the ministries in the Church?

Now I know some of you are going to answer that by trotting out the modern argument that is little more than a theological gymnastic routine. You know the one. It reduces the *meaning* of the word “prophet” in the New Testament to little more than “preacher.” It also flies in the face of historical evidence that stretches all the way from the time of the Apostles to at least the early fifth century A.D.—evidence that says the Early Church had real, live Prophets just like Israel did in the Old Testament.

It sort of makes sense, doesn’t it, if the Church—the Body of Christ—is *Corporate* Israel? But I won’t bore you with the details here. I’ve already laid out the basics elsewhere. [Editor: He’s alluding to what he has written in *Not All Israel Is Israel*.] By the way, do you know how many theologians can do a theological handstand on the head of a pin? Simultaneously?

All right, I know that wasn’t very nice. But I couldn’t pass up the opportunity. Besides, theologians don’t know how ridiculous they get sometimes. I just thought turnabout might be fair play. For those of you who don’t know the particulars, theologians used to argue about

such things. Some years—okay, centuries—ago, there was apparently some question as to how many angels could simultaneously occupy the space on the head of a pin. Nowadays the question is usually how to best explain away this or that statement they find in the Scriptures.

But honestly now, do you think all those people who say the Lord told them something special actually hear an audible voice saying, “Go three blocks down and take a left”? That could get real scary in a hurry if you’re right in the middle of something important and this booming voice comes over your internal intercom telling you to drop everything and run naked down the street like King Saul—especially if some other joker gets on the horn pretending he’s God.

But maybe not. I imagine they can recognize God’s accent right off after listening to Him for awhile. He probably has a West Texas drawl. Everybody important comes from Texas, you know. Leastwise, some like to think so down here. If you’re not from Texas, but you get to be important enough, folks here will even adopt you. They’ll make you an “honorary Texan.” That’s what happened to George Bush. You remember him? He was a Yankee from Connecticut or somewhere who got to be important and somebody special. I wonder if God ever talked to him directly?

“But honestly now, do you think all those people who say the Lord told them something special actually hear an audible voice saying, ‘Go three blocks down and take a left’?”

You Say You Hear Voices?

You tell me. When it’s a matter of public record that serial killers and seriously ill mental patients hear disembodied voices, why would people who are apparently normal otherwise go around claiming “God told them” this or that?

Granted there is probably a certain percentage of these people who are undiagnosed mental cases, but they can’t all be as loony as two ’toons. So there’s got to be something else working in this case. Here’s what I’ve got figured out so far. You judge for yourself. I won’t say I’m dead center on this one, but I think I’m fairly close.

First of all, God doesn’t talk directly to anyone. He said so Himself. Moses was the last to hear the voice of God speaking to him privately, and even he didn’t hear any internal voice. God talked with Moses face to face from the midst of the pillar of cloud at the Tabernacle:

Now Moses used to take the tent and pitch it outside the camp, a good distance from the camp, and he called it the tent of meeting. And it came about, that everyone who sought the LORD would go out to the tent of meeting which was outside the camp. And it came about, whenever Moses went out to the tent, that all the people would arise and stand, each at the entrance of his tent, and gaze after Moses until he entered the tent. And it came about, whenever Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance of the tent; and the LORD would speak with Moses. When all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, all the people would arise and worship, each at the entrance of his tent. Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend. When Moses returned to the camp, his servant Joshua,

the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart from the tent.
(Exodus 33:7–11)

That just about says it all. God talked to Moses directly. But the Scripture we quoted above from the Book of Numbers tells us Moses was somebody special. The rest of us, Old Testament Prophets included, have been left to rely on dreams and visions. I say “the rest of us” because Joel does say God would pour out His Spirit on everybody (Joel 2:28), so we could all have visions and dreams. Peter confirms that did occur after the ascension of Jesus:

*“For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is {only} the third hour of the day; but this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel:
‘AND IT SHALL BE IN THE LAST DAYS,’
God says,
‘THAT I WILL POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT UPON ALL MANKIND;
AND YOUR SONS AND YOUR DAUGHTERS SHALL PROPHESY,
AND YOUR YOUNG MEN SHALL SEE VISIONS,
AND YOUR OLD MEN SHALL DREAM DREAMS;
EVEN UPON MY BONDSLAVES, BOTH MEN AND WOMEN,
I WILL IN THOSE DAYS POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT
And they shall prophesy.
AND I WILL GRANT WONDERS IN THE SKY ABOVE,
AND SIGNS ON THE EARTH BENEATH,
BLOOD, AND FIRE, AND VAPOR OF SMOKE.
THE SUN SHALL BE TURNED INTO DARKNESS,
AND THE MOON INTO BLOOD,
BEFORE THE GREAT AND GLORIOUS DAY OF THE LORD SHALL COME
AND IT SHALL BE, THAT EVERYONE WHO CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD SHALL BE SAVED.’”*
(Acts 2:15–21)

So God might communicate with any one of us at any time through a dream or a vision. But everybody knows such things must be interpreted. Sort of like Scripture, you understand? [Editor: He’s mocking the concept of private interpretation of Scripture. See the articles in *The Voice of Elijah*, January 1993,

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along with “Letters to the Editor” and “Questions & Answers,” *The Voice of Elijah*, July 1991.] That’s logical, isn’t it? We saw above that even the Apostle Paul was reduced to “concluding” the fairly straightforward vision he saw at Troas *meant* he and those with him should veer off their intended course and go into Macedonia to preach the Gospel.

It’s easy to see that God intentionally left us to rely on our own honest appraisal of such phenomena. He did so because the proud and perverse Pretender can (has in the past and will in the future) read monumental messages from God into the jumble of images in the dreams that sometimes accompany the normal activity of the brain writing short-term memory into long-term memory while we sleep.

But, why bother about such things anyhow? The Pretenders have long since ceased interpreting visions and dreams. They’ve gone dedicated voice line to God; fiber optics all the way. So you can forget about divine communication in the *parabolic imagery* of *The Teaching* via visions and dreams. [Editor: He’s alluding to the fact that God sometimes uses the *parabolic imagery* of *The Teaching* to communicate in visions and dreams.] God’s gone to speaking the King’s English. Makes me wonder if He still speaks in parables. [Editor: He’s alluding to the fact that God has always spoken in parables just as Jesus did. See various articles in past issues, especially “The *Parabolic Pantomimes* of Jesus Christ,” *The Voice of Elijah*, January 1991, and “It’s Not Difficult to See, Comparatively Speaking,” *The Voice of Elijah*, October 1992.]

On a related matter, I realize there are probably some True Believers fol-

lowing along with us, maybe even a few that just signed on as new subscribers, who have had a personal experience with God based in the doctrine of those who emphasize the “gifts of the Spirit.” If you are one of those, I suggest you read everything the Apostle Paul tells you about the manifestation of God’s Spirit in the context of his time.

The Apostolic Teaching was alive and well in Paul’s day. (See “The Protestant Confession: The Church Lost *The Teaching*,” *The Voice of Elijah*, January 1992, and “Did You Mean That Literally?” *The Voice of Elijah*, January 1993.) Moreover, the Church still had Prophets ministering everywhere at that time. Remember Agabus and his group (Acts 11:27–28)? Yet Paul tells us that even then the words of one Prophet were to be judged as to their validity by other Prophets standing by (1 Cor. 14:29).

So don’t let some half-cocked Pretender who doesn’t have the foggiest notion *The Teaching* ever existed in the Church convince you God now works otherwise. God does nothing that cannot be independently confirmed as the valid activity of His Holy Spirit by those who understand *The Teaching*. And He won’t. Truth is too important to be shredded like cabbage.

The Apostolic Teaching is no longer understood by the Church today because it was lost early on after the Apostles died. (See “The Origen of Folly,” *The Voice of Elijah*, January 1993.) However, that same *Teaching* will soon be fully understood by True Believers everywhere once again. (See “One Train. One Track. Two Rails.” *The Voice of Elijah*, January 1992.) When *The Teaching* has been completely *restored*, you who are True Believers will better understand Paul’s admonition concerning the gifts of the Spirit.

Suffice it to say for now, the phenomena that accompanied the last great

**“The first thing you
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“One of our obligations as vessels of the Spirit of Christ is to stringently avoid misrepresenting the nature of the Holy Spirit that dwells within.”

outpouring of the Holy Spirit beginning just over a century ago has long since been distorted and perverted to an extreme. God did not intend the gifts of His Holy Spirit to be so totally enlisted in the cause of doctrinal sectarianism by those on all sides. Therefore, I highly recommend you read the book *A. B. Simpson and the Pentecostal Movement* by C. W. Nienkirchen and follow Simpson’s personal example as described therein (not as described later by those who followed him in his own organization).

Hew to the middle ground, and let God work among you as He will in days to come. Only watch carefully for, and guard yourselves against, the corruption that Pretenders of all stripes will undoubtedly seek to introduce among you. (See “Questions & Answers” in this issue.) We are moving closer every day to the final phenomenal outpouring of God’s Holy Spirit. I’ve already heard reports that tell me the Spirit is stirring and beginning to work quietly among you. Many more such works will follow shortly, I’m sure.

Be patient, and avoid the pretense of the Pretenders who gather in their boisterous assemblies for fleshly gratification. God does His best work in the quietness of your prayer closet. Prepare yourselves well now for the outpouring of His Spirit, and you can be certain God will use you later. This article will point you in the right direction. Just keep a slow, steady pace. Pretenders will rush right on by you, thinking it’s all got to happen today.

First Things First

The first thing you should understand is, God doesn’t speak directly to individuals. However, He can and will speak to them through visions and dreams. Just so you have no excuse, however, I must tell you Satan will do the same. The reason for that is testing. God wants to see whether you want Truth, or whether you will settle for a lie. Moses told us that a long time ago. [Editor: He’s alluding to Deut. 13:1 ff.] It’s the same

reason you see so many people teaching false doctrines in the Church today.

The second thing you need to realize is that all this “God told me” business is sometimes nothing more than a con artist’s crude ploy to increase revenues. I won’t name names simply because I don’t want to run the risk of blasphemy (see “How Quickly They Do Blaspheme,” *The Voice of Elijah*, October 1992); but there are some “ministers of the gospel” on television and radio every day/week who are so obviously sleazy it oozes out their pores. They say “God told me” with no more sincerity of belief in God than a frontier medicine man peddling snake oil or a developer selling swamp land in Florida.

Theirs is the ultimate con game. They’re selling the idea of “pie in the sky, by and by” to people who want to enjoy their slice here and now. Until you are willing to admit that, in this case, neither con nor coned is innocent, you miss the point of God’s purpose in allowing such idiocy. People believe the spiel they hear from these charlatans because they *want* to believe it. They *deserve* to be deceived.

Finally, however, there are those True Believers who say “God told me” and sincerely believe it. I even catch myself slipping into that vernacular at times, but I do my best not to. It’s easy to do when you’re trying to follow the prompting of the Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ within you. That doesn’t make it right. It just explains why it is. That’s why I’m writing this article. Knowledge of the information in it has helped me. Maybe it will help a few of you as well.

Don’t Blame Me. It Wasn’t My Fault!

As far as I can determine, True Believers find it easy to say “God told me” for two basic reasons. First, we (here I’d rather say “they” or “you” but can’t do so in all honesty) are trying to duck responsibility for our own beliefs. In other words, we need to do a little more growing spiri-

tually. And second, we haven’t fully thought through the role of the Holy Spirit of Christ that dwells within us.

We’ll *talk about* both of these in a bit. But first, if you fall into this last category as a True Believer, I trust you will take heed to what you find written here. As True Believers, we can’t do much about what others do except shun the mental cases and religious charlatans who spout pious-sounding religious statements. We can, however, personally refrain from attributing directly to God things that come only indirectly from Him—through our own personal relationship with the Holy Spirit and through our deeply held beliefs about God. Let me explain what I *mean*.

“Prepare yourselves well now for the outpouring of His Spirit, and you can be certain God will use you later.”

One of our obligations as vessels of the Spirit of Christ is to stringently avoid misrepresenting the nature of the Holy Spirit that dwells within. That Holy Spirit of Christ would never sin. Consequently, the primary way we represent that Spirit is by avoiding even the appearance of evil (1 Thess. 5:22). What maybe we haven’t thought about until now, however, is the fact that our obligation to the Holy Spirit must also include refraining from glibly telling others “God told us” things He might well never have said even if He should condescend to speak directly to us—which He won’t.

Now, let’s *talk about* the two things I mentioned above. Perhaps the most important reason why we need to pull back from saying “God told me” is because we need to own up to our beliefs. There’s nothing wrong with saying “I believe” or even “It seems to me.” You can do that even when you feel absolutely certain

“So if you aren’t 100% absolutely positive God has spoken to you directly, in an audible voice or otherwise, you really shouldn’t say He has.”

the Holy Spirit within you is compelling you to do something. After all, did the Holy Spirit say anything to you audibly? No? (Watch out for those who answer that question with a quick “Yes.” You may well be dealing with a serial killer or a mental case if God doesn’t speak audibly to anyone.) So, if God didn’t speak to you audibly, maybe He wrote you a letter? No? Then how do you know “God told you” anything?

Let me give you a personal example. I spent the entire decade of the ’70s getting a “higher” education, eight of those years doing post-graduate work, first at a seminary just outside Chicago, then at the University of California, Berkeley. I won’t say I hated every minute of it, but every other minute comes fairly close.

I probably wouldn’t have even finished college, much less gone to graduate school, had I not been convinced beyond a shadow of doubt I had to do so in order to be obedient to the call God had on my life. I even planned to quit several times and couldn’t go through with it. I could have, back then, said “God told me” to go to school. I didn’t, but only because I had no definite understanding of what my ministry would be when I finished. So I just said, “I had to” go to school.

Suddenly, in the early ’80s, after I had finished school and began to understand what God had called me to do, I found myself saying “God told me” and “God said.” But I was forced to take a good hard look at that one day, and when I did, I realized I was trying to offload responsibility for my actions (and my beliefs) by attributing everything to God. “God told me” or “God said” was easier to say than “I believe.” It’s the old “Don’t blame me if this is wrong” syndrome. That’s dangerous—especially when the One you’re trying to lay blame on is God. It’s even more dangerous when the One you are blaming holds you responsible for your words and deeds whether or not you want to be held responsible.

I advise you to own up to your beliefs. It doesn’t hurt to say “I believe.”

I’ve said it many times when I firmly believed the Spirit was leading. Actually, you will find that when you confidently say “I believe,” it makes you more of an individual. Also, if you know what you believe and why you believe it, there’s no reason not to step up to the plate with confidence in even the most adverse circumstances. As the Apostle Peter said:

But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, {you are} blessed. AND DO NOT FEAR THEIR INTIMIDATION, AND DO NOT BE TROUBLED, but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always {being} ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.

(1 Peter 3:14–16)

“As True Believers, we can stop sinning anytime we want. The Holy Spirit knows that. Satan knows it as well.”

There’s also one other overriding reason not to say “God told me.” God doesn’t lie. Neither does He expect His children to lie. So if you aren’t 100% absolutely positive God has spoken to you directly, in an audible voice or otherwise, you really shouldn’t say He has. But let’s go on to see why some of us would tend to think God communicates to us directly.

Nothing But Mystics All

Those of you who are True Believers are well aware the Holy Spirit resides within you. I don’t have to tell you that. You already know it. However, it may

never have occurred to you that your relationship to the Holy Spirit is a mystical union that you can’t fully explain to those who have never had the privilege of experiencing it for themselves. Moreover, you have probably never considered the fact that there are a lot of people who go to church every Sunday and claim to have experienced the new birth you have experienced, yet they have no idea what it means to have such a mystical relationship with the Creator of the universe.

If you doubt that, you should keep in mind the fact that, after the great revivalist Charles Finney was born again in 1821, the pastor and elders of his local church were saved under his ministry. (See “Charles Finney: My Conversion to Christ,” *The Voice of Elijah*, January 1992.) Did you catch that? I said “the pastor and elders.” If you think things are somehow better today than they were back then, you’re sadly mistaken. They are worse. There are millions of “Christians” today, leaders and laymen alike, who think (or at least say) they have been “saved,” yet they have had no personal salvation experience with God at all. They are some of the “Pretenders” I mention so often.

One of the most interesting aspects of Finney’s experience is the fact that he had been the choir leader in his church for several years before he experienced salvation. During that time, the pastor and elders who were subsequently saved under his ministry had been trying to “convert” him because his external behavior told them he wasn’t a “Christian”! There’s a lot of that going on today. Pretenders don’t know that they don’t know. And, for the most part, nobody can tell them they don’t know because they don’t want to know. They are perfectly content to live a lie.

For the benefit of all the Pretenders who might chance to read this article, I ask you True Believers this rhetorical question: How do you know the Holy Spirit dwells within you? You know it because the Spirit has made Himself known to you intimately in a couple of ways. First of all, He is constantly con-

victing you of sin (from within) just as Jesus said He would convict everyone:

“But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper shall not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment; concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you no longer behold Me; and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.”
(John 16:7–11)

Now why do you suppose the Holy Spirit would do such an obnoxious thing to True Believers? Doesn't that qualify as cruel and unusual punishment? With thousands of “Christian” psychologists out there doing their dead-level best to help “Christians” alleviate overwhelming feelings of guilt, why would the Holy Spirit minister to us by making us feel even more guilty for the sins we commit? Why? Because True Believers don't have to sin.

Keeping the Commandments

As True Believers, we can stop sinning anytime we want. The Holy Spirit knows that. Satan knows it as well. But Satan doesn't want you to know it, because knowledge of, and belief in, that one simple fact holds tremendous power. That's why he has made sure you have plenty of Pretenders around you saying things like, “After all, God knows we're only human.” That He does. Consequently, He provided you the Holy Spirit within you to remind you sin is sin even before you commit it—to ensure you will “keep God's commandments”:

“If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; {that is} the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him, {but} you know Him because He abides with

you, and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. After a little while the world will behold Me no more; but you {will} behold Me; because I live, you shall live also. In that day you shall know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him.”
(John 14:15–21)

Did you hear that? Not only did Jesus say exactly what I've already told you about the Holy Spirit disclosing Himself to you so that you know He is in there, He also said you would “keep His commandments.” Twice. Now think about that logically for a minute. He wouldn't have said it even once if it weren't possible. The great revivalist Charles Finney often said much the same thing regarding the King James Version of the text he was fond of quoting:

Follow peace with all {men}, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.
(Hebrews 12:14 — KJV)

Unfortunately, I must tell you that you aren't going to “see the Lord” without holiness. And you aren't going to remain holy until you stop sinning. Satan knows that. That's why He will fight the idea tooth and nail. In his grand scheme, the idea of “holiness” is supposed to leave a bad taste in the Christian's mouth today. It's supposed to be just another one of those hated four-letter words I've

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talked about. (See “Oh, So Many Four-Letter Words!” *The Voice of Elijah*, July 1992.) Satan has worked hard for nearly three centuries crafting that mind-set in Pretenders. Nevertheless, obedience to the prompting of the Holy Spirit within you and careful protection of the holiness you derive from contact with that Spirit are essential to your eternal survival.

It's been clear to the True Believer from the outset that obeying and protecting the Holy Spirit within involves doing certain things and not doing others. But it isn't immediately obvious to them that when Jesus said “keep My commandments,” He was using a Hebrew idiom He took right off the pages of the Old Testament. The *meaning* of that idiom is, like the Hebrew idiom “cut off from” that I have explained in *Not All Israel Is Israel*, tied up in a neat and tidy little bundle that takes you right back to belief in *The Teaching of Moses*. I explain how that is in *The Mystery of Scripture*. For now it is enough that you are aware “keeping the commandments” of God is easy. All it takes is faith—that is, belief in *The Teaching of Moses*.

I have already explained the link between belief and action in the other article I've written for this issue of *The Voice of Elijah*. (See “Watching Ducks Sashaying 'Round the CornerStone” in this issue.) At a time when “group-think” holds the day, it is an often overlooked fact that *what* you as an individual believe determines *what* you as an individual do. That's why it is so crucially important that True Believers know, understand, and firmly believe *The (restored) Teaching* in these Final Days.

“Once The Teaching becomes a part of you—that is, once you firmly believe it—you will act accordingly, as an individual led by the Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ.”

Once *The Teaching* becomes a part of you—that is, once you firmly believe it—you will act accordingly, as an individual led by the Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit knows that Satan knows it as well. That’s why he intends to, and eventually will, throw everything—including the kitchen sink—at what we are accomplishing through The Elijah Project and *The Voice of Elijah*. How do I know that? Well, you remember what I said above about visions and dreams?

The Elijah Project and *The Voice of Elijah* both have their origin in one of those “things.” I had one twenty-some-odd years ago when God called me. The *meaning* of that one was rather hard to miss. God had something He wanted done, and He wasn’t in any mood to discuss whether I was willing to do it. But I had another one of those “things” three years later that has taken me over twenty years to—as Paul and his group did rather quickly—come to any definite “conclusions.” Among other things, that one warned of things I should expect from Pretenders. So, just you wait. You’ll see. Pretenders can be vicious when they feel their beloved traditions are threatened. They killed the Prophets. They even crucified the Christ. And not for nothing did Jesus say:

“And brother will deliver brother to death, and a father {his} child; and children will rise up against parents and have them put to death. And you will be hated by all on account of My name, but the one who endures to the end, he shall be saved.”

(Mark 13:12–13)

Not a pretty picture is it? But then, nothing worth anything is ever free. What was it Jesus said about seeking to save your life and losing it, and losing your life only to find it? There’s a really neat principle in that one. I hope you discover it. [Editor: He’s alluding to Matt. 16:24–27.] Even then, all this nastiness

doesn’t have to be. Most Pretenders try to be accommodating to those who are willing to compromise. Fortunately—or unfortunately, depending on how you look at it—I’m not willing. I trust you aren’t either. Compromise the Truth, you fabricate a lie.

It’s as Easy as Falling Off a Log

So, to get back on track here, as a True Believer you know that your relationship with God *means* you live with a constant internal urge to strive against the sin in your life. However, you must understand that the Pretenders in the Church have never experienced that urge in the way you have. Some of them are devoutly moral people, but only because their conscience was educated that way through the discipline they received from their parents. Others are nothing but Pretenders—through and through.

“The true power of the Christian life resides in faith—not faith in the sense of that you believe, but faith in the sense of what you believe.”

On the other hand, many of you True Believers have struggled for years trying to live holy lives by submitting to the prompting of the divine presence within you. I know, and you know as well, that you have failed more often than not, yet all the while wondering what you were missing.

Well, cheer up. Help is on the way. *The Teaching* provides the wherewithal you have been lacking. You see, the true power of the Christian life resides in faith—not *faith* in the sense of *that* you

believe, but *faith* in the sense of *what* you believe. [Editor: See “The Demons Also Believe (Poor Devils!)” *The Voice of Elijah*, October 1991.] Belief is an extremely powerful force, as Matthew relates by passing along Jesus’ *Teaching*:

Now in the morning, when He returned to the city, He became hungry. And seeing a lone fig tree by the road, He came to it, and found nothing on it except leaves only; and He said to it, “No longer shall there ever be {any} fruit from you.” And at once the fig tree withered. And seeing {this}, the disciples marveled, saying, “How did the fig tree wither at once?” And Jesus answered and said to them, “Truly I say to you, if you have faith, and do not doubt, you shall not only do what was done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and cast into the sea,’ it shall happen. And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive.”

(Matthew 21:18–22)

That seems rather simple, doesn’t it? All you have to do is ask God, believe that you’ll receive what you ask for, and you’ll get it. There’s a fly in that ointment, however, because the Apostle John tells us we can only ask and receive if “we keep His commandments”:

Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth. We shall know by this that we are of the truth, and shall assure our heart before Him, in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight. And this is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one

“As a True Believer, you must learn to distinguish between the feelings of guilt you derive solely from your conscience and the feelings of guilt inspired by the Holy Spirit if you are ever to ‘walk’ in the full freedom of the Spirit.”

another, just as He commanded us. And the one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And we know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.
(1 John 3:18–24)

Are you confused yet? First he says we can only ask and receive if we “keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.” Then he says “this is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ.” Finally, however, he says, “we know by this that He abides in us.” When John says that, he’s *talking about* the fact that his readers know the Holy Spirit “abides in” them because they are “keeping God’s commandments.” So we too can know the Holy Spirit “abides in us” because we “keep His commandments.”

Now we’re down to the nuts and bolts of Christian living. The Spirit of Christ may be in you, but if you aren’t living an overcoming Christian life—“keeping His commandments”—how can you be sure the Spirit is even there? If you are a True Believer, you know He is there because, to one degree or the other, you are already “keeping His commandments.” (See *The Mystery of Scripture* for an explanation of the meaning of the Hebrew idiom “keep the commandments.”)

I tell you bluntly, however, if you aren’t living a completely overcoming spiritual life, it’s because you lack faith. Again, I don’t *mean* faith in the sense of *that* you believe, but faith in the sense of *what* you believe. That’s where *The Teaching* comes in. The Apostle John was writing to Christians who lived at a time when *The Apostolic Teaching* was widely known and believed. Many of those Christians were living completely victorious Christian lives just as “many” True Believers will again now at the End. Pretenders in the Church will mock that idea, assuming True Believers are just like them—all pretense.

Don’t be misled by the Pretenders. Paul accurately described to Timothy the Pretenders of our own time. There will be a multitude of those who don’t understand the Truth of *The Teaching*, but they will nevertheless deny the power that inheres in it. I tell you, as Paul told Timothy, “avoid such men as these”:

But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; and avoid such men as these. For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

(2 Timothy 3:1–7)

You who are True Believers must realize there are Pretenders all around you in the Church who are merely “holding to a form of godliness.” They don’t have a clue as to what we’re *talking about* here. Consequently, they will flatly deny the Truth of *The Teaching* (the true “power” of godliness) because they want to continue “walking” in “the light” of their own understanding, “always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the Truth.”

Believing an even more sinister deception of Satan, these Pretenders will adamantly insist they are born again, attributing the work of their conscience to the Holy Spirit. They can do so, however, only because both the conscience and the Holy Spirit produce feelings of guilt. The one does so directly, the Other indirectly.

Obedient to the Spirit

As a True Believer, you must learn to distinguish between the feelings of guilt you derive solely from your conscience and the feelings of guilt inspired by the Holy Spirit if you are ever to “walk” in the full freedom of the Spirit. Your conscience is merely educable, and that according to the laws, customs, and religious traditions of mankind. By contrast, the Holy Spirit is an educator.

The Pretenders who have had their consciences educated according to all the external do’s and don’ts of their particular religious tradition will insist you must follow them in slavishly adhering to the learned norms of their consciences. For example, some will insist you must attend church three times a week to be a good “Christian,” while others will condemn you for drinking coffee. On the other hand, the demands of those who have long since “seared” their conscience will go to even greater extremes, as Paul warned Timothy:

But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron, {men} who forbid marriage {and advocate} abstaining from foods, which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth. For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, if it is received with gratitude; for it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer.

(1 Timothy 4:1–5)

In contrast to the conscience, which is an innate part of the individual and is educated from childhood according to the various religious and/or cultural

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traditions of society, the Holy Spirit is a *Living Person*. When He takes up residence within the True Believer at the time of conversion, He is already fully cognizant of the laws, customs, and religious traditions of God. Since our conscience is not so fully educated in accordance with God’s Truth, the Spirit works diligently to re-educate our conscience. One of the ways He does that is by convicting us of sin.

Yet there is still another, even more powerful, way the Spirit accomplishes the education of our conscience. In seeking to replicate His knowledge of *The Teaching* in the Believer, the Holy Spirit “guides” him into Truth:

“I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear {them} now. But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. He shall glorify Me; for He shall take of Mine, and shall disclose {it} to you. All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said, that He takes of Mine, and will disclose {it} to you. A little while, and you will no longer behold Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me.”

(John 16:12–16)

That seems rather clear, doesn’t it? John says Jesus stated plainly:

“But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.”

(John 16:13)

That’s the way the Holy Spirit works within you. He doesn’t “speak on His Own initiative.” He waits until you hear or read the Truth. Then He will confirm it for you, provided you are willing to pay attention. That’s why Jesus could

say what He said about the True Believer recognizing *The Teaching* when he hears it:

But when it was now the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and {began to} teach. The Jews therefore were marveling, saying, “How has this man become learned, having never been educated?” Jesus therefore answered them, and said, “My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me. If any man is willing to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or {whether} I speak from Myself. He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who is seeking the glory of the One who sent Him, He is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.”

(John 7:14–18)

“If you have the Holy Spirit, you have an internal witness that testifies to the Truth of The Teaching ... when you hear it.”

Now I know there’s going to be that zealous mystic out there with a wild streak of some sort who will avidly seek to refute what I just said. He may even cite 1 John 2:27, never considering for a moment that John was writing to Believers who he knew had already been fully trained in *The Teaching*. [Editor: See the letter quoted in “Letters to the Editor” in this issue (p. 4).]

But look at it logically. If all you ever needed to gain a knowledge of the Truth was the Holy Spirit within you, there would be no need for the revelation God provided for us in the Scriptures. And if our mystical union with the Spirit of God was intended to provide each of us our own private Teacher, why would God have instituted the office of Teacher

in the Church? And what would any Teacher of the Gospel have to teach except the knowledge gained through his own mystical experiences if he had not himself been taught by someone who understood the Truth? (See “Where Are Jesus’ Disciples?” *The Voice of Elijah*, April 1991.)

You see, your faith (belief) is (and always has been) tied inextricably to what you *hear*, not what you *think*. But don’t take my word for it, the Apostle Paul said it much better than I could ever hope to:

For the Scripture says, “WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.” For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same {Lord} is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call upon Him; for “WHOEVER WILL CALL UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.” How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, “HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GLAD TIDINGS OF GOOD THINGS!” However, they did not all heed the glad tidings; for Isaiah says, “LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT?” So faith {comes} from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

(Romans 10:11–17)

Did you notice what he said about faith? “Faith comes from *hearing*, and *hearing* by the word of Christ.” So your understanding of God’s Truth has to come from some external source, as Paul puts it, “from hearing”—specifically, from hearing the preaching of the *Word of God* by those who have been “sent.” It cannot be solely the product of the machinations of your mind. Unless, of course, you somehow assume that having started across the river on one horse—the horse of “hearing”—we are all expected to get

off that horse in midstream and go the rest of the way on foot, interpreting the Scriptures for ourselves. (See “Did You Mean That Literally?” *The Voice of Elijah*, January 1993.)

So how does the Holy Spirit educate our conscience if we must rely on external sources for our understanding of the Truth? Jesus provided the answer in another context when He indicated to His disciples that the Holy Spirit would teach them using the things they had already heard from Him—the things He had taught them previously:

“These things I have spoken to you, while abiding with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.”

(John 14:25–26)

Jesus says much the same thing again later on, but to fully understand what He was saying on that occasion, you have to keep in mind the fact that He is the *Living Word of God* (John 1:1). In some intricately mystical “Way” that I don’t pretend to fully understand, Jesus Christ is, in Himself, the totality of *The Teaching*. (See “Watching Ducks Sashaying ’Round the CornerStone” in this issue.) If you keep that in mind as you read the following passage, you can see clearly how the function of the Holy Spirit is to “bear witness of”—to confirm for us—*The Teaching* when we hear it:

“When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, {that is} the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of Me, and you {will} bear witness also, because you have been with Me from the beginning.”

(John 15:26–27)

Therefore, the primary responsibility of True Believers who have the Holy Spirit within them is to listen and to learn—to allow their faith (belief) to be built by “hearing” the Truth. Their faith—that is, their understanding of, and belief in, the Truth of *The Teaching*—will come both from hearing things spoken verbally and from “hear-

ing” things written. Every time Truth is heard, the True Believer who is avidly seeking Truth will have a most intriguing mystical experience. There will be a rejoicing in what Paul calls “the inner man,” and an intense yearning to know even more, which can sometimes cause the “outer man” to become impatient.

“Therefore, the primary responsibility of True Believers who have the Holy Spirit within them is to listen and to learn.”

The Holy Spirit within the True Believer will always testify that Truth is true. That’s how I know there will be “many” of you who come to know and understand the Truth of *The Teaching* in these Last Days. Eventually, through the Spirit’s confirmation of the Truth you hear, you will gain the faith (belief) you need to overcome. You don’t believe me? Perhaps you will believe the Apostle John. He said it first. I’m just repeating it because I’ve found it to be true in my own life:

By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome. For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. And who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? This is the one who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three that bear witness, the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for the witness of God is this, that He has borne witness concerning His Son. The one who believes in the Son of God has the witness

in himself; the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the witness that God has borne concerning His Son. And the witness is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

(1 John 5:2–12)

Did you get all that? Let me summarize. If you have the Holy Spirit, you have an internal witness that testifies to the Truth of *The Teaching*—that is, Jesus Christ, Who is the *Living Word of God*—when you hear it. If you have faith in the Truth of *The Teaching* that you hear—that is, if you believe it—you will eventually attain an understanding of enough Truth to enable you to easily overcome the world.

So what’s the point? Just this. Most of the Truth True Believers have today has come to them by reading for themselves what the Apostles wrote concerning *The Teaching* in the apostolic writings of the New Testament. In many cases, however, True Believers have, since their conversion, been misled by hearing false teaching that distorts the *meaning* of the things they first “heard” from the Apostles. Consequently, the faith (belief) of most True Believers has failed to grow into a completely overcoming faith (belief).

For some of you who have been reading along with us for a while, the days of living distressed by the sin in your life are already rapidly becoming a fading memory. How do I know? Oh, I hear reports. I read the letters you write to *The Voice of Elijah*. I also know, as I have for some years, that even greater things are going to happen among you in the future as you begin to consistently triumph over the sin in your life. I know these things because of a dream I had eleven years ago, a dream I am confident God gave me to encourage me to continue following the calling He had placed on my life some fifteen years earlier.

At the time I (under pressure from Satan) was desperately questioning how I could continue following God’s calling. As I understood it, the basic purpose of that experience was to teach me how

“We are in the process of laying down a solid (written) surface for those who will come along behind us nearer the End.”

to recognize when Satan was standing firmly against me. However, it also provided the means for me to overcome such difficulties. Afterwards, I found I could simply ignore Satan’s idiocy by focusing on you, the True Believers to whom I have been sent. So I’ve known for years you were out there, waiting, holding to the commitment you made to the Lord. I also know you’re not alone. There are, as Daniel said, “many” just like you. You’ll see.

I tell you that partly because some of you are tending to get impatient, wanting to hear more of *The Teaching* right away. Do me a favor. First, wait another eleven years before you start trying to push things along any faster than they are going right now. Then consider the possibility that maybe God would have us all wait another eleven years after that. Yet I say that knowing exactly how you feel. I would have dearly loved to have understood *The Teaching* completely when I got my first glimpse of it in 1974.

I still don’t fully understand the minute details of the Old Testament Gospel of Jesus Christ, but God has His timing. We’ll all get there eventually. However, you should understand we are in the process of laying down a solid (written) surface for those who will come along behind us nearer the End. They won’t walk then, as you are now. And they won’t have to stumble around, wondering what to believe, as you are now either. They will run. We are, after all, speaking *parabolically* about the construction of *The Way* whereby the Redeemed will return to the Lord. [Editor: He’s alluding to Isaiah’s *parabolic* discussion of the rebuilding of *The Way* in Is. 40, esp. vv. 27–31.]

Eventually, you True Believers are going to have even greater opportunity to experience the Spirit within you testifying concerning the veracity of the *parabolic* and idiomatic statements made throughout the New Testament. You are going to have that same experience while reading statements made by many of the Early Church Fathers. You will eventually be able to read all those writings and

easily comprehend what you find written there on the basis of your understanding of the Old Testament Gospel of Jesus Christ. Does that seem far-fetched? Just wait. You’ll see.

The beauty and simplicity of the Gospel of Jesus Christ that has, until now, been hidden in the Hebrew Scriptures will amaze you. You will often be astonished by the specificity of the statements made and the overall coherence of the prophecies found there.

However, if you are a True Believer, I warn you to begin preparing yourself now by “walking” according to the Truth the Holy Spirit has already confirmed for you. I exhort you to do those things you already know to be right. Strive to live a holy life, and allow the Holy Spirit even more opportunity to educate your conscience in accordance with the freedom of God’s Spirit by avidly seeking an even greater understanding of the Truth.

“The things we know about God can only be learned by hearing—by listening to an external source who understands the Truth and can explain it for us.”

Remember, your primary obligation is to “walk” in holiness and righteousness—according to God’s Truth. Or haven’t you read what Paul wrote to the Romans:

Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone {as} slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been

freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members {as} slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in {further} lawlessness, so now present your members {as} slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification. For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death. But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

(Romans 6:16–23)

Beware of allowing Pretenders to entice you into participating in their pretense. They don’t have the same relationship to Jesus Christ that you have. All they have is a religion. Consequently, their relationship to God is all pretense. That’s why I call them “Pretenders.” They experience a “relationship” with God only collectively through their association with whatever group they meet with on Saturday or Sunday. Moreover, their religion is something they *talk about* among themselves and demonstrate only outwardly. It’s not something they experience individually through the internal working of the Holy Spirit.

As far as the Pretenders are concerned, it’s that same old Pharisaic issue of cleaning up the outside of the cup when the inside is where all the dirt is. [Editor: He’s alluding to Jesus’ statements to the Pharisees in Luke 11:37–41.] As far as they are concerned, it is enough just to say they know *what they should do*. It doesn’t matter that *what they should do* never is a reality in their own life or in the lives of the other Pretenders with whom they associate. Their verbal expression of *what should be* in their life soothes their conscience.

“The more we know about God, the more things around us, including the mystical experiences we have, will only provide confirmation as to the validity of our understanding of the Truth of God’s Word.”

Summary

I’ve said all the above just to say that the activity of the Holy Spirit within has led more than one True Believer to conclude that “God told them” this or that. Did He? Well, . . . not really. As I’ve said, the things we know about God can only be learned by hearing—by listening to an external source who understands the Truth and can explain it for us. Remember? I also mentioned that in another article. (See “Nobody in Their Right Mind Would Even Want to Be Napoleon!” *The Voice of Elijah*, October 1992.)

The source of all (did you get that? I said “all”) knowledge about God must ultimately be based on an accurate understanding (did you get that as well? I said “accurate understanding”) of the revelation of God contained in Scripture. Anything else we know about God can do little more than provide confirmation of the message we find written there. That’s why *The Teaching* is so important. The more we know about God, the more things around us, including the mystical experiences we have, will only provide confirmation as to the validity of our understanding of the Truth of God’s Word. They will certainly not be the primary basis for some “mystical” relationship we have with God.

All that being the case, you can see that we must allow every mystical experience to pass under the scrutiny of the light of the true *meaning* of the Scriptures. If an experience is the result of our relationship to the Holy Spirit within, it will confirm our knowledge of the Truth. If it does not confirm the Truth of *The Teaching* we already understand, we must reject it. That’s what John is *talking about* when he says this:

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; and every

spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; and this is the {spirit} of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world. You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world. They are from the world; therefore they speak {as} from the world, and the world listens to them. We are from God; he who knows God listens to us; he who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

(1 John 4:1–6)

As you may have already guessed, I like the Apostle John. He doesn’t mince words. Either you “walk” the “walk,” or you’re just so much hot air and somebody to be avoided. But I also like what he has written because, particularly in his epistles, he *talks* a lot *about* the interconnection between perfect obedience to the prompting of the Holy Spirit within and the importance of a comprehensive knowledge of *The Teaching*. I especially like his blunt statement concerning the need to adhere to the Truth of *The Teaching* and vehemently reject anything less:

And this is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, that you should walk in it. For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ

“The beauty and simplicity of the Gospel of Jesus Christ that has, until now, been hidden in the Hebrew Scriptures will amaze you.”

{as} coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist. Watch yourselves, that you might not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward. Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into {your} house, and do not give him a greeting; for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds.

(2 John 1:6–11)

The Church has come a long way down since then, hasn’t it? Who is going to come along today and, as John says, “bring this teaching”? I can almost hear the skeptics saying, “Get real!” They have a point. There are false teachers everywhere who think nothing at all of “going too far,” spouting things that come to them while they are in the middle of a sermon—plucking them, as it were, “out of thin air.” Yet I have complete confidence in those of you who are True Believers, that you will again “abide in *The Teaching*.” I know therefore that you will overcome because faith (belief in *The Teaching*) makes it all possible. As the Apostle John put it:

We know that no one who is born of God sins; but He who was born of God keeps him and the evil one does not touch him. We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in {the power of} the evil one. And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding, in order that we might know Him who is true, and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. Little children, guard yourselves from idols.
(1 John 5:18–21)

John *meant* exactly what he said. It is not only possible for you to overcome

“Those who ‘go too far’ and deny the Truth of The Teaching also ‘deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.’”

the world, it is expected that you will—although the Pretenders in the Church have been insisting for centuries that it just isn’t so. Don’t be misled. The key phrase in all the quotations I have given you from the Apostle John is this:

We know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding, in order that we might know Him who is true.
(1 John 5:20b)

You will eventually find what I have told you to be true in your own life if you believe what you find through the ministry of *The Voice of Elijah*. When you finally have full and complete understanding of *The Teaching*, overcoming the world will be a cinch. The main problem you will face then is how to deal with all the Pretenders who want to continue in their pretense. They will try to blend in with you while desperately clinging to their vile stubbornness during the visible demonstration of God’s holy presence as He works among you. The Apostle Paul described them as:

the false brethren who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to bring us into bondage.
(Galatians 2:4b)

Don’t doubt it for a moment. Pretenders will definitely try to drag you back into the bondage they endure. However, Jude also mentions such individuals, telling us we should “contend earnestly for the faith” against them because they “deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ”:

Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to

you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.
(Jude 1:3–4)

Jude’s statements are fairly clear. What he doesn’t tell you, however, is the fact that Jesus Christ is *The Teaching*—the *Living Word of God*. Therefore, those who “go too far” and deny the Truth of *The Teaching* also “deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.” In God’s sight, that is no small matter. Jude knew that. That’s why he said what he did. Later on, he uses some of the para-

“It is not only possible for you to overcome the world, it is expected that you will.”

bolic imagery explained in *The Teaching* to describe the people who “revile the things which they do not understand.” He is again *talking about* people who rejected *The Apostolic Teaching* the Church had been given:

But these men revile the things which they do not understand; and the things which they know by instinct, like unreasoning animals, by these things they are destroyed. Woe to them! For they have gone the way of Cain, and for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam, and perished in the rebellion of Korah. These men are those who are hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted; wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam; wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever.
(Jude 1:10–13)

It seems to me Jude doesn’t have a very high opinion of Pretenders. Maybe you should be a bit leery of them as well. Finally, however, Jude exhorts his readers to overcome in spite of the presence of Pretenders among them:

These are grumblers, finding fault, following after their {own} lusts; they speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of {gaining an} advantage. But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they were saying to you, “In the last time there shall be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts.” These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit. But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith; praying in the Holy Spirit; keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life. And have mercy on some, who are doubting; save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh. Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, {be} glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.
(Jude 1:16–25)

I encourage those of you who have come to believe in the Truth of *The Teaching* you have found through the ministry of *The Voice of Elijah*. Stand firm in your belief in that Truth, knowing that many will contradict it, seeking only

“When you finally have full and complete understanding of The Teaching, overcoming the world will be a cinch.”

to “cause divisions” among you. It will become increasingly clear to you over time that, in the manifold wisdom of God, Jesus Christ, the *Living Word of God*, is (mystically, I might add) seeking to replicate Himself in you. He can only do that in those who are willing to listen and to learn. Pretenders are not willing to do that.

As *The Teaching*, Jesus Christ “is able to keep you from stumbling” just as Jude said. Therefore, I exhort you with the words the Apostle Paul wrote to the Ephesians concerning the dynamic interconnection between the Truth found in *The Teaching*, the faith (belief) of the True Believer, and the resulting righteousness that will achieve your salvation through the sole agency of the *Word of God*:

Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual {forces} of wickedness in the heavenly {places}. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand firm therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH, and HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, and having shod YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE; in addition to all, taking up the shield of

faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil {one}. And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, and {pray} on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel.

(Ephesians 6:10–19)

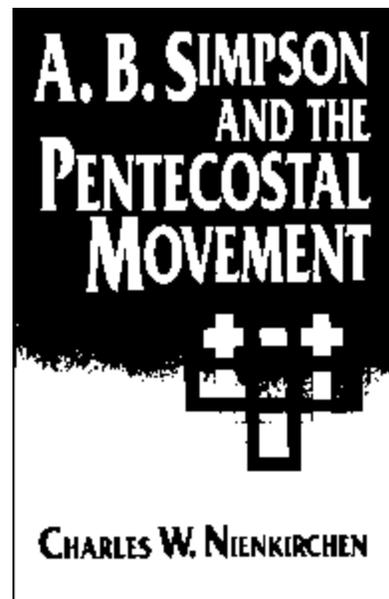
So what “armor” do you think Paul had in mind? You got it. He’s *talking about The Teaching*—“the strength of His might.” ■

Here Are a Couple of (Actually Three) Good Rules to Live By:

A. B. Simpson was a man who took his religious beliefs seriously. His personal diary reveals he lived his life in constant preparation to meet the One he knew and loved. At the age of eighty he was still seeking a closer walk with the Lord. But he was never one to argue about religion and dispute what others believed. He apparently felt Christian life was better spent worshipping and fellowshiping with other Believers who had the same love for the Lord that he had.

Life was much simpler in Simpson’s day, but some things never change. So if you’re looking for an example to follow in these Last Days, you couldn’t do much better than A. B. Simpson. He was a well-known Christian leader around the turn of last century—when God’s Spirit was working phenomenal wonders among Believers throughout the world. Never a Pentecostal himself, Simpson walked the high road at a time when Satan’s agents were working night and day—both sides against the middle—to introduce controversy that would stop (or at least slow down) the mighty outpouring of God’s Holy Spirit.

1. **Never Argue About Religion or Politics.**
2. **Always Be Prepared to Die and Pay Taxes.**
3. **Don’t Traffic With People Who Break These Rules.**



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Questions & Answers

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

Editor: A year ago I asked you about the issue of this ministry being called a "cult" because it offers views, specifically eschatological views, that differ so radically from mainstream Christianity. [Editor: See "Questions & Answers," *The Voice of Elijah*, April 1992.] At that time you said many would probably hold that view of us, but you also derided such a view by stating that, for a cult to exist, it had to hold regular meetings somewhere so its members could have personal interaction with, and I assume come under the control of, a cult leader. You have also said at various times that you have no intention of ever providing such circumstances. In light of the recent cult fiasco involving the Seventh Day Adventist offshoot near Waco, the Branch Davidians, do you have anything more to say on the issue of cults?

Elijah: I would earnestly warn all your readers to avoid the danger of letting someone else do their thinking for them. For whatever their initial motives, all cult members somehow fall into that trap. If I were to hazard a guess as to why, I suspect they do it for the same reasons people cling tenaciously to some religious tradition: They want to avoid responsibility for what they believe. It's easier to ask someone what you should believe and rest easy in knowing that, if they happen to be wrong, it's not your fault. That's a neat little rationalization we all use to mentally sidestep responsibility for our own beliefs.

Cult members aren't the only ones who succumb to that tendency, however. The Pretenders in the Church



are doing the same thing, although they normally have no major anti-social behavior associated with their deft relinquishing of responsibility for what they believe. I'm sure more than a few have read an issue of this newsletter and immediately run off to their pastor so he or she could tell them whether or not to believe what they had read. That's exactly the same thing cult members do. As the *parabolic imagery* of the Scriptures so aptly characterizes them, they all blindly follow this he-goat or that like so many lost sheep. [Editor: He's alluding to Zechariah 10:3.] The problem is not in their following a leader, however, because God obviously instituted specific offices in the Church for the purpose of providing leadership. The problem comes when people *blindly* follow a leader. They don't really know what they believe because they are afraid to do their own thinking. Consequently, they are trying to ride double on a horse that can carry only one.

Editor: What do you mean?

Elijah: God looks at the individual. He only secondarily looks at the group. People would rather forget that. Traditionalists and cult members alike think they can somehow ride piggy-back on the beliefs of the group they have joined and God will let them into Heaven just because they associated with the *right* group of people. I've told you repeatedly: "Assumptions will kill you," and that one is deadly. The Apostle Paul stated, in no ambiguous terms, that God will judge the individual, not the group, according to deeds done in the flesh. [Editor: He's alluding to Romans 1:18 ff., esp. 2:5-6.]

One of the articles I'm writing for this issue of the newsletter argues that the source of your every action stems either directly or indirectly from some personal belief you hold. [Editor: See "Watching Ducks Sashaying 'Round The CornerStone" in this issue.] That being the case, you can see that Paul is essentially stating you are going to be judged individually according to whether or not you have lived according to the Truth you had available. Several times in that same passage he mentions the Wrath of God that will be revealed at the Judgment. Yet people completely ignore all that and go their merry way, thinking somebody else's beliefs will suffice for them. That's a lie that originated in the pits of hell. But it accomplishes what Satan wants,

and it allows those who believe it to hide from the Truth so they can go on doing whatever they want.

Editor: *So you're saying there is really no difference between cult members and the Pretenders in the Church?*

Elijah: Yes and no. The Pretender and the cult member are both trying to avoid responsibility for what they believe by identifying themselves with the beliefs of the larger group. Both are looking to some acknowledged religious leader, or leaders, to articulate their beliefs for them. But the Pretenders in the Church are able to do that without mentally relinquishing their individual identity apart from the group. That differs from cult members who, for whatever reason, have identified themselves so closely with the beliefs of the group that they cannot bring themselves to stand alone, apart from the group. Both are the same in the sense that they are just ordinary people trying to hide from God. However, the corporate solidarity of a cult is a whole lot more dangerous than the cohesiveness of the average congregation in the organized Church because a cult leader seeks to obliterate the personal identity of the individual by making the solidarity of the group more important than the identity of the individual. Beyond that, as I understand the commonly accepted definition of a cult, a cult leader either consciously or subconsciously uses mind control techniques together with peer pressure to control his followers. That also contrasts with the Pretenders in the Church. They depend on peer pressure alone to maintain the cohesion of the group.

Editor: *You lump cult members and Pretenders in the Church together with an obvious disdain for them both. Why is that?*

Elijah: Because they are both willing pawns of Satan. Because Satan intends to use them both, working both ends against the middle, in an attempt to keep people from giving the Truth a fair hearing. I have little respect for anyone who has sold out body and soul to Satan to the point where they have no interest in seeking knowledge of the Truth. But you must also understand I've known for some time that Satan has been working feverishly behind the scenes, intent on using cult fiascos like the Jonestown Massacre, and now the Waco event, to subvert God's final work among True Believers. He is, even now, trying to create in Christians an almost paranoid aversion to any teaching that is not "mainstream" in one way or the other. I know I mentioned that in an article for the newsletter last year, and I think I mentioned it specifically in one issue of *The Update*. [Editor: See "Nobody in Their Right Mind

Would Even Want to Be Napoleon!" *The Voice of Elijah*, October 1992. Monthly Contributors see also *The Voice of Elijah Update*, September 1992.]

I suspect Satan now intends to deepen that aversion through a rapid-fire succession of cultic debacles in various cults he has been preparing. So this is as good a time as any to go on public record stating you can expect cults and cult teachings to be a hot topic in the media for some time to come. It's all part of Satan's overall strategy. In fact, anything religious that grabs the headlines in years to come is most likely going to be the result of Satan working to shape public opinion in one way or another. Nothing he does now would surprise me. His insanity is growing because he knows he has a limited time left on the spiritual side before he's forced to cross over to our side. [Editor: He's alluding to Revelation 8:10–11 and 12:7–9.]

But there's another perspective to all this that contributes to my disdain for Satan's pawns. The Church—whether Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, or any one of hundreds of Protestant denominations—is not *our* Church, as much as we would like to think so, and as cult leaders and Pretenders seem to think. It is God's Church. I have no intention of ever gathering a group of Believers together to start a cult that, by its very nature, would be just one more segregated part of God's Church. God did not call me to start some new group. He did call me to finish the work He started with the old one. When I've finished that Church, "finished" in the sense of putting the final touches on True Believers in preparation for the Return of Jesus Christ, I'll be gone. And you won't be able to find any "Harperites" hanging around afterward.

I don't care what denomination your readers come from or belong to. If they have the Spirit of the *Living* God within them, I have something they need to hear. After they have heard it, they can do with it as they will. But if they believe it, they had best understand God holds them responsible for how they behave toward the other members of the local church they attend. They should not do anything that would bring disrepute on what I teach. I have no interest in creating controversy in any Christian group. If controversy arises, it will come from those who prove themselves to be Pretenders by the antagonistic attitude they express toward others—whether Believers or unbelievers. The last thing any True Believer will do is argue over the things they learn from me. That has no value at all. The Apostle Paul admonished Timothy and Titus several times not to engage in that type of activity. [Editor: See 1 Timothy 1:6; 4:7; 6:3–5, 20; 2 Timothy 2:14–18, 23–26; Titus 3:9–11.] The True Believer will take heed

to Paul's admonition and rest content in the knowledge that the Truth will speak for itself to anyone who has ears to hear. If a person has no interest in hearing the things I teach, the True Believer will leave them alone and find someone who does. Pretenders love to argue because they want to *show others what they know*. God has no overriding interest in *what you know*. His basic concern is, and always has been, *what you do with what you know*. If you believe the Truth and live in accordance with it, well and good. If you don't live according to *what you say you believe*, you don't really believe; you're just living a lie.

Editor: *You've just mentioned an issue that's recently arisen among readers of The Voice of Elijah who are interested in meeting with, or at least communicating with, other readers of the newsletter. What is your reaction to that? The issue, as I see it, relates to the possibility of people who are reading the newsletter and believing what they have read founding new churches, or at least starting new fellowship groups.*

Elijah: It's normal for people to prefer to associate with people who think as they do and have the same or at least a similar value system. I see nothing wrong with that. As long as those people don't try to involve me personally, I have no reason to feel one way or the other about what they do. It is, as they say, a free country. In the past three years I've come to accept the fact that God is going to use what I teach for His Own ends, and He is not going to inform me of what those ends are before the fact. There are a variety of reasons why that is, but as I understand it, a primary reason is that, if I knew all that God has planned, Satan would know as well, and he would try to circumvent it. God has no intention of allowing True Believers to undergo any unnecessary difficulty that might result from Satan's insanity. Consequently, I actually know but little as to the nature of my ministry.

To use a Hebrew idiom and its *parabolic image*, however, I can tell you I'm not going to "build the house." God is going to use others to accomplish that. It's taken me awhile to grasp the magnitude of the work God has in mind, but I've come to understand over the past few years that a lot of other people are going to be involved in that building process. I've also come to accept the fact that I'm not the one ultimately responsible for controlling the building activities. God is. I'm not the architect of the "house." [Editor: He's alluding to Hebrews 11:10.] I'm just delivering blueprints to the workers on the job site. I can't claim, as the Apostle Paul did, that I'm laying any part of the foundation as the "wise master builder." I'm just crafting

new tools others can use to finish "building." But I admonish anyone who seeks to "build" using the tools I provide that "each man be careful how he builds."

[Editor: He's alluding to Paul's comments in 1 Corinthians 3:10 ff. and the Hebrew idiom "build a house" with its attendant imagery. He plans to explain the Scriptural message related to the Hebrew idiom "build a house" in the third volume of The Resurrection Theology Series: *House of Israel, Temple of God*. However, for those interested, he is currently planning to summarize at least part of that message later this year during the first of several seminars The Elijah Project will offer for our Monthly Contributors. You needn't attend those seminars personally, however, since all of them will be videotaped and made available later through this newsletter.]

Editor: *The meaning of Paul's statements in the passage you have just referred to from 1 Corinthians has been debated by Christian commentators for centuries. Would you mind explaining for our readers what you understand Paul was saying in that passage?*

Elijah: Sure. But first of all, let's read what he wrote:

And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to babes in Christ. I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able {to receive it}. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men? For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not {mere} men? What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave {opportunity} to each one. I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth. Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building. According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building upon it. But let each man be careful how he builds upon it. For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is {to be} revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each

man's work. If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire. Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and {that} the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are. Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become foolish that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God. For it is written, "{He is} THE ONE WHO CATCHES THE WISE IN THEIR CRAFTINESS"; and again, "THE LORD KNOWS THE REASONINGS OF THE WISE, THAT THEY ARE USELESS." So then let no one boast in men. For all things belong to you, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or things present or things to come; all things belong to you, and you belong to Christ; and Christ belongs to God.

(1 Corinthians 3:1–23)

If you read from the beginning of Paul's letter, you can see how his train of thought has moved fluidly from the first chapter, through the second chapter, and into the beginning of the third. After the salutation, he begins the main body of his letter by mentioning the divisions that exist in the church at Corinth. In 1:12 he refers to those who divisively claim to be disciples of his, or disciples of Apollos, or Peter, or Christ. He then begins to *talk about* the "wisdom of God" that can be found in his *Teaching*. In the second chapter he continues *talking about* teaching Believers the things he understands in the Scriptures—what in verse 7 he again calls "God's wisdom," but this time he adds the phrase "in a mystery." He is obviously *talking about* the Old Testament Gospel of Jesus Christ because he also says it is "the hidden" mystery.

In his discussion of the wisdom embodied in his *Teaching*, Paul was alluding to the fact that he had been teaching the Corinthians *The Apostolic Teaching*. That will eventually become crystal clear to True Believers. I say "eventually" because my writing currently seems to be moving at a glacial pace. However, when I've finished the first three or four books, True Believers will be able to see how the very core of *The Apostolic Teaching* focuses on the difference between the wise person and the fool. That's why Paul repeatedly mentions wisdom and foolishness throughout the passage.

Paul continues *talking about The Apostolic Teaching* in 1 Corinthians 3:1–3 by telling the Corinthians they aren't ready to understand some of the more difficult things he would like to teach them because they

are still "babes in Christ." Then he gives them an example of their childish behavior. For his example, he returns to what he mentioned before, that some of the Corinthians are claiming to be his disciples, while others claim to be disciples of Apollos. In other words, he is saying the Corinthians' lack of unity as demonstrated by their sectarianism discloses their spiritual immaturity. That doesn't speak well for the denominationalism and sectarian thinking running rampant in the Protestant Church today, does it? It's sort of like kids choosing up sides so they can strut their theological stuff. That will not be the case among True Believers at the End.

Anyway, Paul's focus on the Corinthians' lack of unity led him naturally into his reference (in verse 9) to two of the *parabolic images* that God has used in the Scriptures to speak concerning *Corporate* Israel. Those two images are the "field" and the "house." Paul had already used the *parabolic imagery* related to the field in verses 6 through 8 to tell the Corinthians both he and Apollos taught the same thing—*The Apostolic Teaching*. That comes through in his use of the *parabolic images* of the "Seed" he planted and the "Water" Apollos provided. Both of those are *parabolic images* the Prophets and Jesus used to depict *The Teaching*. Since he had already used the *parabolic image* of the Church as God's "field," Paul picks up the *parabolic image* of the Church as God's "house" in verse 10, as he has also in Ephesians 2:19 and following, because he wants to emphasize the importance of unity of belief among Believers.

Paul understood, as Satan's dupes apparently still don't, that "a house divided against itself falls." [Editor: See Luke 11:17.] He knew *The Apostolic Teaching* provided the rock-solid basis for the unity of the one "house" of God. He also knew Apollos taught the same things he taught. [Editor: See Acts 18:24 ff.] Consequently, it was clear the Corinthians were arguing among themselves, with one side arguing for his *Teaching* and the other side arguing for *The Teaching* of Apollos, only because they did not accurately understand *The Teaching* of either one. If they had, they would have seen that both he and Apollos taught the same thing.

One *significant* element in Paul's discourse that is easily overlooked is his discussion of the "temple" of God in verses 16 and 17. He is not *talking about* the individual as the "temple" of God but rather the entire congregation at Corinth as a "temple." That comes through clearly in the Greek text because all the verbal forms and the second person pronouns—the "you" pronouns—in those two verses are plural. So Paul is *talking about* God destroying the individual who has

defiled the holiness of the entire congregation at Corinth, which is the “house” of God. That is the same “house” he has been *talking about* all along. How could the individual defile the holiness of the group? By their presence among True Believers. I can’t fully explain how that is here, except to say the laws that Moses instituted teach us the basic principles involved. That’s why Paul insists in Chapter Five that the Corinthians should excommunicate one individual in particular. [Editor: See 1 Corinthians 5:13.]

It is also not obvious at first, but Paul’s statements concerning the Corinthian congregation as a “temple” of God follow logically from what he has said immediately before about others who “build” on the “foundation” he has “laid.” When he *talks about* the different types of building materials that could possibly go into “building” the “house” of God, he is referring to different types of individuals that stand in the assembly of Believers. Some—like the gold, silver, and diamonds—can withstand intense heat without suffering damage. Others, like the wood, hay, and straw, can’t. He then says the “fire” of God’s Judgment will reveal whether or not the part of the “temple” one individual has “built” will survive the “fire” of God’s wrath. If it does, that individual will receive a reward for having “built” part of God’s “house.”

From his statements, it appears Paul was concerned that some of the Corinthians had “converted” individuals who were not actually True Believers. He was afraid they were trying to “build a house” out of unbelievers who were wood, hay, or straw. To fully understand Paul’s statements, however, you have to understand the Old Testament message related to the Hebrew idiom “build a house.” I apologize to your readers, but without going into a lengthy explanation, I can’t say much more.

The reason Paul was concerned about the Corinthians letting unbelievers defile their assembly has to do with the fact that there is a mystical element involved in the assembly of True Believers. As Jesus said, “For where two or three have gathered together in My name, there I am in their midst.” [Editor: See Matthew 18:20.] The key phrase in that sentence is, “in My name.” You can meet with unbelievers—and Believers as well for that matter—for any and every purpose imaginable and God will not be “in the midst.” But if two or more True Believers meet, claiming to be meeting as a gathering of True Believers—and there are certain constituent ingredients that go into that claim—the Spirit of God will be there, moving among you. Unfortunately, the Holy Spirit of Christ that meets with the assembly of True Believers will be defiled by the blasphemous pretense of Pretenders who

know nothing of Christ.

So Paul’s warning to the Corinthians concerning the holiness of God’s “house”—that is, the holiness of the assembly of True Believers—is still appropriate today for those True Believers who want to fellowship together as an assembly of True Believers. If they allow unbelievers—Pretenders—to meet with them, thereby tacitly acknowledging that those Pretenders are True Believers, God will not be pleased, to say the least.

It was not by accident that the Roman Catholic Church came by the practice of excommunication. It is one of the oldest and most essential practices of the Christian Church. Without it, the Protestant Church has become what it is today—an open invitation, come-fellowship-with-us-next-Sunday organization that has no concern at all for the holiness of the Holy Spirit as He meets with True Believers and moves among them. So, to answer your question about True Believers fellowshiping together: I’m sure there will be some True Believers who meet together as the “house” of God and once again humbly seek to protect the holiness of Christ’s Spirit dwelling “in their midst.” I’m just as sure that some Pretenders will take what I teach and use the practice of excommunication for no purpose other than to proudly demonstrate, like the Pharisees before them, that they are better than everybody else.

I can’t possibly control what people do with what I teach. All I can do is warn them of the consequences. Some will take it and teach it to others, never mentioning where they got it, and without even bothering to tell them what your ministry is all about. But those who try to use the tools I provide should understand the consequences. God does not take the “building” of His “house” quite as lightly as most today assume. In His case, silence should not be taken to *mean* consent. It just *means* He said all He needed to say thousands of years ago. It is all hidden in the Old Testament Gospel of Jesus Christ.

An understanding of God’s Truth could at one time be found in *The Apostolic Teaching*, but the Church gave that up in exchange for a more “sophisticated” understanding of Truth. [Editor: See the articles in *The Voice of Elijah*, January 1993.] One should always keep that in mind. The Church voluntarily “gave up” *The Apostolic Teaching*. Pretenders, believing it must somehow have been God’s fault if that happened, will piously deny it. However, God didn’t give up *The Teaching*. We did. We lost it because Church leaders took what they had learned from a previous generation and tried to “improve” it. That could happen again today, but it won’t. Not because some won’t try, but

simply because there isn't time. Percentages declare there will always be those few imbeciles, but since God holds us only corporately responsible for the mistake the Early Church made, I wouldn't want to be the fool who tried the same thing today. [Editor: He's alluding to the two articles "Did You *Mean* That Literally?" and "The Origen of Folly," *The Voice of Elijah*, January 1993.] Therefore, if I were to offer a word to the wise, it would be, "Be careful what you do with *The Teaching*."

The lowest common denominator of Christian belief today, Catholic and Protestant alike, is that of the person who walks in off the street. God did not intend His Church should come to that. Those circumstances exist only because the Church no longer has anything of much *significance* to teach. However, appearances can be deceiving. The true members of the Church of the *Living* God haven't yet sunk to such lows, contrary to what Satan would have you believe. "The Many" are still out there, holding to the rudimentary Truth they understood when the Spirit first took up residence within them. I know you at *The Voice of Elijah* are just now, after two and a half years of ministry, beginning to hear from some of them. Take my word for it. An amazing number will follow. They will all have one thing in common—a basic understanding of the Truth of *The Teaching* that differs radically from what most of them have heard taught from the pulpit. For example, they will all understand the Truth concerning the Wrath of God because that's how they came to be born again. It's just that they have lacked, until now, someone who could confirm the veracity of that basic Truth and explain the scriptural basis for all the other things they have tended to believe. I will do that openly, for all—Believer and Pretender alike—to read. Consequently, what I teach will infuriate Pretenders, and they will fight against it. I have already accepted that. It is part of my calling.

But to get back to the text, Paul continues his statements concerning the "house" of God with a warning to those at Corinth who, like cult leaders and a lot of preachers today, "boast in men," that is, they are proud of the number of followers they have listening to them. Again, using plural forms of the personal pronoun to refer to the entire congregation at Corinth, Paul concludes by telling the Corinthians, "you belong to Christ; and Christ belongs to God." His point should not be lost on any who would seek to follow the Spirit of the *Living* God today. The Church in all its varied forms is God's Church. It's not your Church, and it's certainly not my Church. But anyone who wants to "build" anything on the "foundation" of the Church that Paul "laid" so long ago had best do so cautiously. I'm not going to be "building" anything any time soon.

Right now, I'm just feeding the "stones" who have already been "laid" and informing them as to their rights and responsibilities as members of God's "house." [Editor: He's alluding to Peter's use of the "house" image in 1 Peter 2:1 ff.]

When the time comes for "stones" to be added to God's "House," I'm sure He has a plan for that as well. But I'm going to take one thing at a time and wait as long as I possibly can before taking any action in that regard. That may sound strange to some, but I've learned from past mistakes. Until I am compelled to do something, I won't. I've found patience is a necessary virtue where God is involved. No need to get impatient. You can't rush Him, but you can easily move on ahead of Him alone. He'll let you go, never giving you a clue that you're playing the fool until you fall flat on your face. Then He'll give you an education in a hurry, provided you're willing to learn. I'd rather follow His lead. So I'll just keep on doing what I'm doing until that's finished. Then we'll see what's next.

Editor: *I'm confused. Are you saying you think people who read the newsletter should not get together for prayer and fellowship?*

Elijah: Not at all. I'm just saying God's Church is God's Church, and anyone who carelessly takes action that may have a detrimental impact on any true member of God's Church is a whole lot less than wise. Gathering for prayer and fellowship is one thing. Establishing a separate congregation is something else again. Those who are currently leaders in the Church, no matter which part, are responsible to God for their ministry if two or more True Believers are members of the assembly of the Church they shepherd. I'm sure there are some congregations in which not a single True Believer can be found. But even the ministers of those congregations will answer to God for masquerading as part of His Church. All I'm saying to True Believers is, "Be careful." The Wrath of God is a terrifying thing, as we will all have opportunity to see for ourselves one day. It's obvious to me that His Wrath is already at white heat, so the End will come soon enough. Whatever else a person does, he or she should make it a top priority to hold to the commitment they have made and live accordingly, being careful to avoid tainting the Holy Spirit in any way. That's all I'm saying.

Editor: *That seems fair enough. On to other things... You mentioned the fact that The Voice of Elijah ministry began two and a half years ago. Many of our readers aren't aware that in the first issue, in October of 1990, over three months before the Gulf War*

began, you laid out details of what would happen during that war with amazing accuracy. Since then, you've mentioned other things you thought were going to happen, and many of them have happened just as you said they would. All the while you've said, "I don't claim to be a Prophet." However, there is one thing you mentioned concerning the Gulf War that hasn't happened yet. Saddam Hussein has not yet been assassinated. Have you reconsidered that part of what you said?

Elijah: The Gulf War isn't over yet. As long as the sanctions are still in place and Iraq is partitioned, with Kurds in the north and Shi'ites in the south carrying on the conflict the multinational forces began, it won't be over. So we have a while to wait before I'll concede that. However, I read the other day that one of the things mentioned in one of the passages of Scripture I quoted in that first issue is ready to occur. I don't think I referred to it in the articles I wrote back then, and rightly so, because it doesn't apply to Iraq except as *parabolic imagery*. However, one of the passages mentions the marshes in the south of Iraq being burned with fire. [Editor: See Jeremiah 51:32.] Saddam Hussein has been preparing to burn those marshes by diverting water away from them for nearly two years. They are just now getting dry enough to burn. They'll go up in smoke this summer I assume, and the Shi'ites hiding there will be in even more desperate straits. That will increase the pressure on Iran to take some kind of action. Assassination is the most likely option.

I'm tending more and more to shy away from forecasting anything, even in *The Update*, because Pretenders put so much emphasis on "signs and wonders." Consequently, no sign will be given them except the sign of Elijah bringing the "rain." I'd rather they lose interest in what's going on here and go on about their business. As I said before, God doesn't care all that much about *what you know*. His primary concern is *what you do with what you know*. That's why the Church's loss of *The Apostolic Teaching* wasn't any great disaster as far as God was concerned. He has continued to judge the individual according to their deeds just as Paul said in Romans. [Editor: See Romans 1:18 ff.]

If people aren't living according to the small amount of Truth they now have, why in the world would they want additional Truth—and the greater responsibility that comes with the knowledge of that Truth? It beats me how people can go on day after day doing the same things they cynically condemn others for doing and still think they will avoid judgment. Paul plainly says they are "storing up wrath" for themselves. [Editor: See Romans 2:5.] I would not want to

be in their shoes on Judgment Day. But I guess they won't be wearing any shoes then, will they?

Editor: *That comment brings up another issue. In the lead article you wrote for this issue, you make sarcastic comments about charlatans and Pretenders. You even make comments about mainstream Christian theologians. Why do you do that?*

Elijah: Partly because it's fun poking holes in puff-balls, especially so since it's part of what God called me to do. But the main reason I do it is because True Believers are naïve. They tend to see only the good in people. They say things like, "There are a lot of good people," directly contradicting God. [Editor: See Psalms 14:1–3; 143:2.] I realize that's easy to do nowadays because the Church doesn't stress God's view of sin and of sinners. But it's still wrong. True Believers haven't been taught that in God's eyes nobody is "good." People may be "nice" to you but that doesn't mean they are "good." Moreover, True Believers haven't grasped the *significance* of Paul's words to Titus:

To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled. They profess to know God, but by {their} deeds they deny {Him}, being detestable and disobedient, and worthless for any good deed.

(Titus 1:15–16)

If True Believers are going to survive spiritually in the days to come, they are going to have to develop a hard edge and a keen eyesight—spiritually, I *mean*. Jesus said we are supposed to be as shrewd as serpents and as harmless as doves. [Editor: See Matthew 10:16 ff.] Without shrewdness, the dove-like nature of the True Believer will be easy prey for all those who want to continue their abominable pretense by stubbornly pretending to believe *The Teaching*.

I have confidence in the True Believers, however. They'll get my drift without turning it into an arrogant "I'm better than you." I certainly don't *mean* it that way, although Pretenders will take it that way because to the "defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure." It's a simple matter of logic: I wouldn't have been called to do what I do if I had stood in God's favor. I'll face greater judgment because of my calling. Consequently, I do the best I can to do things that will accomplish more than just one thing. In this case, I'm also angling for an angry, or at least skeptical, rejection of what I teach on the part of some Pretender that will turn him or her away. It's all part of the process: I'm gathering out while God gathers in. ■

Ducks

From Page 1

Did you notice I added an additional qualification to the “duck identification routine”? The usual expression is, “If it looks like a duck, and walks like a duck, it must be a duck.” Yet I said it also had to “quack like a duck.” A lot of people do that to the “false prophet identification routine” Jesus outlined. They add more detail to the specifications. You know, they say you’re a false prophet only if you say this or you don’t say that.

I suppose they consider it sort of like the situation with the specs the Air Force issued a couple of years ago when it set out to buy 300,000 personal computers. Did you hear about that one? Following new government guidelines, the Air Force requested bids from suppliers. At the time, a lot of people were proud of the fact that the proposals submitted under the new, highly-abbreviated specs were only “10 pages instead of the usual 150 pages.” (*Business Week*, March 8, 1993)

Unfortunately, now everybody is questioning whether a personal computer is a personal computer. Everybody, that is, except the winner of the bidding process. Consequently, the Air Force has had to choose a winning bid three times because every time they’ve chosen a winner the losers contested the award in court and had it set aside. That probably wouldn’t have happened if the specs had been more detailed.

The sad thing about the Air Force fiasco is that in the two years since the contract was first awarded, computer technology has advanced to the point where the original specs no longer accurately identify the most recent, and cost-effective, generation of computing “ducks” the Air Force could procure. So much for ducks that waddle.

As a Man Thinketh ...

In contrast to government bureaucrats, Jesus thought it necessary to set forth just one spec, just one requirement, for identifying a false prophet. If the prophet produces bad “fruit,” he’s a false prophet. So I ask you again: What does Jesus mean by “fruit”? Now don’t go totally subjective and play guessing

games. To find out, all you have to do is continue reading Matthew’s record of what Jesus said after that:

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.’”
(*Matthew 7:21–23*)

That was easy, wasn’t it? Jesus said not everybody who says, “Lord, Lord” “does the will of My Father.” That means the “fruit” He has in mind is in “doing the will of My Father.” It also means some folks are not actually what they appear to be. But I suppose you already knew that. I call them “Pretenders.” Maybe you have a better term for them. Whatever you call them, Jesus said there would be many who tell Him on Judgment Day that they had prophesied in His name, cast out demons in His name, and worked many miracles in His name, yet He would deny them.

Doesn’t that sound like a description of just the sort of things one would expect a Prophet to do? I imagine anyone doing those things would think they had a key to the Gates of Heaven. Yet Jesus said they are in for a rude awakening. They weren’t legitimate Prophets at all because they didn’t “do the will of My Father.” So He “never knew” them. Then He tells us outright the reason they will be rejected. It’s because they lack acceptable “fruit”:

“DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.”
(*Matthew 7:23*)

Why do you suppose Jesus would think it such a simple matter to identify a false prophet? And why didn’t He stress identification based on words instead of deeds? Surely, if you want to know who a person is, you should listen to what he says, don’t you think?

Well, I hate to tell you this, since some of you are not yet totally awake,

“People always act according to what they believe, or want to believe, is true—without exception.”

but He probably didn’t stress words over deeds because that’s not the way it is down here. You see, we’re living in a land of liars. Most often, the people down here don’t say what they think or feel. They say *what they want you to think* they think or feel. I shouldn’t have to tell you there’s a big difference between those two.

So, if you can’t always trust what people say, how are you going to know who they are down deep inside? Simple. Do what Jesus said: Take a good, hard look at their actions. That way, you’ll soon discover what they are thinking because people always act according to what they believe, or want to believe, is true—without exception.

Consider the story of the boy who cried “wolf.” Remember? He thought it was great fun to see the reaction of the townspeople running frantically every time he fooled them by crying “wolf.” The first few times he cried “wolf,” they believed him. But before long they just assumed he was up to his old tricks and ignored him. So what happened when the wolf actually came?

I realize that’s not the moral of the story as it is usually told, but it illustrates the truism Jesus had in mind nonetheless. If we didn’t all act according to what we believe, whether according to fleeting notion or deeply held conviction, there would be no way doctors could define what is and is not mental illness. Consider the alternative: Bizarre activity would be the norm, without basis in, or link to, our mental state at the time.

If you have any doubt that when Jesus said “fruit” He meant “actions,” continue reading what He said after that:

“Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine, and acts upon them, may be compared to a wise man, who built his house upon the rock. And the rain descended, and the floods came,

“The ‘rock’ on which Jesus ‘built His house’ (the Church) is not Peter himself but what Peter understood about Jesus—the revelation pertaining to the Messiah of Israel that one can find in The Teaching of Moses.”

and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and [yet] it did not fall, for it had been founded upon the rock. And everyone who hears these words of Mine, and does not act upon them, will be like a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and it fell, and great was its fall.”
(Matthew 7:24–27)

That just about says it all, doesn’t it? I like that parable. It’s one of my favorites because its meaning is parabolic on two levels. On the first level, it talks about the one who “hears” *The Teaching of Jesus Christ* and “acts upon” it. He is LIKE a wise man who “built his house upon the rock.” By contrast, the one who doesn’t “hear” *The Teaching of Jesus Christ* and “act” accordingly is LIKE a foolish man who “built his house upon the sand.”

On the second level, however, Jesus is referring to the parabolic message of *The House* that is hidden in the Hebrew Scriptures. A primary element in that message concerns the spiritual warfare that goes on between Himself and Satan. In the parabolic imagery of that Old Testament message, Jesus Christ is the wise man, Satan is the foolish man.

The Old Testament Gospel of Jesus Christ tells us how the Messiah of Israel, the wise Man, is going to “build His house” on one solid “rock.” On the other hand, it also tells us Satan, the foolish man, is going to “build his house” on a multitude of tiny rocks—the sand. (See *The Mystery of Scripture and House of Israel, Temple of God*.) That’s what Jesus was referring to in the well-known exchange He had with Peter:

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He {began} asking His disciples, saying, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” And they said, “Some {say} John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the proph-

ets.” He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” And Simon Peter answered and said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” And Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal {this} to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” Then He warned the disciples that they should tell no one that He was the Christ.
(Matthew 16:13–20)

It isn’t obvious at first, but the “rock” on which Jesus “built His house” (the Church) is not Peter himself but what Peter understood about Jesus—the revelation pertaining to the Messiah of Israel that one can find in *The Teaching of Moses*. However, He is also saying He will “build” the Church using “stones” LIKE Peter. (Peter means “stone.”)

The revelation embodied in *The Teaching of Moses* is the cohesive product of the mind of God. By contrast, the grains of sand on which Satan has “built his house” are nothing more than the disparate, conflicting thoughts of individual men. The cataclysm of wind and rain mentioned in the Parable of the Wise Man and the Fool is just a parabolic description of the final, specific events of this era that are described in various places throughout the Prophets. You are already seeing the “rain” fall. The high “wind” will be along shortly. Let the reader understand.

In telling the parable, Jesus is explaining to His followers the reason why He will reject the false prophets He has just warned them against. He will reject them because they didn’t hear “these words of Mine,” and “act upon them.” In other words, the individual false prophet

could not “build his house” on *The Teaching* God revealed to Moses. He “built” it instead on teaching that originated with men. Consequently, the false prophet could not produce “fruit” acceptable to God because that is only possible by “hearing” and by “acting upon” *The Teaching of Jesus Christ*.

Consider the logic: If actions always stem from belief, how can anyone “do the will of My Father” if they don’t choose to believe *The Teaching of Jesus Christ* when they have the opportunity to hear it? Sadly enough, they can’t. If you believe a lie, you’ll come up short at the End. A word to the wise is sufficient: You’d better pay attention.

I’m going to take you on a brief survey of a few of the salient references to *The Teaching* concerning *The House* in the New Testament. Just keep in mind, *The Teaching* is a lot like an iceberg. Most of it is hidden beneath the surface of the text—hidden in parabolic images and their corresponding Hebrew idioms, the stuff of which parables are made. You should take notes because you’re going to be tested. The one who has ears to hear will hear.

Is Your Foundation Cracking?

The distinctive characteristic of *The Teaching of Moses* is the fact that it purports to be revelation from God. So, if we are looking for the “foundation” on which Jesus, as the quintessential wise Man, “built the house” of God, we could succinctly say that foundation is the revelation God gave to Moses. That’s short and sweet. The verbosity comes in when one tries to explain the manifold implications of what God has packed into that simple statement.

In a very real sense, the Prophets and the Apostles do not add to the revelation God gave to Moses. They merely set it in historical perspective by revealing how God worked in history to accomplish the things He revealed to Moses.

“The Greek philosophers ... ‘laid a foundation’ of knowledge gained by ‘reasoned argument’ on which subsequent generations of their disciples have striven to ‘build the house’ of Satan.”

Going further down this same track, one can say that Jesus Christ is the complete expression of the *revelation* of God. That is, in His life, death, and resurrection from the dead, He is *The Teaching of Moses* personified. Everything God *revealed* to Moses is fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Therefore, since *The Teaching of Moses* is the *Word of God*, Jesus Christ is, in Himself, the *Word of God*:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

(John 1:1–5)

Don’t be misled. That’s just a *parabolic* explanation of a spiritual reality. Did you understand what John said about *The Word* being *The Light* “the darkness did not comprehend”? He’s explaining *parabolic imagery* that relates how Jesus Christ is *The Teaching*—that is, *The Word of God*, Which is also *The Light* that unbelievers cannot understand because they reject it without even considering it might be true.

I won’t pretend the above comes anywhere close to being an adequate explanation of the Truth involved in the *parabolic* concept of Jesus Christ as the *Word of God*. However, I’ll explain it all eventually. (See future volumes in *The Resurrection Theology Series*.) For now, however, I should tell you Paul also mentions the information conveyed by the *parabolic imagery* of *The Word* on at least one occasion:

For I want you to know how great a struggle I have on your behalf, and for those who are at Laodicea, and for all those who have not personally seen my face, that their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love,

and [attaining] to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, [resulting] in a true knowledge of God’s mystery, [that is], Christ [Himself], in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. I say this in order that no one may delude you with persuasive argument. For even though I am absent in body, nevertheless I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good discipline and the stability of your faith in Christ. As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, [so] walk in Him, having been firmly rooted [and now] being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, [and] overflowing with gratitude. See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. For in Him all the fulness of Deity dwells in bodily form.

(Colossians 2:1–9)

“Jesus Christ is the complete expression of the revelation of God.”

Did you notice that Paul said “a true knowledge of God’s mystery” is Jesus Christ, “in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” I realize there are more than a few mystical freaks out there, the illegitimate offspring of false prophets, who will insist Paul is *talking about* some mystical experience they have had in which they “received the Lord,” or “Jesus came into their heart.” He isn’t. He’s *talking about* Jesus Christ as the absolute personification of *The Teaching of Moses* he had explained to the Colossians. That’s why he says a bit later, “walk in Him.” It’s also what he has in mind when he says “in

Him all the fulness of Deity dwells in bodily form.”

So much for the *revelation* God gave Moses as the “foundation” on which Jesus Christ “built the house” of God. The search for the foundation of Satan’s “house” takes us somewhat farther afield. To uncover it, we must delve for just a bit into Greek philosophy. That should come as no surprise, considering the role we have seen Greek philosophy played in the Early Church’s loss of *The Apostolic Teaching*. (See articles, *The Voice of Elijah*, January 1993.)

Greek philosophers, particularly Socrates (ca. 470–399 B.C.) and the Athenian philosophers who followed in his footsteps, have long been uncritically credited with taking the “one small step for man” that became a “giant leap for mankind.” In truth, the “presocratic philosophers”—Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes (ca. 600–530 B.C.)—of Miletus took that formidable step.

Under the tutelage of these presocratic philosophers, the upper echelon of Greek society moved from superstitious belief in myths and reliance on divine oracles (revelation) to a profound faith (belief) in a knowledge of the divine gained strictly by means of “reasoned argument.” Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle merely took philosophical speculation concerning the origin of the *cosmos* (world) and its creator—what the presocratic philosophers had called “the Unbounded”—to ever-increasing heights of sophistication.

Lest you missed it, the major difference between the “foundations” of the two *parabolic* “houses” of which the Old Testament message speaks inheres in their view of revelation. We will discover Jesus Christ and His disciples have “built the house” of God on the “foundation” of revealed Truth that was “laid” by Moses, the Prophets, and the Apostles. By contrast, the Greek philosophers flatly rejected the notion of revelation in favor of reasoned argument based on empirical evidence. They “laid a foundation” of knowledge gained by “reasoned

argument” on which subsequent generations of their disciples have striven to “build the house” of Satan.

Just so you understand what we are about here at *The Voice of Elijah* and The Elijah Project, we are going to take Satan’s “reasoned argument” approach and use it against him. For example, it can be shown, and I will show over the next several years—by means of “reasoned argument” and empirical evidence alone—that the Hebrew Scriptures (that’s empirical evidence, isn’t it?) contain a detailed explanation of all that God accomplished through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Moreover, I will use the New Testament and Early Church Fathers (they’re also empirical evidence, aren’t they?) to confirm that my understanding of the Old Testament Gospel of Jesus Christ was known to the Early Church. Along the way, I will explain, for the benefit of all who have ears to hear, what the Prophets have spoken concerning events that will occur in our own time.

My use of the “reasoned argument” approach doesn’t *mean* everyone will accept what I teach. Quite the contrary. I am only offering a “reasoned argument” based on empirical evidence. As I’ve said before, evidence is objective, “proof” is subjective. (See articles, *The Voice of Elijah*, October 1991.) If what I teach is true, however, the fact that it has been explained openly is going to leave those who reject it without excuse. You see, there are various ways one can be a “witness” for Jesus Christ. When the prosecution rests its case against this generation on Judgment Day, the testimony of True Believers will provide the basis for conviction.

If you want to understand what I teach, however, you have to think in parables—always think in parables, even sometimes when I say something *is* something else. As I’ve explained before, a parable is just a comparison that tells us how one thing is *LIKE* another. (See “Nobody in Their Right Mind Would Even Want to Be Napoleon!” *The Voice of Elijah*, October 1992.) In this article we are going to be looking at just a few of the *parabolic statements* in the Scriptures that tell us how the work of Jesus Christ is *LIKE* that of a wise man building a house on a rock.

Carpenters Build Houses, Don’t They?

The subheading has nothing to do with this article. I just like the *imagery*. Actually, in Palestine, houses are built of stone, and have been for thousands of years. Therefore, carpenters didn’t normally build houses in Palestine in the time of Christ, stone masons did. That’s why we’re going to be *talking about* “living stones” a bit later.

Justin Martyr tells us Jesus was a carpenter who made wooden yokes. But that, like the *parabolic pantomime* of Jesus being born in a manger and crucified as the Passover Lamb of God, is part of another story. [Editor: He’s alluding to Jesus’ words in Matthew 11:25–30. See also “The *Parabolic Pantomimes* of Jesus Christ,” *The Voice of Elijah*, January 1991.] It appears God enjoys playing with *parabolic imagery*, doesn’t it? But that’s another story as well. Right now, let’s get back to building houses.

“The Hebrew Scriptures ... contain a detailed explanation of all that God accomplished through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”

The Apostle Paul on one occasion alludes to the *parabolic imagery* of the Old Testament prophetic message concerning the “house” of God in emphasizing the need for Believers in Ephesus to demonstrate unity:

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household, having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner {stone}, in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit. (Ephesians 2:19–22)

Isn’t that interesting? Most commentators take Paul’s use of the terms “house” and “foundation” as metaphorical images. (Here the translators of the New American Standard Bible have even translated the Greek term for “house” as “household” because they didn’t understand the *parabolic imagery*.) Those images aren’t metaphorical. They’re *parabolic*. [Editor: See “They’ve Put God in a Box! (Or So They Think),” *The Voice of Elijah*, January 1993.] Paul is alluding to the Prophets’ *parabolic* message concerning the “house” of Israel that became the “house” of God—the “house” the wise Man “built” on the “rock.”

By the way, surely you’re familiar with the psalmists’ declaration that “God is a rock”? [Editor: Ps. 18:31 et al.] They say it over and over again. If you don’t believe me, check your concordance. The Prophets who wrote the Psalms were just playing with the *parabolic image* of the “rock” that is related to the *parabolic image* of the “house.” God was doing the same thing in the dream He gave Nebuchadnezzar. You know, the one where “a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands” only to become a mountain itself (Dan. 2:34–35, 45)? That’s just a tongue-in-cheek allusion to the fact that the first two tablets of the covenant, the ones Moses shattered at the foot of Mt. Sinai, were cut out of the mountain by God Himself (Ex. 32:16). But that’s also another story.

By referring to Jesus Christ as the “cornerstone,” Paul has tucked into his statement a brief allusion to Isaiah 28:16. Do you know how many times that verse is quoted in the New Testament? Six. Therefore, it seems the Apostles saw something specific in Isaiah’s statements. Indeed they did—something incredibly specific. So let’s take a look, understanding that, if we are to comprehend Isaiah’s *meaning* in that one verse, we must understand it in its larger (historical and literary) context.

Isaiah begins by *parabolically* describing circumstances that have come about because of Israel’s rejection of *The Teaching of Moses*. He says the priests and the Prophets he describes are no more able to comprehend what God has said in *The Teaching* than a drunkard high on wine. In contrast to the life-sustaining Truth of *The Teaching of Moses*

which is (*parabolically*) LIKE bread that came out of the mouth of God (Deut. 8:3), the words that come out of their mouths are (*parabolically*) LIKE vomit:

*And these also reel with wine and stagger from strong drink:
The priest and the prophet reel with strong drink,
They are confused by wine,
they stagger from strong drink;
They reel while having visions,
They totter {when rendering} judgment.*

For all the tables are full of filthy vomit, without a {single clean} place.

“To whom would He teach knowledge?”

And to whom would He interpret the message?

*Those {just} weaned from milk?
Those {just} taken from the breast?
For {He says},*

*‘Order on order, order on order,
Line on line, line on line,*

A little here, a little there.’”

*Indeed, He will speak to this people
Through stammering lips and
a foreign tongue,*

He who said to them,

“Here is rest, give rest to the weary,”

And, “Here is repose,”

but they would not listen.

So the word of the LORD to them will be,

“Order on order, order on order,

Line on line, line on line,

A little here, a little there,”

***That they may go and stumble backward, be broken, snared,
and taken captive.***

Therefore, hear the word of the LORD,

O scoffers,

*Who rule this people who are
in Jerusalem,*

Because you have said,

*“We have made a covenant with death,
And with Sheol we have made a pact.*

The overwhelming scourge will not reach us when it passes by,

For we have made falsehood our refuge and we have concealed ourselves with deception.”

Therefore thus says the Lord GOD,

***“Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone,
a tested stone,***

A costly cornerstone {for} the

foundation, firmly placed.

He who believes {in it} will not be disturbed.

And I will make justice the measuring line,

And righteousness the level;

Then hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies,

And the waters shall overflow the secret place.

And your covenant with death shall be canceled,

And your pact with Sheol shall not stand;

When the overwhelming scourge passes through,

Then you become its trampling {place},

*As often as it passes through,
it will seize you.*

For morning after morning it will pass through, {anytime} during the day or night.

And it will be sheer terror to understand what it means.”

The bed is too short on which to stretch out,

And the blanket is too small to wrap oneself in.

For the Lord will rise up as {at} Mount Perazim,

He will be stirred up as in the valley of Gibeon;

*To do His task, His unusual task,
And to work His work, His*

extraordinary work.

And now do not carry on as scoffers,

Lest your fetters be made stronger;

For I have heard from the Lord

GOD of hosts,

Of decisive destruction on all the earth.

(Isaiah 28:7–22)

Heavy, heavy, hangs over their head. It’s coming folks, and nothing you or I can do or say now is going to stop it. If I were you, I would check to make sure I wasn’t one of those who have “made falsehood our refuge” and “concealed ourselves with deception.”

But scoffers will continue to scoff—right up to the bitter End. And how bitter that End will be! You can’t tell them. There’s no need to even try. They have multiplied layers of fail-safe mechanisms built into their theological beliefs that will be there until that sud-

den, stony-cold realization of the mistake they made rises within them when they finally hear the words:

“DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.”

(Matthew 7:23)

But that’s another matter. You’re not responsible for what others *choose* to believe. You are, however, responsible for what you believe. So, did you understand what Isaiah said? First he asks the rhetorical question:

“To whom would He teach knowledge?”

And to whom would He interpret the message?”

(Isaiah 28:9a)

Then he goes on to explain that, because the sons of Israel had no interest in understanding *The Teaching of Moses*, God was going to make the Old Testament Gospel of Jesus Christ (*The Teaching of Moses and the Prophets*) just that much more difficult to understand:

So the word of the LORD to them will be,

“Order on order, order on order,

Line on line, line on line,

A little here, a little there.”

(Isaiah 28:13a)

To understand what Isaiah is saying, you must realize he was among the earliest of the writing Prophets. He, and all the other Prophets who recorded their prophecies for our benefit, created the Hebrew Scriptures. They put them together for us under the divine guidance of the Holy Spirit. Knowing that, you can better see that Isaiah is *talking about* the circumstances one now faces in reading the Old Testament. The coherency of the message of the Hebrew Scriptures can be discovered only by reading “a little here, a little there” because the Prophets intentionally put it together that way.

Isaiah is talking to the leaders of Israel who would rather believe the lies of their various traditions than believe the Truth. (But remember, the Church is today the continuation of *Corporate* Israel, so he is talking to the Pretenders around us today as well.) There are a lot of people like that, aren’t there? Isaiah says they “have made a covenant with death.”

Then he reveals what God's response to their love of error will be:

*"Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone,
a tested stone,
A costly cornerstone [for] the
foundation, firmly placed.
He who believes [in it] will not be
disturbed."
(Isaiah 28:16)*

What in the world could that statement possibly have to do with anything Isaiah has said up to that point? Obviously he thought it had everything to do with it because he goes on to say:

*Then hail shall sweep away the
refuge of lies,
And the waters shall overflow the
secret place.
And your covenant with death shall
be canceled,
And your pact with Sheol shall
not stand.
(Isaiah 28:17b–18a)*

It's clear that, in the overall context, Isaiah is *talking about* those who will believe the Truth of *The Teaching of Moses*—the "costly cornerstone"—as opposed to those who willingly *choose* to believe a lie. Furthermore, it is also clear that he understands the "costly cornerstone" God is going to "lay" will be the Truth that one should believe. But he doesn't pause at all to explain the *parabolic imagery* of the Prophets related to the "house" of Israel, or the fact that, since Israel is the "firstborn" of God (Ex. 4:22), Israel is also God's "house," or that the *meaning* of the Hebrew idiom "build a house" informs us how all that is and ties it together into one coherent message. Isaiah merely assumes you will understand his statement is just another bit of the information in the Hebrew Scriptures that is going to be scattered "a little here, a little there."

You see, the *parabolic imagery* in *The Teaching of Moses* tells us the individual members of Israel are living "stones" in the "house" of Israel. I'll eventually explain for you how it does that. That same *parabolic imagery* also tells us (contrary to what many today would like to believe) that any "stone" who becomes contaminated with sin be-

yond remedy will be "cut off from" Israel.

As I explained in *Not All Israel Is Israel* (pp. 203 ff.) there was one point in history when all Israel—in the person of Jesus Christ—had been completely "cut off." According to the *parabolic image* of *Corporate Israel* as a "house," the "house" had been completely demolished and its "foundation" razed.

But on Resurrection Morning God "laid" a new "cornerstone," Jesus Christ,

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message of the
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the first of the "living stones" that would eventually comprise the rebuilt "house" of Israel. Therefore, Jesus Christ provided a crucial part of the "foundation" on which His disciples, those who would come along later, could add even more "stones" in again "building the house" of Israel—what we call the Church. Peter is *talking about* that *parabolic imagery* when he quotes the same verse from Isaiah that Paul used:

*Therefore, putting aside all malice and
all guile and hypocrisy and envy and
all slander, like newborn babes, long
for the pure milk of the word, that by it
you may grow in respect to salvation, if
you have tasted the kindness of the
Lord. And coming to Him as to a living
stone, rejected by men, but choice
and precious in the sight of God, you
also, as living stones, are being built
up as a spiritual house for a holy
priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices
acceptable to God through Jesus
Christ. For {this} is contained in
Scripture:*

*"BEHOLD I LAY IN ZION A CHOICE STONE,
A PRECIOUS CORNER {stone},
AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM
SHALL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED."*

*This precious value, then, is for you
who believe. But for those who disbelieve,*

*"THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS
REJECTED,*

*THIS BECAME THE VERY
CORNER {stone},"*

and,

*"A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A
ROCK OF OFFENSE";*

*for they stumble because they are dis-
obedient to the word, and to this
{doom} they were also appointed.
(1 Peter 2:1–8)*

Did Peter pull it all together for you? First, in verse 5 he alludes to (and in verse 9 he quotes) statements that are made concerning *Corporate Israel* in Exodus 19:5–6. That tells us he is *talking about* the Church as the continuation of the "house" of Israel. Then in verse 6 he quotes Isaiah 28:16 to emphasize the importance of belief in Jesus Christ—that is, to emphasize what he had said earlier about "coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected by men, but choice and precious in the sight of God." In that quotation, Peter adheres to the central thrust of Isaiah's statements—that is, belief in the Truth of *The Teaching of Moses* and, by extension, belief in the Prophet's explanation of the Old Testament Gospel of Jesus Christ.

In verse 7, Peter quotes Psalm 118:22 which tells us the "stone" rejected by the "builders"—that is, the Jews who had been "building the house" of Israel until God "cut them off" from Israel—had suddenly been made into the "cornerstone" of a "foundation" that was being "laid" for an entirely new "house" of Israel. (Face the facts. You don't "lay" "stones" in a "foundation" unless you are going to be "building" a new "house.")

Are you still with me? The *parabolic imagery* in all these passages is fairly simple, but I realize I'm leaving gaps by not having first explained the Old Testament background the Prophets had available to them when they wrote. I'm intentionally doing that to shake loose the skeptics reading along with us.

It will be best in the long run for you True Believers that the Pretender turns scoffer and openly rejects my message. There are plenty of Pretenders who lack the courage to openly reject anything.

Many of them will be able to intellectually understand the things I teach, but they won't believe *The Teaching* because they are constantly seeking more "proof." They fail to understand that evidence is objective, "proof" is subjective, residing in the Believer. (See articles, *The Voice of Elijah*, October 1991.) Those of you who house the Spirit of the Living God should be thankful you already have within you the "proof" they seek. (See "Mystics, Meatballs, and the Marvelous Works of God" in this issue.) Most of them will never find that proof because they are too proud and stubborn to humbly repent of their sins.

Jesus quotes the verse Peter has

**“The parabolic
imagery in The
Teaching of Moses
tells us the individual
members of Israel are
living ‘stones’ in the
‘house’ of Israel.”**

taken from Psalm 118 in a parable that clearly makes the point I made earlier concerning the Jews being “cut off from” Israel. (See *Not All Israel Is Israel*, pp. 188 ff.) If you understand the *parabolic imagery* related to the “house” of Israel, the point of His parable is that much clearer:

And He began to tell the people this parable: “A man planted a vineyard and rented it out to vine-growers, and went on a journey for a long time. And at the {harvest} time he sent a slave to the vine-growers, in order that they might give him {some} of the produce of the vineyard; but the vine-growers beat him and sent him away empty-handed. And he proceeded to send another slave; and they beat him also and treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed. And he proceeded to send a third; and this one also they wounded and cast out. And the owner of the vineyard said, ‘What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; perhaps they will respect him.’ But

when the vine-growers saw him, they reasoned with one another, saying, ‘This is the heir; let us kill him that the inheritance may be ours.’ And they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. What, therefore, will the owner of the vineyard do to them? He will come and destroy these vine-growers and will give the vineyard to others.” And when they heard it, they said, “May it never be!” But He looked at them and said, “What then is this that is written,

*‘THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS
REJECTED,*

*THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER
{stone}’?*

*Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust.” And the scribes and the chief priests tried to lay hands on Him that very hour, and they feared the people; for they understood that He spoke this parable against them.
(Luke 20:9–19)*

Did you catch his allusion to Daniel 2:34–35 and 44–45? He's *talking about* Himself as the “stone cut out of the mountain without hands” that Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream. It's intriguing *parabolic imagery*, isn't it? For the benefit of you scoffers, He's *talking about* the scattering of the wicked at the time of His Second Coming. You know, the time when you get to enjoy the eternal reward you have coming in return for your skepticism?

(Sorry folks, but I have to tighten up their straightjacket once in a while. They hate it when someone acts as arrogant as they are. Their stubbornness kicks in, and they go absolutely meteoric. It never occurs to them that someone might actually know the Truth and be able to see through their pretense.)

Finally, in 1 Peter 2:8, Peter turns to Isaiah 8:14 and quotes just a portion of a passage in which Isaiah has told us:

“It is the LORD of hosts whom you should regard as holy. And He shall be your fear, And He shall be your dread. Then He shall become a sanctuary; But to both the houses of Israel, a

*stone to strike and a rock to stumble over,
{And} a snare and a trap for the inhabitants of Jerusalem.
And many will stumble over them,
Then they will fall and be broken;
They will even be snared and caught.”
(Isaiah 8:13–15)*

That passage says it all. For some, “the Lord of hosts” “shall become a sanctuary”—literally, a “holy place.” He will become, in Himself, the “House” of Israel Who is also the Firstborn of God—the “House” (sanctuary) of God. But for most of the Jews, Jesus Christ, the chief “cornerstone” set in the “foundation” of the new “house” of Israel, was a bit too high a hurdle. He still is for many, Jew and “Christian” alike, who believe God's favor still resides with the Jews. It will become clear to them soon enough (but too late) that *The Teaching of Jesus Christ* was just “a stone to strike and a rock to stumble over.”

If that doesn't explain it for you, don't look for it to be made any clearer. The Jews were “cut off from” Israel, and most of them failed to take advantage of the opportunity to, as Paul says in Romans 11:17–24, be “grafted in again.” They “stumbled” over Jesus Christ—*The (personified) Teaching of Moses*—Who was the “cornerstone” of the new “foundation” that was being “laid” in preparation for “building” the “house” of Israel again.

Believe in the Stone

The Apostle Paul said much the same thing as Jesus did in the parable about the wise Man and the fool, although in the process he merged Isaiah 8:14 into 28:16, producing a hybrid quote that, amazingly, remains true to the intent of Isaiah in both verses:

What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith; but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at {that} law. Why? Because {they did} not {pursue it} by faith, but as though {it were} by works. They stumbled over the stum-

*bling stone, just as it is written,
"BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A STONE OF
STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE,
AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT
BE DISAPPOINTED."
(Romans 9:30–33)*

Obviously, some will question Paul's mangled quote, yet at the same time they care little whether they rip verses out of their scriptural context themselves, distorting their meaning in the process. Unlike Paul, who remained true to Isaiah's intent, they are perfectly content to use what the Prophets have written for their own minuscule purposes.

To accurately understand what Isaiah has said in 8:14, one must consider it as part of a larger passage. He begins that passage by telling us God warned him against "walking in the way" of the people of Israel:

*For thus the LORD spoke to me with
mighty power and instructed me not to
walk in the way of this people
(Isaiah 8:11a)*

Isaiah doesn't tell you the Prophets all condemn Israel for having "turned aside from" *The Way* of the Lord to "walk in" their own ways. (See *The Mystery of Scripture*.) He assumes you already know that. Why shouldn't he? It's clearly stated over and over in the Prophets. Isaiah also assumes you know "*The Way*" of the Lord is *The Teaching of Moses*, so he doesn't bother telling you that either. Isaiah takes it for granted that you understand all the things you need to know from reading other passages in the Hebrew Scriptures. And indeed you will, soon enough, if you continue along with me.

The final thing Isaiah doesn't tell you, but assumes you will understand from reading what he has written, is that, when "the Lord of hosts" "becomes a sanctuary," He will also become *The Way*

***"The Truth of The
Teaching has never
been (and will never
be) fully understood by
unbelievers."***

of the Lord the Redeemed of the Lord will follow when they make their "way" into the "house" of the Lord, just as Jesus said:

*"Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, {there} you may be also. And you know the way where I am going." Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me."
(John 14:1–6)*

Does what Jesus said confuse you? I hope it does, because only a fool would think he understands. Jesus is explaining a great spiritual mystery. That mystery can only be understood *parabolically*, and even then only on the basis of things that are explained elsewhere by the Prophets. Put summarily, Jesus is *talking about Himself as The Teaching of Moses*. *The Teaching* is *The (only) Way* whereby Believers become living "stones" in the "house" of Israel, and ultimately, in the "house" of God. Yet, in some mystical sense, *The Teaching* is the "house" of God. He is the "sanctuary" Isaiah mentions that is "built" from the "foundation" up out of living "stones" in whom that same *Teaching* dwells. Now you tell me if you can understand what Jesus said. *Parabolically*? Perhaps yes. But literally? Don't be a fool.

In *parabolic statements*, Jesus is saying the same thing Paul said in his letter to the church at Rome:

*But the righteousness based on faith speaks thus,
"DO NOT SAY IN YOUR HEART, 'WHO WILL ASCEND INTO HEAVEN?'
(that is, to bring Christ down), or
'WHO WILL DESCEND INTO THE ABYSS?'
(that is, to bring Christ up from the dead)."
But what does it say?
"THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART"—that is,*

***"The Hebrew idiom
'make a name' is a
synonym for the idiom
'build a house.'"***

*the word of faith which we are preaching, that if you confess with your mouth Jesus {as} Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. For the Scripture says,
"WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED."
(Romans 10:6–11)*

Notice that Paul has dipped into Isaiah 28:16 to make his point concerning the necessity of believing in Jesus Christ, the "Lord of hosts" Who is *The Way*, *The Truth*, and *The Life*. He is *The Word* through which Believers will be saved. And all you have to do is believe.

The Apostle Peter does a commendable job of summarizing the same thing in his statements to the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem. But in so doing, he brings in the *parabolic image* of the "name," thus opening up even greater possibilities for making obscurantist statements, since the Hebrew idiom "make a name" is a synonym for the idiom "build a house." It probably never occurred to you that there might be *parabolic imagery* hidden in such an ordinary word, but take a look anyway:

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers and elders of the people, if we are on trial today for a benefit done to a sick man, as to how this man has been made well, let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, —by this {name} this man stands here before you in good health. He is the STONE WHICH WAS REJECTED by you, THE BUILDERS, {but} WHICH BECAME THE VERY CORNER {stone}. And there is salvation in no one else; for there is

no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved.
(Acts 4:8–12)

By the way, if you're still with me, we lost of a whole bunch of Pretenders during that last explanation. They want nothing to do with anything so "mystical." Give them literal or give them death. They'll have both. They've made a covenant with him, remember? But God intended it should be so to protect those of you who have "insight" in these Last Days. You see, Isaiah plainly told us that's how it will be when, at the conclusion of the passage we've been looking at in Isaiah 8, he says:

Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples. And I will wait for the LORD who is hiding His face from the house of Jacob; I will even look eagerly for Him. Behold, I and the children whom the LORD has given me are for signs and wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, who dwells on Mount Zion. And when they say to you, "Consult the mediums and the spiritists who whisper and mutter," should not a people consult their God? {Should they consult} the dead on behalf of the living? To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn. And they will pass through the land hard-pressed and famished, and it will turn out that when they are hungry, they will be enraged and curse their king and their God as they face upward. Then they will look to the earth, and behold, distress and darkness, the gloom of anguish; and {they will be} driven away into darkness.
(Isaiah 8:16–22)

Did you notice what Isaiah said about those who are "hard-pressed and famished"? They have no idea the famine Amos predicted actually occurred (Amos 8:11–13). They don't know they've been eating vomit that came out of the mouths of false prophets, vomit that has been regurgitated for generations. That "food" has no nutritional value. Its original nutrients have long since broken down into a putrid stew that

can no longer sustain life. The situation today is the same as it was in the days of Isaiah (Is. 28:7–8). The leaders of Israel are all "eating and drinking with drunks." [Editor: See Matthew 24:49.]

To explain what Isaiah had in mind, I should tell you the Truth of *The Teaching* has never been (and will never be) fully understood by unbelievers. Their unbelief prevents them from comprehending what God has done. Your own understanding of *The Teaching* is a mystical experience because *The Teaching* is a Person, a Person Who must first take up residence within you before you can understand. Only then can He grow until, as

"Isaiah takes it for granted that you understand all the things you need to know from reading other passages in the Hebrew Scriptures."

Paul said, Jesus Christ becomes "a mature man" within you (Eph. 4:13).

Notice, however, that Paul explains in that passage how spiritual growth is made possible. God intended it should be accomplished through the ministry of the Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, and Teachers—those who (are supposed to) understand *The Teaching*. In other words, if you don't listen to and believe someone who understands the Truth, you won't grow spiritually. So what do you think would happen if you chose to listen to and believe someone who doesn't understand *The Teaching*, or, better yet, at some point decide to reason it all out for yourself?

Remember what Jesus said about the disciple never becoming greater than his Teacher? Be patient. There's nothing covered that won't be revealed to you eventually. There's nothing hidden that I won't make known. [Editor: He's alluding to Matthew 10:24–27.] Let the unbelievers around you expose themselves by speaking the folly of their own mind. They're drunk; and drunks have to vomit now and then.

The stubbornness of unbelievers will not allow them to accept the authority of anyone God has called to prepare the faithful. Consequently, *The Teaching* has always been "bound up" and "sealed" "among His disciples" (Is. 8:16) in every generation when it has been understood by "the many." It will be so now at the End as well. Therefore, it is going to become just that much easier for you True Believers to recognize and root out the Pretenders among you in these Final Days. How do I know? Isaiah said so:

To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn.
(Isaiah 8:20)

It was the same way in the Early Church. We know that because Paul says exactly what Isaiah has said:

And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves.
(2 Corinthians 4:3–7)

Should you doubt that Isaiah and Paul are *talking about* the same thing, check back to see whether Isaiah goes on to talk about *The Light*. Then take note of the fact that, in verse 6, Paul has alluded to Isaiah 9:2. They are both *talking about* the same thing all right, and I trust you are one of those who will one day see, in all its fullness, what Paul calls "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ." Because if you don't "see" *The Teaching* down here, you never will; but you'll have hell to pay when you cross over. ■

Why Not?

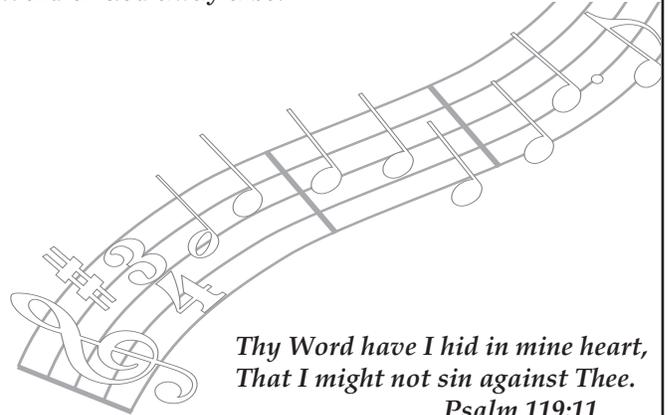
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That I might not sin against Thee.
Psalm 119:11*

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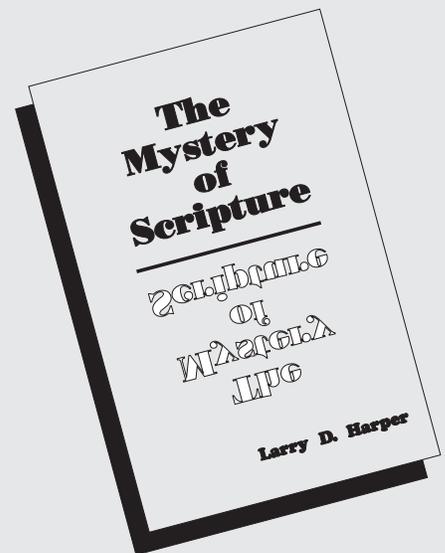
Obviously, that doesn't describe the Church today. With a church on every corner preaching a different interpretation of Scripture and believers picking and choosing as they deem fit, it doesn't seem possible it could have ever been otherwise, does it? Yet it was a reality in the Early Church for well over a century. So, what happened?

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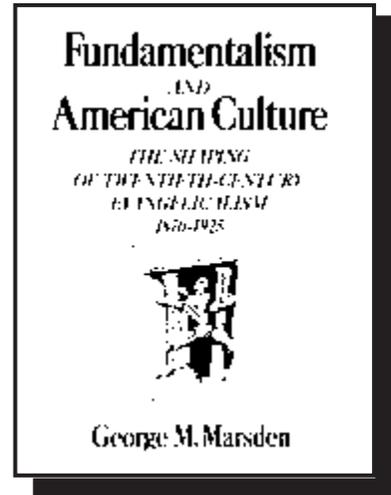


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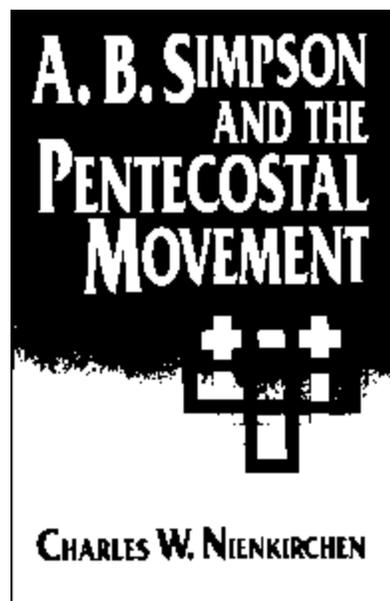
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- 1. Never Argue About Religion Or Politics.**
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- 3. Don't Traffic With People Who Break These Rules.**



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