



Some Things Never Change

“Whosoever,” says He, “heareth my words, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, that built his house upon a rock: the rain descended, the floods came, the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.”

We ought therefore to stand fast on His words, to learn and do whatever He both taught and did.

But how can a man say that he believes in Christ, who does not do what Christ commanded him to do?

Or whence shall he attain to the reward of faith, who will not keep the faith of the commandment?

He must of necessity waver and wander, and, caught away by a spirit of error, like dust which is shaken by the wind, be blown about; and he will make no advance in his walk towards salvation, because he does not keep the truth of the way of salvation.

But, beloved brethren, not only must we beware of what is open and manifest, but also of what deceives by the craft of subtle fraud.

And what can be more crafty, or what more subtle, than for this enemy, detected and cast down by the advent of Christ, after light has come to the nations, and saving rays have shone for the preservation of men, that the deaf might receive the hearing of spiritual grace, the blind might open their eyes to God, the weak might grow strong again with eternal health, the lame might run to the church, the dumb might pray with clear voices and prayers—seeing his idols forsaken, and his fanes and his temples deserted by the numerous concourse of believers—to devise a new

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fraud, and under the very title of the Christian name to deceive the incautious?

He has invented heresies and schisms, whereby he might subvert the faith, might corrupt the truth, might divide the unity. Those whom he cannot keep in the darkness of the old way, he circumvents and deceives by the error of a new way.

He snatches men from the Church itself; and while they seem to themselves to have already approached to the light, and to have escaped the night of the world, he pours over them again, in their unconsciousness, new darkness; so that, although they do not stand firm with the Gospel of Christ, and with the observation and Law of Christ, they still call themselves Christians, and, walking in darkness, they think that they have the light, while the adversary is flattering and deceiving, who, according to the apostle's word, transforms himself into an angel of light, and equips his ministers as if they were the ministers of righteousness, who maintain night instead of day, death for salvation, despair under the offer of hope, perfidy under the pretext of faith, antichrist under the name of Christ; so that, while they feign things like the truth, they make void the truth by their subtlety.

This happens, beloved brethren, so long as we do not return to the source of truth, as we do not seek the head nor keep the teaching of the heavenly Master.

Cyprian, "The Treatises of Cyprian," Treatise i, Chaps. ii-iii, in Roberts and Donaldson (Eds.), *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (1886), Vol. 5, pp. 421-422.

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A Note From the Editor

Since taking over as Executive Editor of *The Voice of Elijah*® earlier this year, I have struggled to determine what I should say in my editorials. My basic concern has revolved around this question: What kind of things would God have me, a disciple of the Lord, say to my fellow-disciples?

I have not been called as a Teacher, so I realize my responsibility is not to teach. Yet I also know that it is next to impossible to express my thoughts and beliefs in an open forum without engaging in instruction to some degree. Consequently, the dilemma I have faced is in knowing what thoughts I should share, and what thoughts I should keep to myself. Which brings me back to my question: What can I say in these editorials that will benefit those of you who are fellow-disciples without making me guilty of trying to teach?

As best I can tell, the only verbal assistance that I (or any Believer) can offer to another Believer is that of encouragement. I see three ways I can do that. I can encourage them to:

1. "Hold fast" to the Truth they have "received" (Heb. 10:23).
2. "Walk" in greater understanding of the Truth (Eph. 4:17-24).
3. "Turn from" the "error of their way" if they have "strayed from the Truth" (James 5:19-20).

While this list is not intended to be exhaustive, and it certainly does not touch on all the ways we can go about encouraging one another, it does give me a greater sense of direction concerning the things I can discuss when I write. So, since Larry asked me to share with you my own born-again experience (elsewhere in the newsletter), I thought I would add a brief addendum to my "testimony" that will hopefully be of some encouragement to you.

In the twenty-one years I have been a Christian, I have felt the rebuke and conviction of the Holy Spirit many, many times. I have especially felt His conviction over the past few years as I have slowly begun to see how much sin still remains in my life. While I should have recognized my past sins as sins, I often did not see them for what they were because I had gotten so caught up in the "way" of the world. If my assumption is right, most of you True Believers have already realized, or are going to realize, that your "walk" with the Lord has not been much different than my own. Sadly, we have strayed from "The Way" of God we understood when we first believed, and have been living in accordance with one or more of the seductive lies that exist down here. We know our lives are not pleasing to God. Yet we have not, until now, understood how to break free from Satan's delusion.

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My encouragement to you is to join me as I strive to return to the God I once committed myself to follow. By the grace of God, "The Way" back to Him is now being made ready for all who wish to follow that "path." I can't speak for you, but I intend to "walk" as close as I can behind those who are "building" that "road." In the meantime, I am seeking to return to the simplicity I once enjoyed in the Lord and avoid the wants and desires that inhere in selfishness. I am also trying to "tune out" what others think so I can move forward in wisdom according to the knowledge and understanding of the Word I have already been given.

Based on that knowledge and understanding, I know that following the parabolic "highway of holiness" (Is. 35:8) back to God is a slow but steady process. Like traveling a great distance by foot, one can only complete that process one step at a time. Contrary to what the advocates of the phony "once saved, always saved" doctrine say, there is no easy "way" to salvation. Jesus said that, but few today believe Him. He said this:

*"Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter by it. For the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it."
(Matthew 7:13-14)*

I now can "see" that I believed the first things related to that "Way" when I was born again. I can also "see" the new birth is a once-for-all-time experience, but salvation is a process. That process begins the moment we "enter by the narrow gate" (become born again) and continues, thereafter, as a life-long journey down the "narrow way that leads to life." Whether we as True Believers endure to the very end and inherit salvation is up to each one of us individually. We can "turn aside from" that "Way" if we choose to believe a lie of Satan that contradicts something we understood God

required of us when we first believed.

Unfortunately, unless True Believers wake up to the reality that their sinful life is not pleasing to God and "see" that their sin is going to destine them to eternal Hell, they will never strive to follow "The Way" back to God. I can "see" that I was hell-bent for destruction myself until I saw "The Light" a few years ago. By God's grace, since that time I have made some progress in getting back to the "walk" with the Lord that I had right after I was born again.

If you have been exposed to modern Church theology for any length of time at all, you undoubtedly believe you can "have your cake and eat it too." You think you can go your own "way," live as you please, and still be saved because deep within the recesses of your perverted mind Satan has convinced you that God is going to save you in spite of what you do. Yet, no matter how hard you try to convince yourself that your "love" for God has somehow kept you on the straight and "narrow path" that leads to salvation, I can assure you that you probably took a detour quite some time ago. I can further assure you that unless you admit the error of your "way" and return to God by following His "Way" (the parabolic message of The Apostolic Teaching), you will be in for a rude awakening come Resurrection Day.

If you are one of those comparatively few Christians who have been born again, I encourage you to join me in returning to the God we first loved and committed ourselves to follow. He is not the imaginary god presented in the Church today, but the God Who exists in this realm as a Word. He is, specifically, the Living Word of God, the One Who lives within us through our knowledge and understanding of the Truth of the Gospel and The Apostolic Teaching. He's the only True God we can ever "know" down here. ■

Allen Fries

I's Just Wonderin', Is Anybody Headin' That Way Yet?

Five years ago this month, I took a crash course in how to use Xerox Ventura, a Microsoft Windows-based desktop publishing program, when I started formatting the articles I had written for the first issue of *The Voice of Elijah*®. Consequently, that first issue was a month or so late getting out, and even later getting into the hands of the first subscribers. But by the time the second issue hit the post office in mid-January—a couple of days before the Gulf War began—we already had quite a few folks who had signed up to read along as I publicly began to push aside Satan's haze.

Since then, we've upgraded to QuarkXpress, which is a desktop publishing program used by many major magazines and newspapers, and I do all my writing in an already formatted layout. We've also seen a lot of subscribers come and go, not all of them sans that final vitriolic letter. But those of you who are still hanging on seem to be a fairly resilient bunch, considering I've given you more than adequate reason over the years to discount what I have to say. As a reward (would some consider it punishment?) for your sheer tenacity, I thought I would submit a "testimony" from Allen Friess for this issue along with a bit of my own rambling to give you some insight into the mind-set of the folks who bring you this newsletter.

Allen took over as President and Executive Editor of *The Voice of Elijah*® this past spring. He's been struggling ever since, trying to get his bearings and determine what is expected of him, but I'm sure he's probably figured out by now that there are no guidelines. He is going to have to come up with his own. I'm looking forward to the changes I know he is going to bring to the entire operation. *The Voice of Elijah*® is going to go where the Board of Directors

takes it. We'll discover after the fact that is exactly where God intended it to go. In the meantime, Allen is securely strapped in the driver's seat, trying to figure out how to get out of first gear. Toward that end, the powers that be at *The Voice of Elijah*® (the Board of Directors) are making rumblings about possibly starting up another push to sign on new subscribers. So I assume we'll see a few things start to happen before too long. By that I *mean* the coming together of more and more born-again Believers.

I've told you repeatedly over the past several years that I was born again when I was twelve years old. That event changed my life in more ways than I can accurately recall after so many years. One thing I vividly remember as a teenager is desperately hating my sin and wanting to somehow break free from the constant spiritual defeats I suffered. I never could shed my sin, and nobody was there to tell me how. I now know that all God's Children have faced basically that same desire for guidance and have found nothing that satisfies their longing for Truth until Satan deceives them and they latch on to one of his lies. In my case, the lack of guidance would have been deadly, were it not for the mercy of God. Six years after I was born again, I had essentially given up the idea that I could ever be what He required. I was trying to hide from the Spirit within so that I could do what I wanted to do. That's when God called me in such an overpowering experience that I knew I could not, and should not even try to, resist His will.

God's call totally transformed my life. I knew then beyond a shadow of all doubt that there was a God. I also knew God wanted me to do something for Him. I had no idea at that time as to the what, when, where, or how of my calling; but I knew I was going

to do whatever He wanted me to do. I may not know a lot of things today, folks, but I still know I am going to do what God called me to do. So you can count on having me around a few more years anyway. You should also believe me when I tell you God is not through with me yet. Not hardly.

I'm Back ... With a Vengeance!

During the past four or five years I've given a lot of thought to what has happened to me since I was saved. I have paid especially close attention to things I have experienced since God called me on August 17, 1966. There is only one word that adequately summarizes the way I feel about my walk with God at this point in time. That one word is *vengeance*. I look at how Satan kept me beaten down as a teenager and I think vengeance. I look at how Satan has successfully enticed me to veer off track several times since God called me and I think vengeance. I look at the seven years I spent in Hell during the 1980s, and I think vengeance. I look at what Satan has done and is currently doing in God's Church and I think vengeance. In fact, every time I think about Satan and what he has done to me and all God's other Children, I think vengeance.

Just so you don't misunderstand, let me tell you what I *mean* by *vengeance*. The Lord has called me to herald the arrival of the One through Whom God Himself will exact absolute and final vengeance against Satan and all his children. Lest you think I am some whacko cuckoo militiaman with several tons of illegal arms stored in the basement and a couple of tanks in the garage, I should also tell you this about the vengeance of the Lord:

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. {We are} destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and {we are} taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.
(2 Corinthians 10:3-5)

Those of you who honestly desire to return to the Lord and Master of us all will understand what I am saying. Everybody else can go to Hell as far as I'm

concerned. And you will, too, if you don't watch your step. The Truth is available if you want to hear it. If you don't, I'm certainly not going to force it on you. Remember what I told you? Every time I think about what Satan has done I think vengeance? Well, folks, if you choose to believe a lie, that's your business. I'm not responsible for your business. Jesus already told you Satan is a liar and the father of all liars. So you should know that he has nothing to say that is not, in one way or another, a lie. Neither do his children. I learned that the hard way. I spent the past fourteen years teaching the Pretenders that Satan sent my way to keep me from seeing the Truth God wanted me to see. All that time I could not figure out why they showed no genuine interest in the things of the Lord. Now I know why. They had never been born again.

The days I spent in total confusion are over now, but I still remember the frustration I felt in not being able to understand why things never seemed to add up. Oh, do I ever remember those days! So if you haven't had the pleasure of that all-important life-changing encounter with the God of all Creation, don't even bother bringing your ignorant "Christian" pretense around me. I now know exactly what Satan has done in God's Church. I also know precisely what God can and will do in your life if only you will give up Satan's lies and submit to the Lord of all Creation.

Who'da Thunk It?

I should begin by telling you this year has proven to be the most incredible time of my life. The past six weeks have been absolutely phenomenal. You see, that's how long ago God gave me two little babies in the Lord. I have been continually feeding them the things God has taught me over the years, and do you know what? They are hungrier for the things of the Lord than I ever expected those Pretenders to be all along. They also know all about Pretenders, because that's what they were before they came to the Lord. So when I *talk about* Pretenders, don't tell me I don't know what I'm *talking about*. I have all the evidence I need. The Church is full of Pretenders who have no idea they have believed Satan's lie. But there are also those of you ("The Many") who have been born again. God has called me to reach you with the Truth you need to know before your love for the Lord grows cold, just as Jesus said it would before the End:

*"And at that time many will fall away and will deliver up one another and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise, and will mislead many. And because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end, he shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come."
(Matthew 24:10-14)*

Allen encouraged you to join him in "returning to the Lord" in "A Note From the Editor," so I assume the Spirit is nudging a lot of you in that direction. Let me tell you about my own struggle to see through the lies of Satan so that I could find my way back to the joy of the Lord that Satan stole from me way back when.

In late January of this year, as several of us met for our nightly time of prayer, I challenged those here with me to examine themselves to see if they were not the reason God was not moving among us. At the time I believed all of them had been born again. They said they had been, and I thought they knew what they were *talking about*. I have since learned that nary a one knew Christ. The next day, however, I realized I was the one who was standing in God's way. That surprised me. I don't know why, but I had thought it would surely be someone else. Silly me.

That event was merely one in a long series of steps I have taken over the past five or six years in an effort to get back that intense closeness that I felt to the Lord twenty-nine years ago. Three or four years ago, after I began to see through Satan's deception, I started examining my life carefully and, as things came to mind, I would confess to God the things I had done in the past that I felt had displeased Him. Don't misunderstand. I have tried to confess my "sins of the flesh" over the years. So none of the things I felt I still needed to confess were sins like lying, cheating, or stealing. They were much worse than that. They were all decisions I had made that I consciously knew, or should have known at the time, were not what God desired. All those decisions had drastically changed the direction of my life and had, therefore, had a negative impact on my ability to do and be what God has called me to do and be.

By this past January, I had made quite a bit of progress in my efforts to get back to where I felt I should be with the Lord, but something seemed to be

standing in my way and I couldn't see what it was. In late January, however, after urging others to look at themselves, I was then able to look at myself and see my sin clearly. I suddenly realized I had complicated my life beyond all reason by investing heavily in real estate during the 1980s. I immediately determined to remedy that unhappy circumstance, and unusual things began to happen a few days later.

Do you hear what I'm saying? I'm telling you God started working here in January of this year, folks, and He hasn't shown any signs of letting up since. So, I have one small bit of advice for you: If the phrase "joy of the Lord" *means* anything at all to you, you need to start taking inventory of your life right now. Unless I miss my guess, you will find Satan has enticed you into accumulating a whole lot of "trash" in your own life that you need to get rid of.

A short time after I admitted I had sinned in complicating my life with the things of this world when I knew deep down within that I should trust the Lord to provide for me, I was back at it again, trying to figure out what other sins still stood between me and the Lord. That's when I saw the one sin God had been waiting for me to admit for twenty-three years. You could have knocked me over with a feather! Not only could I clearly see how Satan had enticed me into sin, I could also see how he had then blinded me to the point where I had not even considered the fact that my action was sin. Therefore, I had no idea at all that I even needed to confess.

Psssst! Hey Buddy! Do This!

Let me tell you about my sin, not for my benefit, but for yours, because I suspect more than a few of you may need to confess the same thing. Have you ever read this passage?

Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said,

"I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM;

AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD,

AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.

Therefore, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST
AND BE SEPARATE," says the Lord.
"AND DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN;
And I will welcome you.
And I will be a father to you,
And you shall be sons and daughters to Me,"
Says the Lord Almighty.
Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse
ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfect-
ing holiness in the fear of God.
(2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1)

Did you hear what Paul said? He said:

**Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what
partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what
fellowship has light with darkness?**
(2 Corinthians 6:14)

That's not actually what Paul said. That verse contains a *parabolic image* that the New American Standard translator has obscured by using more "modern" terminology. The King James Version conveys the underlying *parabolic imagery* a bit more accurately:

**Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbeliev-
ers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with
unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with
darkness?**
(2 Corinthians 6:14) —KJV

Paul used a Greek word in that verse that, by its very definition, lent itself to the *parabolic image* of two different kinds of animals yoked together as a team of draft animals. He got that image from this verse:

**"You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together."
(Deuteronomy 22:10)**

I don't intend to explain the Hebrew idiom that stands behind that *parabolic imagery*. I only mention it to remind you God gave that prohibition to the sons of Israel at a time when they understood *The Teaching of Moses*. His purpose was to warn them against becoming entangled in relationships with foreigners who did not understand the Truth they understood. That's why the Apostle Paul said what he did about Believers being "unequally yoked" with unbelievers.

Believers in Paul's day had knowledge of *The Apostolic Teaching*; unbelievers didn't.

It is debatable whether Paul's prohibition against being "unequally yoked" should include business relationships. I'll leave it up to you as an individual to determine what you believe is right for you. If you want to rationalize so that you can do what you want to do rather than doing what you honestly believe you should do, that's your problem.

There is absolutely no doubt the prohibition Paul mentioned covers the most intimate relationship of all—marriage. I knew that twenty-three years ago, but I chose to ignore it. Consequently, I paid the price. Oh, boy! Did I ever pay the price! But that's all over now, so I can *talk about* it on most days as though it had happened to someone else. In some ways, I wish it had happened to someone else. Yet if it hadn't happened to me, would I still be able to see all the things God wants me to see? I doubt it. In some cases, and especially for us slower folks, experience is not just the *best* teacher, it is the *only* teacher.

Let me tell you about the folly of a fool. I made the mistake of telling the Lord what I would and would not do twenty-six years ago. Then I immediately went out and did what I wanted to do. I married a woman who may or may not have been a Believer. Her relationship to the Lord was not my first concern. My concern was much more idiotic. Here are all the sordid details of my sin.

In the fall of 1969, shortly after I got out of the military, I began to feel that God wanted me to go back to college. I absolutely hated the thought of living in a dormitory again after spending two years in a dormitory, then two years in the Army, and a couple of weeks back in a dormitory again. So *I told the Lord* (note the italics) I would go back to college only after I was married. Wouldn't you know it? I was married the next spring and started college the following fall.

You know, I never did live in a dormitory. I had a nice little apartment where I lived alone with a great big heap of guilt hidden in the closet. You see, I was a widower at the ripe old age of twenty-two. Does that surprise you? If you know the same Lord I know, it shouldn't. He disciplines everyone that He loves. I didn't say that, the writer of the Book of Hebrews did (Heb. 12:5–6), and he was quoting the Book of Proverbs (Prov. 3:11–12). So I know for a fact it's true; it has the required number of witnesses (Deut. 19:15).

woman down one day in early August 1980 and told her she could do what she wanted, I no longer cared whether or not we were both headed in the same direction. I was going to do what I believed God wanted me to do. The fact that I was no longer willing to give in to her every whim turned her secure little world upside down and, over the next year or so, I began to see she had been intentionally inciting me to anger all along by opposing everything I believed.

Since I was obviously no longer concerned with trying to accommodate her every desire, she took another tack and began to hassle me about all kinds of things. I assumed at the time that she was trying to get some kind of emotional feedback from me, to make me respond with the same anger I had shown before when she did those kinds of things. That's when I sat her down for the second time and told her exactly where I stood. I informed her she was welcome to tag along with me if she wanted to, but I was not going to give up my calling to satisfy her constantly badgering me to do this or that instead of what I felt would please God.

Even then the thought never came to me clearly that she was an unbeliever whom Satan was using to incite me to sin. After all, we are *talking about* a woman who had been attending evangelical/fundamentalist churches twice every Sunday for her entire life. She even played piano for the choir on Sunday morning and for Sunday night services. As far as all the "Christians" we knew could tell, she was the perfect Christian. I knew better, and I should have been able to see her for what she was in the same way that I could see most of them for what they were, but I honestly (dishonestly?) couldn't see the Truth. I assume that was because I was unwilling to admit I had sinned in marrying her.

I was finally forced to recognize the fact that I had married an unbeliever only when, in July 1988, after sixteen years of demonstrating constant stubbornness and contention, she confessed to me that's what she had been. She did that, however, only after she had experienced the first of what was to be a seven-year-long series of phony "conversion" experiences. Still, after all those years of constant contention, with her saying "no" if I said "yes" and "left" if I said "right," the thought that I should confess I had sinned in marrying her never occurred to me. That didn't come up until early this year.

Of Blue Skies and Rainbows

Now let me describe a True Believer for you. She is concerned for and submissive to others. She is open emotionally, agreeable, always willing to listen, and supremely confident of who she is now and what she was before. Moreover, she will be the first to tell you God deserves all the credit for what the Spirit of Jesus Christ has done in her life. In case you missed it, I have just described the woman I married twenty-three years ago. She was born again about six weeks ago. So don't tell me I don't know what I'm *talking about* when I *talk about* the difference between Pretenders and True Believers. I lived with the stubbornness and contention of a Pretender for a whole lot longer than I care to remember. I'm looking forward to living with a completely different woman now. So you can take your goofy "Christian" pretense and stick it in your ear. To be more specific, you can stick half of it in your left ear, the other half in your right. Then you can pull it back out your nose so that everybody can see there's no brain in there.

That's the amazing thing about the Lord. When you come up front about your sin, He's right there to reward your honesty. I doubt Bonnie would know the Lord today if I had not admitted my sin. God alone knows how many times she has pretended to be born again over the past seven years since she first admitted she had been pretending all along. That's why I'm still looking, folks, trying to see what else I need to set straight with God. It's hard to say what He might do when I can finally see all the ways that Satan has deceived me over the years. So, if you know what I *mean* when I *talk about* the "joy of the Lord," I suggest you do what I started doing a few years ago. If you don't know anything about that joy, I suggest you repent and believe the Gospel. Who knows? Maybe we will all be where we should be in the Lord by the time *The Teaching* is available in its totality.

Now let me tell you about the folly of another fool. This one has just read everything I've written and has had this reaction: "That's great! I'm glad you're finally getting right with God!" Don't tell the idiot now. Let's let the Lord inform him when he finally wakes up to face the reality that he missed the point of everything I said. Lest you think you are not that slumbering, slobbering moron, tell me this: Do you know how many Pretenders there are in the Church

today? Millions. Do you have any idea how the pretense of those people is misleading God's legitimate Children? Not a bit. Do you know how often God's Children are enticed to sin by those Pretenders? All the time. Do you know what God intends to do to rectify that situation? No, because you are completely unwilling to see things "The Way" God sees them.

Are You Ready for This?

Folks, I want to tell you something I know beyond a shadow of any doubt. All of God's Children today have some major sin they have committed that is preventing them from seeing through the haze of Satan's delusion. That situation is directly attributable to the asinine pretense of all the Pretenders who have taken up roost in God's Church over the past forty years. If you don't think that is so, that's fine. I have nothing more to say to you. Since I'm obviously not *talking about* the reality in which you have chosen to live, you can stop reading right now. As for those of you who desire to get back the "joy of the Lord" you once had, let me tell you where to begin.

First of all, you have to accept the fact that you are not where God wants you to be as His Child. Even if you have continually confessed your sins of the flesh over the years and have maintained a continual prayer life, I can guarantee you that Satan has deceived you in one way or another. That deception would probably not be deleterious to your ultimate salvation *in other times*. That is, it would probably not result in you denying Christ. The problem is, we are not now living *in other times*. We are living *in the End Times*. We are heading straight into the circumstances Paul described to the Thessalonians:

Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to Him, that you may not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. Let no one in any way deceive you, for {it will not come} unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. Do you not remember that

while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he may be revealed. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains {will do so} until he is taken out of the way. And then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; {that is,} the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. And for this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they might believe what is false, in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.

(2 Thessalonians 2:1-12)

I realize there are those misguided "teachers" in the Church today who tell you that passage does not describe anything you need to worry about because you will already have been "raptured" by the time the Antichrist appears. That is nothing more than Satan's lie. Paul was writing to assure the Believers at Thessalonica that the Day of the Lord could not possibly have already come because they had not yet seen the Antichrist. He even reminds them he had already told them that when he was with them! Be reasonable. Paul would never have even mentioned the appearance of the Antichrist if it was not something that Christians should be concerned about.

The Truth is, the appearance of the Antichrist is the one event that God has provided to let Believers know the Second Coming is imminent. However, if you are one of those who Paul says "did not receive the love of the truth" and therefore "did not believe the truth," you are going to have a bit of a problem when the Antichrist appears. Trust me. If what I am telling you is true and you choose not to believe it, you are going to be swept away by Satan's delusion because you have chosen not to believe the Truth.

If it is any comfort to you, lots of other True Believers are going to be caught in that same net. Paul is *talking about* all of you when he says "God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they might believe what is false." He *means* you are going to give up the Truth of the Gospel that you have already

believed and not even realize it. That is "the apostasy" he mentions in verse 3. Believe it if you care to; disbelieve it if you dare to. What you do is no concern of mine one way or the other. I'm just doing what God called me to do.

No? Well, How About This?

The second thing you must understand is that, in the same way that you are not what God wants you to be right now, no part of the Church is what God wants His Church to be. I said, "No part of the Church." That includes the "part" in which you have been warming the pew. Don't misunderstand what I just said. God is actively working throughout the entire Church, but He is not doing what most people assume He is doing. So get it firmly fixed in your mind. No one church or denomination is pleasing to Him. That is because every one of them is an admixture of Pretenders and True Believers.

I'm not saying you have to stop attending whatever church you attend now. By no means. You should do whatever you feel is right for you in that regard. I am merely telling you that you must start distinguishing between the True Believers and the Pretenders who attend church with you. Believe me, there are more Pretenders in the Church today than there are True Believers. The evangelical/fundamentalist wing of the Church has been almost completely taken over by Pretenders in the last forty years. That was the last stronghold of born-again Believers a century ago. It isn't today. Therefore, you must begin trying to identify those around you who have actually had a born-again experience with God and those who are merely pretending. How can you do that? It's actually quite simple. Here's how:

Start asking people to tell you about how, when, and where they were saved. Ask them for specifics: (1) What happened to them? (2) When did it happen? (3) What did they understand God required for them to be saved? (4) How did they feel immediately afterward? (5) How did their "conversion" experience change their life? You could add dozens of other pertinent questions to that short list. But the thing you are looking for is something in what they say that you can identify with, something that tells you they have had exactly the same experience you had when you were born again.

Don't accept an outward change of behavior as evidence of the new birth. Satan has a knack for allowing people to experience a dramatic change in their external behavior as evidence of a counterfeit "conversion" experience. As a matter of fact, a change in external behavior is all that most Pretenders have to confirm their "new-birth" experience. So don't even pay attention when people want to talk about an external change. Try to get them to tell you how they felt inside after their supposed conversion experience. The most telling sign of the new birth is the definite inner change that accompanies it. If you have been born again, you know what that change is and will be able to discern when someone is trying to describe it to you. Believe me, Pretenders don't have a clue.

Although Satan can provide Pretenders temporary mental relief from their constant inner turmoil, he cannot mimic the permanent spiritual change that the Spirit of Christ brings. If he could, he would. But Isaiah has already told you a Pretender cannot have the peace and tranquillity that come only from an intimate relationship with the Spirit of God:

*But the wicked are like the tossing sea,
For it cannot be quiet,
And its waters toss up refuse and mud.
"There is no peace," says my God, "for the wicked."
(Isaiah 57:20-21)*

Anyone who has ever experienced the marvelous peace of the Lord that accompanies the new birth knows exactly what I'm *talking about* when I say "joy of the Lord." Pretenders have no idea what that *means*. So, if you are a True Believer and want to recover that sense of peace and regain the confidence you once had in your relationship with the Lord, you must begin by distinguishing between those who are True Believers and those who are Pretenders. If you cannot do that, you will never be what God desires *in these Last Days*. I'm not saying that arbitrarily. I say it because it is part of what God expects of His Children as we approach the Coming of the Lord:

Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, and the LORD gave attention and heard {it,} and a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the LORD and who esteem His name. "And they will be Mine," says the LORD of hosts, "on the day that I prepare

{My} own possession, and I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him. **So you will again distinguish between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him. For behold, the day is coming, burning like a furnace; and all the arrogant and every evildoer will be chaff; and the day that is coming will set them ablaze,**" says the LORD of hosts, "so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. But for you who fear My name the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings; and you will go forth and skip about like calves from the stall. And you will tread down the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day which I am preparing," says the LORD of hosts. (Malachi 3:16-4:3)

What About This?

Now the third thing you are going to have to do before you can regain the "joy of the Lord" is this: Go back over your life to the time when you met the Lord and mentally relive all the experiences that are the most vivid to you. As you do that, evaluate your actions in connection with all those events. Did you do what you knew to be pleasing to the Lord? If you didn't, you must realize God has been disciplining you for your sin. He has been trying to convince you that what you did was wrong. If you have been ignoring His conviction, your life is undoubtedly in turmoil. So, if you want back the peace that only God can give, you must begin to confess where, when, and how you have sinned. Some of you may even have to go back and mend a few fences by apologizing to others. I'll let you determine where that is. I don't have to tell you what is right and wrong for you. You already know that, provided you are willing to be completely honest with yourself and with God. If, in any instance, you did not do what you believed to be the right thing for you to do, you sinned. Admit it. Honest confession is all that God requires of His Kids.

After you have made a first pass over the things you have done since beginning your walk with the Lord, go back over your life a second, third, and fourth time, looking for things you missed the times before. While you're doing that, start looking at your current circumstances. Are you in a situation that is distressing to you? Take a closer look. How did you

get there? If the peace of God is no longer a part of your life, there has to be a clearly identifiable reason. What decision or decisions did you make that you shouldn't have made? Above all, be honest. Don't rationalize just because you don't want to face up to the cold, hard facts you are going to have to accept to get back to the Lord.

I have been called to teach you the things hidden in the Scriptures that you need to know to be able to "walk" right smack dab in the center of God's perfect will for your life. But you are going to have to get back there on your own. I don't expect "The Way" back to be easy for you. Satan deceived you in a variety of ways, using various people, to get you into the predicament you are in today. He intentionally tried to make your circumstances difficult for you to escape. So he is definitely going to try to keep you there and, failing that, he will continue to try to deceive you as you make your way back to God. That's why distinguishing between Pretenders and True Believers is so important. You must recognize the liars around you for what they are and beware of listening to what they *insist you must believe*.

Pretenders are going to tell you some nonsense or the other related to the fact that all you need to do to get back in right standing with the Lord is repent. Don't believe them. Repentance has to do with the state of unbelief you were in before you met the Lord. If you have been born again, you have already repented and believed the Gospel. The thing you must do as a Believer is confess the fact that you know where you have sinned against God and accept His forgiveness. That is all that God requires. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ has already done the rest.

I realize Pretenders make no such fine distinction between repentance and confession of sin. I don't intend to explain the distinction I have made here. I am merely telling you that your situation is not something the repentance of an unbeliever will solve. God wants you to see the Truth concerning how Satan has deceived you. That can only be accomplished if you are willing to see it for yourself. Therefore, I can tell you "The Way" back to the "joy of the Lord" is probably going to be long and treacherous, not short and sweet. Nonetheless, if you want it, the joy of the Lord can be yours once again. If you don't believe that, it's only because you don't understand I am telling you what I know for a fact from personal experience.

Do you want to know how the Lord prepared me to accomplish the work He called me to do? He turned me over to Satan in April 1982 and let him drag me down to the bottom. Then He let him do his best to keep me there. Satan took me all the way down, folks, and he held me there for seven years. But he couldn't keep me. Do you want to hear about that fabled "Hell on Earth"? I can tell you. I've been there. Just ask me what it's like to twist and turn in total confusion day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year. I can tell you exactly what seven years of confusion can do for you and to you. By 1990, I was at rock bottom physically, mentally, emotionally, psychologically, and spiritually. I was so far down that I had to give up my pessimism. I woke up one day and realized things had to get better. They couldn't get any worse.

Let me tell you what it's like to know all about the God Who is, yet have His secretary put your every call on hold until the line disconnects. If that's not a precise definition of Hell, I don't know what is. For several years my every prayer was nothing but me shouting at God, demanding to know why He had called me, yet He wouldn't respond to me and show me why everything in my life was so completely opposite of what I knew it should be. Then one day things got a bit out of hand and I started accusing Him of things that I knew were my own fault. He responded immediately that time, and I shut up real quick. As a matter of fact, He scared me so bad I haven't raised my voice to Him since. I just sort of pray in a whisper. But at least that time I knew He was listening. That was a start.

I had no idea during all that time that God was disciplining me for something I had done in April 1982. The only thing I knew was my life was in shambles and God must want it that way. I could not see His harsh admonishment was a test. It was a chance for me to prove I would submit to His discipline and not give up my faith in the Truth of *The Teaching* I understood at that time. Eventually, I saw the mistake I had made and I confessed that I had failed to do what I knew I should have done. So when I sat down to write *Not All Israel Is Israel* in 1990 so that others could have the same opportunity to understand *The Teaching* that I had enjoyed for over fifteen years, I got a pleasant surprise. Suddenly, God began to respond to me again.

God has been doing some marvelous things in my life ever since, up to and including this very day. It's been a long trek back, folks, but I'm getting there. Trust me. If God could bring me back from the Hell I was in, He can do the same for anyone. So, if you want back what Satan stole from you, take my advice. In case you missed my point, I'm telling you God has not only called me to teach you "*The Way*" the Early Church lost, He has also called me to show you "*The Way*" back to the "joy of the Lord" you once had. That is, I can show you some of the practical things you can do so that you can see through ALL of the ways Satan has deceived you in the past. The question is, Do you want to know the Truth, the whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth? Or do you just want to *pretend*?

Finally, What About This?

The fourth thing you need to do if you want to return to the Lord is eliminate all the detrimental things in your life that vie for your attention. You will have to determine for yourself what those things are. The key here is the slogan "simplify your life." That says it all too well. Ask me sometime to tell you how I know that. I'll tell you a few more things about the folly of a fool (me) and the discipline of the Lord. Believe me, the "worry of this world" that Jesus mentioned in the Parable of the Sower is absolutely devastating to the peace that God gives.

*"Hear then the parable of the sower. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, the evil {one} comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road. And the one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word, and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no {firm} root in himself, but is {only} temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away. And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and **the worry of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.** And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit, and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty."*
(Matthew 13:18-23)

Take a good look at the third type of person Jesus described in that parable. The more money you have, the more “worry” you have to occupy your “heart” (mind) and choke out the “Word” that Jesus “sowed” there. That Word will provide peace and contentment if you focus on Him alone. The important thing is keeping that “Word” in front of you as much as possible. That’s why television and radio can have an incredibly detrimental effect on your spiritual life if you let them. However, memorizing Scripture and thinking about the things of the Lord can have an equally incredible positive effect. How do you replace the one with the other? It’s not all that difficult. Let me give you a couple of suggestions. Thankfully, not everyone has the same goofy psychological makeup that I have. You can probably come up with other, even better, ways to immerse yourself in the Word.

I recommend you do two things to bring your mind back around to “*The Way*” of the Lord. Go down to your local Christian bookstore and pick up a few tapes or CDs by someone who has recorded some of the old hymns you hear in church. Those written by Fanny Crosby are excellent. She obviously knew what she was *talking about*. Her contemporary, Robert Lowry, also wrote several marvelous songs. Isaac Watts is another writer who evidently knew the Lord. Beware of listening to just any “Christian” music. Most lyrics written today are nothing more than “feel good” nonsense.

The thing to look for in recorded music is someone—not necessarily the singer, but definitely the songwriter—who speaks to you concerning the reality of the new birth you have experienced in your own life. There are not a lot of that kind of Christian songwriters around today. That’s why I mentioned looking for older hymns. They have a definite content. That’s what you’re looking for—content that speaks to you concerning your own experience with the Lord. All of God’s Children have had exactly the same new-birth experience. So when you listen to the songs, listen closely to the words. The purpose of this exercise is to bring another born-again person into your life who will speak to you constantly concerning the reality of the new life in Christ that you experienced some time ago.

While you’re at the bookstore, pick up a brand new King James Bible and a copy of the King James Version of the New Testament on audiotape. If you

have a King James Bible that you marked up right after you were born again, that’s great. If you don’t, you’ll need a clean copy for underlining verses. If you can’t afford a new one (they can be incredibly expensive), let me know. I’ll see that you get one with your name on it. I don’t recommend the King James Version as a study Bible, but I heartily recommend it for memorization because its flowery language makes it easier to memorize. It’s like memorizing poetry.

Here’s what you are going to do. You are going to use the recorded New Testament to identify specific verses that speak to you. As you listen, underline those verses. Then go back to memorize them later. Make sure you get a recording by someone you can stand to listen to. Some audio New Testaments were evidently produced by folks who think Christianity is supposed to be staid and formal—all pious appearances. That will make it unnecessarily difficult for you to get past the voice and hear the words.

While I’m on the subject of things that are easy to listen to, what I just said applies to music tapes and CDs as well. I have a hard time listening to someone who obviously doesn’t know the first thing about the intimate relationship I have with Jesus Christ because of the new birth. I assume you feel the same way. That’s why you need to evaluate the singer as well as the songs. Let me give you an example.

I have a tape by the gospel singing group The Cathedrals (actually it’s not mine, I stole it—that is, I took it and feel bad that I haven’t given it back for over two weeks—from one of the new kids in the Lord I mentioned earlier). It’s obvious from the songs they recorded and what they say on one of their albums that some, if not all, of them have been born again. I have no idea where they are in their “walk” with the Lord today, but the fact that I believe they have experienced what they are singing about makes it easier for me to listen to the words of the songs.

I have had that tape going all the time while I’ve been writing, and every time I stop to listen to the words of the songs it’s like I’m hearing them again for the first time. It’s not the same with “feel good” lyrics or secular singers who, for some reason, felt a need to record a token gospel album. Not only do they not sing with any feeling, most of the time the words of the songs they chose to record don’t say anything meaningful about the new-birth experience. So before long, they get old like the lyrics of any other song.

Don't forget why you are listening to "Christian" music. You are listening while another person encourages you by singing to you concerning their own experience with the Lord. Think about it. Not only will you be able to "walk" with the Lord, doing exactly what He desires, modern technology will make it possible for you to "walk" with lots of other born-again Believers in a "virtual reality." Try it. I think you'll like it.

Do You Have What God Requires?

Have you noticed I haven't said anything about praying as a means of getting back the "joy of the Lord" you once had? That's because the only thing God wants to hear you say in prayer right now is that you know how, when, and where you have sinned. You will know when the time has come for you to walk right up to the throne of God and make your petitions with the full confidence you once had. Then you can pray like you did right after you were born again. Trust me. The marvelous feeling of praise you once had will also come back of its own accord. So just keep looking for all those things you did that you knew were wrong but you did them anyway because Satan enticed you to sin.

While you're doing that, you can be listening to what a few born-again songwriters had to say about the reality of the new life in Christ they experienced after their own new birth. As you listen to the New Testament on tape and read the biblical text yourself, make a note of all the verses that say something specific to you. Underline them immediately. Then make time to go back and memorize them later. Notice I said "make time." Memorize one verse at a time and regularly review the ones you have already memorized. Way back when, I memorized one verse a day and reviewed the ones I had already memorized every week. I couldn't do that today (old age). You may want to plaster the verse you are working on all over the place so that you see it continually. Above all, don't give up. If you think it is going to be easy getting back the "joy of the Lord" that you squandered, check again. You've got another think coming. If you're diligent in doing the things I've recommended, however, it shouldn't be long before you wake up to hear "songs in the night" or some verse of Scripture talking to you. You'll be on the home stretch then.

Let me give you one final word of encouragement. Do you know what kept me from giving in to Satan's suggestions that I give it all up and forget my calling during those seven years that it was obvious God wasn't going to respond to me? Sheer stubbornness. I wanted to know the Truth that lies hidden in the Hebrew Scriptures, and I knew that God had called me to understand that Truth. Even during the darkest times, when Satan had me bound physically to the point where I could not even hold my hands over my head, I never doubted I had already seen the Truth hidden in the Hebrew Scriptures. I doubted everything else. But I never doubted that. And I knew that if I held out just a few years longer, sooner or later God would respond and we would get on with what God called me to do.

Well, folks, I'm here to tell you we are about to get on with it. It may take a while longer for me to figure out the few remaining things that Satan has used to bind me, but I'll see them. I already feel the Spirit moving within me like I felt way back when God first called me. So I know I'm going to get back that full burning passion that Satan stole from me because nobody in the Church had the Truth necessary for them to tell me how to grow in the Lord. I already have that Truth. All I need now is free access to the throne of God. That will be mine before long as well. I can see that as clearly as I have ever seen anything. But that renewal of confidence in the Lord is not an experience reserved for me alone. It is what God has ordained for all His Children in these Last Days. So, if you have ever wondered what went wrong with your relationship with God, I can show you. All you need to do is follow me as I follow Christ.

I fully intend to devote the rest of my life to only one thing: taking vengeance on Satan for all those years he kept me in such confusion that I could not tell whether this, that, or the other was true. I know the Truth now, and I am going to see to it that anyone who has even the slightest bit of love for the Truth has opportunity to hear what God called me to tell them. I am certainly not articulate, but I'm sure a lot of folks will think so when they hear the things I have been called to teach. You can believe that if you care to. You can disbelieve it if you dare to. Either way, you're going to have to face the Truth one way or the other. Why not face Him sooner, rather than later, when it's too late to remedy your mistake? ■

By Way of Summary, Let Me Begin by Saying ...

*O*ver the past five years I have stated various things in various ways, scattering my statements helter-skelter throughout the numerous things I have written and recorded for **The Voice of Elijah**[®]. I have been intentionally vague and obscure in statements I made in one place, only to explain them plainly in another. I am still doing the same thing today. The reason for that is quite simple. I know that only those who have a sincere desire to know the Truth will ever bother trying to piece it all together. Moreover, only those who believe what I teach will be able to accomplish that task.

Allen Friess is one of those who started reading as a skeptic (as all do) four years ago and gradually began to see coherency and Truth in the things I have written and recorded over the years since. Consequently, he was asked, and agreed, to take over the helm of **The Voice of Elijah**[®] this past spring. As plans were being made to begin a new direct mail campaign to sign up new subscribers, Allen submitted the following letter for the Board of Directors to consider as a model for the mailing. With only minor changes of my own, the letter stands as written. It was mailed out to prospective subscribers this past week. I have included it here to give current subscribers a chance to review the highlights of things I have written and recorded over the years.

I have no intention of summarizing God's case myself by tying together the things I have stated thus far until I have submitted all the evidence. By then it will be too late for most. So I recommend you carefully read what Allen has written and then set out to accomplish the task of "gathering" for yourself. Allen did a commendable job of it. You can do the same if you sincerely want to. It is what God expects of all those who have a "love of the truth" in these Last Days. Believe it if you care to; disbelieve it if you dare to ...

Dear Friend,

Are you an **honest** person? Can you honestly admit the truth even when it's not pleasant? Are you a **rational** person? Can you look at things with a rational mind and see them for what they really are? If so, ask yourself the following questions:

- ◆ Have you ever looked at those around you who call themselves "Christians" and wondered if many are not what they claim to be?
- ◆ Have you ever taken a good look at your own walk with the Lord only to realize your life falls short of what you know it should be?
- ◆ Have you ever looked at the Church with its multitude of denominations and its "easy-believism" teachings and sensed that the Church and its teachings come up short when measured against Scripture?
- ◆ Have you ever felt that the Church is conveniently overlooking much of what is said in Scripture about confession of sin, repentance, fear of God, personal holiness, the wrath of God, God's hatred of sin, or His judgment of sinners?
- ◆ Have you ever felt that your understanding of Scripture has gaps in it, or sensed there is greater significance to what you read in Scripture than what you hear explained?
- ◆ Have you ever looked at the Old Testament and wondered how it fits together with the New Testament?

- ◆ In short, have you ever looked at yourself, or other “Christians,” or the Church, or your understanding of the Bible and gotten the strange feeling something is terribly wrong?

If you answered “yes” to any one of these questions, you are not alone. However, if you have the desire to understand **why** so many things seem “wrong” in the Church today, then you are definitely in the minority. Sadly, most “Christians” don’t care to know why so much has gone awry since the days when Jesus commissioned eleven men to go out and “make disciples ... **teaching them** to observe all that I commanded you” (Matt. 28:19–20). Complacency and a smug attitude rooted in the “just-believe-in-Jesus-and-it-will-be-okay” mentality has succeeded in dulling the senses of most “Christians.”

History: A Word to the Wise

Have you ever read what Jesus said about the people of His Own day and wondered if maybe His words might apply just as well to us today?

*“Therefore, I speak to them in parables; because while seeing **they do not see**, and while hearing **they do not hear**, nor do they understand. And in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says,*

*‘YOU WILL KEEP ON HEARING,
BUT WILL NOT UNDERSTAND;
AND YOU WILL KEEP ON SEEING, BUT WILL NOT PERCEIVE;
FOR THE HEART OF THIS PEOPLE HAS BECOME DULL
AND WITH THEIR EARS THEY SCARCELY HEAR,
AND THEY HAVE CLOSED THEIR EYES
LEST THEY SHOULD SEE WITH THEIR EYES,
AND HEAR WITH THEIR EARS,
AND UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART AND RETURN,
AND I SHOULD HEAL THEM.’”
(Matthew 13:13–15)*

Are you reluctant to think these bolded phrases might apply to our own day? You shouldn’t be. Human nature being what it is, it’s not hard to imagine that “religious” people today could just as easily be guilty of the same faults as previous generations. (You know the saying: “History has a way of repeating itself.”) And beyond that, Paul says much the

same thing Jesus said when he warns Timothy that professing Believers would eventually stop listening to the Truth.

*For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but {wanting} to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths.
(2 Timothy 4:3–4)*

Ask yourself honestly: Is it possible these words describe circumstances as they exist in the Church today? Take a look around you. Aren’t “Christians” selectively picking and choosing what they want to hear? Don’t “religious” people today sound a lot like the “religious” people of Jesus’ and Paul’s own day?

Perhaps you think “religious” people today are different because they have greater knowledge of the Bible. But do they really know as much as they think they do? Before you answer that, bear in mind that the vast majority of scholars and teachers must be wrong in what they teach. Do you doubt that? Then answer this question: How can so many divergent viewpoints about Scripture all be correct? How can so many contradictory doctrines be true? If there are several views concerning a particular theological issue, then someone, if not everyone, must be wrong. It cannot logically be any other way.

Since history **does** repeat itself, we need to consider what Jesus said about the best religious scholars and teachers of His Own day. He called them “**blind guides of the blind**” (Matt. 15:14). They had spent tremendous amounts of time and mental energy studying the Old Testament. Yet Jesus made it clear **they did not understand the Truth**. That fact alone should serve as a warning to all who automatically assume that biblical scholars must know the Truth merely because of their academic credentials. History warns us that scholars and teachers today could easily fit Paul’s description of those who are “*always learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth*” (2 Tim. 3:7).

Do You Know That You Don’t Know?

What about you? How much “knowledge of the truth” have you gained over the past few years? With

all of the sermons you've heard, radio preachers you've listened to, books you've read, and Bible studies you've attended, do you feel you have learned enough to fill all the gaps in your understanding of the Scriptures? Or could it be that you, too, are "always learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth"?

If that question offends you, you are not alone. The Pharisees of Christ's day were also offended when He said the same about them. Their pride wouldn't allow them to admit what Christ knew to be true—they lacked "knowledge of the truth." Will your pride keep you from acknowledging that you also lack a good deal of knowledge about the Truth?

Before you pronounce this judgment unfair, why not test your own knowledge of Scripture and see if you can answer these few questions:

- ◆ Jesus said Moses wrote about Him in the first five books of the Old Testament (John 5:45–46). Can you find these references to Jesus Christ?
- ◆ Jesus also said there were things written about Him in "the Prophets and the Psalms" (Luke 24:44). Can you find and explain all these references?
- ◆ Can you accurately explain the meaning of all of Jesus' parables?
- ◆ Can you explain what Paul meant when he said that all Israel was "baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (1 Cor. 10:2)?
- ◆ Can you explain where Paul gained his knowledge of the Rapture of the Church and the coming Antichrist?

Then can you explain ... Well, you get the picture. Every reference above was taken from the New Testament, yet when was the last time you heard someone provide adequate answers to these questions? **The fact is, we don't know as much as we think we do**, and these questions only scratch the surface of what we don't know.

Why You Don't Know

The reason you haven't heard adequate answers to the questions above is because, unfortunately, Church scholars today have the same problem the

Pharisees of Jesus' day had: **They lack a true understanding of the message of the Old Testament.** And because they lack an adequate understanding of the Old Testament, **they cannot accurately explain the New Testament because the New Testament flows out of the Old Testament.**

What Christians must accept is the fact that the Bible is one book which must be understood as one continuous story. You see, the Bible is like any other book. The things learned in the first part of the book (i.e., the Old Testament) are crucial to one's understanding of the last part of the book (i.e., the New Testament). That makes sense, doesn't it? How can you understand what's really going on in a novel if you only read the last few chapters of the book? It's the same with the Bible.

What You Need to Know

The question to be answered is, How can we comprehend the message of the Old Testament so as to complete our understanding of the New? **What is the key, if any, to unlocking the mystery of the Old Testament?** As you might expect, Jesus has provided us some insight. Consider this question: What was the one unique aspect of Jesus' teaching ministry that set Him apart? Was it not His continued use of parables? Both Matthew and Mark tell us that Jesus spoke in parables all the time.

All these things Jesus spoke to the multitudes in parables, and He did not speak to them without a parable, so that what was spoken through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying,

*"I WILL OPEN MY MOUTH IN PARABLES;
I WILL UTTER THINGS HIDDEN
SINCE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD."
(Matthew 13:34–35)*

*And with many such parables He was speaking the word to them as they were able to hear it; and He did not speak to them without a parable; but He was explaining everything privately to His own disciples.
(Mark 4:33–34)*

Most Christians don't realize that Jesus spoke in a parabolic context on a recurring basis. That is, His discourses were often filled with terminology and

imagery that carried *parabolic significance*. For instance, Jesus' most famous message, the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5–7), contains many significant *parabolic* references. Yet most Christians fail to understand these references are parabolic and thus miss important aspects of His message. Another *parabolic* discourse that is easier to recognize as being *parabolic* is John 6:26–60. Sadly, Jesus' followers totally missed the point of this message because they failed to realize He was speaking *parabolically* rather than literally. Unfortunately, that is still true of those who claim to be His followers today.

Rather than asking why Jesus spoke in parables, let's ask a different question: Where did Jesus get the idea to speak in parables in the first place? **Would you believe Jesus was simply following the tradition established by the Old Testament Prophets?** They proclaimed God's message through the use of parabolic imagery and Hebrew expressions called idioms. Would you also believe Moses, Israel's first Prophet, used Hebrew idioms and parabolic images to teach Israel about God's plan of salvation? Would you then believe Jesus simply used these Old Testament idioms and images to present similar parables about God's plan of salvation? It's true.

What's an Idiom?

Most Christians are already familiar with *parabolic* images (a vine, a field, a treasure, etc.). But perhaps we need to identify what an idiom is. **Idioms are phrases which carry a different meaning than what they literally suggest.** Here are a couple of American idioms:

- ◆ Uncle Joe "kicked the bucket."
- ◆ I "bought a lemon."

These idioms are readily understood in our culture today. Yet their meanings cannot be determined by simply defining individual words. For instance, defining *kick* and *bucket* does not suggest that "kick the bucket" means someone "died."

Our culture is not the first to use idioms in everyday speech. All languages have idiomatic expressions. Moses used idioms. The Prophets of Israel used idioms. Jesus Christ used idioms. The Apostle Paul used idioms. As a matter of fact, the Bible is replete

with idiomatic statements that *mean* something slightly different than what most people think. Here are a few examples from the Old Testament:

"If there is any person who will not humble himself on this same day, he shall be cut off from his people."
(Leviticus 23:29)

"The LORD will establish you as a holy people to Himself, as He swore to you, if you will keep the commandments of the LORD your God, and walk in His ways."
(Deuteronomy 28:9)

"He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever."
(2 Samuel 7:13)

I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you with My eye upon you.
(Psalm 32:8)

To understand these verses, you must first define the idioms they contain. However, any attempt to define these idioms according to our twentieth century Western mind-set will fail miserably. **If you don't understand these idioms exactly as the ancient Hebrew people did, you can't comprehend what the writer meant to convey.** And if Jesus Himself borrowed idioms like these from the Old Testament so that He, too, could speak in parables, then you won't comprehend His statements either.

Parables and the "Hidden Mystery"

Here's a fact: **The New Testament Gospel message of Jesus Christ comes directly out of the Old Testament where it lies concealed in Hebrew idioms and parabolic images.** Do you find it hard to accept that God would hide the Gospel message behind idioms and images? If you do, perhaps you need to read more carefully what Jesus said.

*"I WILL OPEN MY MOUTH IN PARABLES;
I WILL UTTER THINGS HIDDEN
SINCE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD."*
(Matthew 13:35b)

Do you know what a parable does? **First of all, a parable compares one thing with another.** It compares the unknown (the kingdom of Heaven) with the known (a mustard seed, a dragnet, etc.). But a parable also does something else. **It simultaneously reveals and conceals its "hidden" message.** To those who have insight, it reveals. To those who lack insight, it conceals. Jesus' desire to both reveal and conceal His message is His reason for speaking in parables.

And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?" And He answered and said to them, "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted."

(Matthew 13:10–11)

And His disciples {began} questioning Him as to what this parable might be. And He said, "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest {it is} in parables, in order that SEEING THEY MAY NOT SEE, AND HEARING THEY MAY NOT UNDERSTAND."

(Luke 8:9–10)

The clear implication of these two passages is that God can choose to "grant" (reveal) insight into the "mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" to those He deems worthy, or He can choose to "not grant" (conceal) insight in the case of those who are deemed unworthy. Jesus addresses the issue of who God views as worthy or unworthy as He continues His discourse in Matthew's account:

*"FOR THE HEART OF THIS PEOPLE HAS BECOME DULL,
AND WITH THEIR EARS THEY SCARCELY HEAR,
AND THEY HAVE CLOSED THEIR EYES
LEST THEY SHOULD SEE WITH THEIR EYES,
AND HEAR WITH THEIR EARS,
AND UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART AND RETURN,
AND I SHOULD HEAL THEM.'*

But blessed are your eyes because they see; and your ears because they hear."

(Matthew 13:15–16)

Jesus presents a distinct contrast between two groups of people here. Those who listen to the Truth but choose to disregard it by "closing" their "eyes" and "ears" are not worthy to receive insight and understanding. But

those who are willing to listen to and believe the Truth, have "eyes" that "see" and "ears" that "hear" and, therefore, will be "blessed" with insight and understanding.

The Apostolic Teaching

Are you beginning to see the correlation between parables and the "mysteries of the kingdom of heaven"? Are you starting to see that the "mysteries" of God cannot be perceived without insight into the parables of Scripture? If not, Paul has more to say about God's "hidden mysteries" that might help you to "see":

Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away; but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden {wisdom,} which God predestined before the ages to our glory; {the wisdom} which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

(1 Corinthians 2:6–8)

When Paul says, "we speak God's wisdom in a mystery," he is referring to a specific body of knowledge ("God's wisdom") which he and the other Apostles were "speaking" to (teaching) their disciples. The content of this knowledge was parabolic in nature and had been revealed to the Apostles by Jesus so that they might teach others. **The content of The Apostolic Teaching was precise information concerning God's message that had been "hidden" in the Old Testament behind Hebrew idioms and parabolic images.**

Those who believed the Truth provided by The Apostolic Teaching found that the "mystery" of the Old Testament was no longer "hidden" from them. Those who were willing to open their "eyes" and "ears" (that is, to listen, learn, and believe) could gain insight which would allow them to understand the "hidden" message of the Old Testament. Does this sound phenomenal and hard to believe? Don't be too quick to dismiss all this as nonsense lest you prove yourself to be one of those with closed "eyes" and "ears."

Unraveling the "Mystery"

If you are willing to concede the possibility that the message of the Old Testament was indeed a "mystery"

that was "hidden" through the enigmatic use of idioms and images, there are still other questions that must be answered: (1) Where did the Prophets of God come up with the idioms and images they used? (2) How can the specific meaning of these idioms and images be ascertained? Certainly, if one is to accurately understand the message of the Prophets, one must eliminate guesswork concerning the meaning of the specific idioms and images they used.

As stated earlier, the primary purpose of a parable is to compare one thing to another. (The English word *parable* is actually just a transliteration of the Greek word *parabole*, which means "comparison.") **God's use of parables was intended to teach His People about the unknown spiritual realm (the kingdom of Heaven) by comparing it to things known in this realm.** That being the case, you can see where the Prophets would likely use terminology and images in their parables that were already known and used by God's People.

But what were the things Israel already understood which God could use as a starting point? Would it surprise you to learn that the ancient Israelites actually thought like Egyptians at the time God began to teach them? Think about it. Israel had been in Egypt for four hundred years prior to the Exodus. Being in Egypt for such a long period of time must have had a tremendous impact on what they believed and how they thought.

If God was going to use parables to teach Israel about His Kingdom, surely the Egyptian culture would provide an obvious point of comparison since it was the culture Israel had been exposed to for four hundred years. However, there is also another reason for believing God used the Egyptian culture in His parabolic statements to the Israelites. Moses, Israel's first Teacher, was fully trained in Egyptian arts, sciences, literature, and theology. Having been raised by Pharaoh's daughter, Moses received the best education Egypt had to offer. The New Testament tells us exactly this:

*"And Moses was educated in all the learning of the Egyptians, and he was a man of power in words and deeds."
(Acts 7:22)*

It was not by accident that God called Moses to be Israel's Teacher. His knowledge of the Egyptian way of life made him the perfect candidate to understand and

explain the comparisons God was going to make between Egyptian culture (the known) and the Kingdom of God (the unknown).

But why would God use the Egyptian culture to make comparisons that would teach Israel about spiritual Truth? Basically, because it suited His purposes. **You see, the one issue of paramount concern to every pious Egyptian was how to attain the resurrection from the dead.** The Egyptians had elaborate beliefs pertaining to just this one issue. **God used Egypt's own mythological beliefs about resurrection from the dead as a starting point from which He went on to teach Israel about true resurrection from the dead through Jesus Christ.**

Does that sound crazy? Consider for a moment some of the things the ancient Egyptians believed about the resurrection from the dead:

1. They believed the Pharaoh was the incarnate son of god, engendered by god himself.
2. They believed the deceased Pharaoh (the son of god) was the only person capable of attaining resurrection from the dead by his own accord.
3. They believed the common layman could only attain resurrection from the dead through belief in and union with the deceased son of god (Pharaoh).

Can you begin to see why God would use Egypt's mythological beliefs as a basis for His Own revealed Truth? It was the best way to teach Israel about the true Son of God and the true resurrection from the dead. And this only scratches the surface of the similarities between God's plan of salvation and that found in Egyptian mythology.

Likeness Is Not Reality

The Pentateuch is replete with the idioms and images Moses used to teach Israel about Jesus Christ and true resurrection from the dead. Yet these idioms and images are all grounded in Egyptian and Canaanite mythology. Although the mythology itself was completely untrue, God could still use the terminology and images associated with mythology to

make comparisons that taught Israel what spiritual reality was like.

You see, parables cannot tell us what spiritual reality is. Parables can only teach what spiritual reality is like by means of comparison. Until we reach the hereafter, none of us has the ability to fully understand the realm of God as it truly is. So the best we can do is strive to understand what spiritual reality is like by means of comparison.

But remember: **If you don't adopt the mind-set of the ancient Israelites, you will never understand the parabolic statements made in the Old and New Testaments.** So it's important to recognize that Israel's mind-set was primarily influenced by Egyptian culture at the time of Moses.

However, since Canaan was a neighbor to Egypt, the Israelites were also well aware of Canaanite beliefs. By Isaiah's time (centuries later), the sons of Israel were deeply immersed in the religious beliefs and practices of the Canaanites. Not surprisingly, when Isaiah tried to call them back to God, he spoke to them in parabolic statements based on Canaanite beliefs. Therefore, to understand the Book of Isaiah, you must adopt a Canaanite mind-set. The point is simply to say that if you truly want to understand the Old Testament, you need knowledge of Egyptian and Canaanite mythological beliefs.

Since the Bible is a single book which must be read as a continuous story, you must also take into account Egyptian and Canaanite mythology when you read the New Testament. That's because the New Testament is a continuation of the Old Testament. However, since the New Testament was written during a time of strong Greek influence, you must also take into account Greek religious beliefs and concepts along with Egyptian and Canaanite beliefs if you are ever to gain complete understanding. Sound confusing? Maybe I can help make it easy for you.

The Voice of Elijah®

By now you have probably realized this is not your typical "Christian" letter. The information presented is far different than what you typically hear coming from the Church. Your perception of who you are, and your assumptions about who others claim to be, and what the Church has become, and what the Bible is all about have been challenged to this point.

Whether you are willing to admit you have "heard" anything that sounds even remotely truthful is for you to decide.

Most who receive this letter will not have read this far. They will have already rejected the overall premise I have presented. That premise is simple: Things today are not what most Christians assume them to be. That's because most people within the Church are not what they seem to be, and the things taught by those in the Church are far from what they should be. Dare I say the "blind" are once again leading the "blind." That is a bold assertion, but this is an even bolder one: True Believers who have truly "listened" with an honest heart and a rational mind have already begun to "see" these things are so. If you fit this profile, I have good news for you.

The Voice of Elijah® is a ministry with one purpose: To seek out born-again Believers and let them know that God is again at work in the restoration of the Old Testament Gospel message of Jesus Christ. I say God is at work "restoring" that Truth because the Church lost the Truth revealed to the Apostles within 175 years of the death of Jesus Christ.

God began the process of restoring certain aspects of that lost Truth almost five hundred years ago when he called Martin Luther to restore the most basic Truth of all—salvation by faith. The work of Martin Luther began the Protestant Reformation. What has transpired in the Protestant Church since that time is a mixture of both good and bad.

The good news is that God continued to "call" others after Martin Luther to protect the Truth that Martin Luther, John Calvin, Ulrich Zwengli, and others had already recovered. Such men as Johann Arndt, John Wesley, George Whitefield, and Charles Finney even sought to continue the Protestant "restoration" of Truth. The bad news is that Satan did not sit by idle while these men of God worked. He had no difficulty finding vain individuals to do his work of distorting the Truth God had already restored.

Protestant History: Truth vs. Lies

Since Truth by its very nature must be specific in content, God has always had only a narrowly defined amount of information to put forth. Satan, on the other hand, has had no such restrictions. As the

“father of lies,” he has never been limited in the amount of false information he can disseminate. And disseminate he has. His efforts to confound and confuse True Believers since the time of Martin Luther can be clearly seen in the sad state of the Church today. Yet his most profound lies have made their way into evangelical Church doctrine only within the past one hundred years or so.

So what are the lies Satan propagates? Well, that’s part of what *The Voice of Elijah*® seeks to explain for the benefit of those who are willing to believe God still “calls” individuals to continue the Protestant “restoration” of the Truth. The question you must ask yourself is: “Do I really believe I have ‘heard’ something that sounds true?” If you believe you have, then *The Voice of Elijah*® will give you the chance to “see” and “hear” more of the same kind of Truth you have just read.

I’d like to offer you an opportunity to subscribe to *The Voice of Elijah*® newsletter. This quarterly newsletter is currently examining the history of the Church since A.D. 200. Since it is our contention that the Church lost an accurate understanding of *The Apostolic Teaching* somewhere around A.D. 200, we feel it is necessary to provide adequate evidence in support of that view. From time to time, we also point out the various lies that have found their way into the modern Church. And all of this is just scratching the surface of what you can eventually learn through our ministry.

If you are one of those who feel you have “heard” the ring of Truth in what I have written, you should be reading *The Voice of Elijah*® newsletter. However, if your desire is only to protect the “traditional” beliefs you find in the Church today, then you should probably move on.

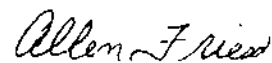
If you don’t want to “hear” that God **expects** His People to stop sinning, or that “fear of God” is a legitimate motivating factor to keep Christians from sinning, or that the “once saved, always saved” teaching is a lie Satan uses to undermine Christian concerns about sinning, or that Christians today act like spoiled “children” who think their “Father” won’t discipline them because of their sinning, then you don’t want this newsletter. All I can do is wish you the best in your walk with God because I have nothing to offer you. On the other hand, if you have a love for the Truth and would like to become all that God expects

you to be, I invite you to consider the following subscription offers:

1. **One year subscription (4 newsletters), plus a complimentary copy of *The Passover Parable*.** This little booklet talks about the ancient Egyptian and Canaanite beliefs God used to explain His purpose in the Incarnation of Jesus Christ.
2. **Two year subscription (8 newsletters), plus complimentary copies of both *The Passover Parable* and *The Antichrist*.** *The Antichrist* is a 64-page book that contains important details about the coming Antichrist written by the Early Church Fathers, Irenæus and Hippolytus.

If you honestly believe you have “heard” the Truth in what I have written here, don’t miss this opportunity to become a subscriber to *The Voice of Elijah*® newsletter. Please take the time now to fill out the enclosed Order Form and mail it with your check today. An envelope is provided for your convenience. You won’t be sorry.

Sincerely,



Allen Friess
Executive Editor
The Voice of Elijah®

P.S. Your satisfaction with *The Voice of Elijah*® newsletter is guaranteed. If you are not completely satisfied, we will refund your money promptly. ■

Do All of God's Children Know Who They Are?

[Editor: We have included the following "testimony" in this issue to introduce you to The Voice of Elijah®'s new President and Executive Editor, Allen Friess. In upcoming issues we hope to provide you the "testimony" of others to give you a bit more insight into the people who bring you this newsletter each month.]

I was born in Wichita, Kansas on December 12, 1955. I am the fourth of five children. My three sisters, one brother, and I were raised on a farm on the outskirts of Wichita. We were all instructed in the Catholic faith.

Looking back on my youth, I can't help but think that living on a farm has proved to be both a blessing and a curse. On the one hand, I had the opportunity to spend a lot of time with my father (how many kids can say that today); and I was given duties and responsibilities that made me feel he trusted me. That helped instill in me a sense of character, confidence, and self-worth. On the other hand, the time I spent with my father and the responsibilities he gave me were almost always related to work.

From age nine to seventeen, I can honestly say that my typical summer day consisted of just three things: eat, work, and sleep. Since my father only had two boys to help him work the farm, there was always plenty of work to go around. Unfortunately, even after summer was over and school began, work on the farm did not end. Much to my chagrin, it seemed like there was always something to do regardless of the time of year.

We lived just outside the city limits, and I attended school with wealthy kids whose parents had moved to the suburbs to get away from the inner city. Since these kids were my contemporaries, I naturally compared myself to them. However, there wasn't

much to compare. When they talked about receiving an "allowance," or having a birthday party with lots of gifts, or playing little league baseball, or going swimming, or attending parties, or going to summer camp, or earning money at a part-time job during the summer, I had nothing comparable of my own.

Although I worked hard year 'round helping my dad, I seldom received anything for the effort. And only infrequently did I have the opportunity to do "fun" things like most other kids my age. As a result, I often felt cheated by the fact that I had been raised on a farm. Therefore, I developed a driving ambition to get off the farm and into the city as soon as possible.

I decided not to go to college even though I had an aptitude for math and physics and had good grades in high school. The way I saw it, four years of college would just mean four more "summer vacations" of hard work on the farm with little, if any, pay. I figured if I got a "real job" (one where I actually got paid) I could kill two birds with one stone. First, I would earn some money; and second, my summers would not be free to spend working on the farm. Although I intended to find a job in Wichita after graduation, my first job actually took me farther away from home.

In July of 1973, at age seventeen, I began to work for my brother-in-law in Kansas City. He had a small business which had grown to the point where he needed help, and I was his first employee. I started out with high hopes. The life I envisioned for myself would surely be what I had always longed for, or so I thought. I stayed in Kansas City for almost two years before moving back to Wichita. But during that time I reached a point in my life lower than I had ever been before. That eventually brought me to my knees before God. I'll tell you more about that in a little bit.

But first, I want to mention a few things about my Catholic upbringing.

My Catholic Background

Although the Catholic faith held little interest for me during my youth, there were occasionally times when specific questions about things I had been taught would come to my mind. One question that kept coming up was, What purpose did it serve for Jesus to die on the cross? Even though I believed Jesus Christ had died as a sacrifice for sins (because Catholicism taught this), I didn't understand how His death related to personal salvation. A second question I often thought about was, Why did I need to confess my sins to a priest? This question ultimately caused me to doubt certain things about my Catholic faith.

I suppose I started questioning things I had been taught, in part, because I felt the Catholic Church never did a good job of providing insight into their teachings. They would simply teach me that something was true, and I was expected to believe it. At first, that's exactly what I did. But as I got older and my reasoning capabilities developed more, I started wanting to know the reasons why I should believe what they said.

Once I began to scrutinize and question my Catholic faith, I started seeing things that made no sense at all to me. For instance, it didn't seem logical that I should confess my sins to, and receive forgiveness from, someone I had not sinned against, and who was just as guilty of sin as I was. Reason alone told me that if I had sinned against God, and if God was all-knowing, then I should confess my sins directly to Him and seek forgiveness directly from Him. Having concluded this was true, when I was sixteen I decided to stop going to confession in the "traditional" Catholic way.

Since I was old enough to drive by this time, I would intentionally go to church alone when it was "time for confession." Once there, I would park the car in an isolated spot in the parking lot and confess my sins directly to God in the car. This removed my inhibition to honestly confess my sins, and for the first time, I had prayer that was not memorized or ritualistic in nature.

Although I became better acquainted with how to confess my sins to God through this experience, I

was not born again at this time. That's because the outward confession of my sins was not generated by any genuine repentance within. That is, there was nothing in me that desired to change the direction of my life, nor was there any recognition or acceptance of the fact that I was a wretched sinner in the eyes of God. I was willing to admit that I sometimes committed sins, but I was unwilling to admit that I was a "sinner." Like the Pharisees, I was certain that label applied to other people. That's because I saw myself as basically a good person who just happened to do bad things from time to time.

Looking back, I'm not sure if I was unwilling to admit my sinful nature because of pride, or whether I was simply ignorant of my true status as a sinner. Whatever the case, I know I did not see the truth about myself as a sinner, nor did I understand that repentance is different than confession of sins. Like most people today, I probably assumed that confession of sins was an automatic sign of repentance. I know I didn't understand that God first looks inside a person to see if an inward change of mind has occurred that corresponds with the outward confession of sins. That is basically to say that genuine repentance is an inner change in one's beliefs that is expressed as a sincere outward confession of sins. After all, what has been stated time and time again in *The Voice of Elijah*® really is true: what you believe determines what you do.

As best as I can remember, my unwillingness to comply with the traditional rites of confession was the only thing I ever did that was a conscious effort to go against the teaching of the Catholic Church. Even though I could sense there was no depth to the Catholic faith because of the emptiness I felt within myself, I made no real attempt to break free from Catholicism. Basically, I was content to live with an empty faith because it was easy. It didn't require anything of me. Even at that, however, occasionally there were still times when the desire to find some shred of truth would come over me.

I can remember this happening one time while our family was on vacation. We spent a day in Salt Lake City where we visited the Mormon headquarters, among other things. Although our basic interest was only in seeing the Mormon Tabernacle, we were given quite an indoctrination into Mormon beliefs. I vividly remember thinking to myself that the

Mormons seemed to have an in-depth understanding of why they believed as they did. I found that fascinating; and I specifically remember telling my mother that the Mormons seemed to offer reasons for what they believed, as opposed to the Catholics who, to my mind, didn't. The thought that I might actually come to understand something I had never understood before prompted me to beg some money from my mother to buy the Book of Mormon. Sadly, any thought of being enlightened by this book quickly vanished when I found I could not understand a thing written in it. After that, I made no more attempts to try to figure out what was true. I was nearing graduation from high school and I had other things on my mind.

Tough Times in Kansas City

My move to Kansas City after graduation was an exciting time for me because I was finally going to get off the farm. I was going to earn some money and enjoy myself, I thought. Instead, the next two years proved to be a trying time in which I learned a lot about the realities of life. I soon discovered I had led a sheltered life on the farm and, consequently, was extremely naïve. I also learned that not everyone had the strong work ethic I had, nor did people hesitate to tell outright lies about anything. I also gained a greater appreciation for my dad and the overwhelming difficulties he must have faced in making financial ends meet with a wife and five kids. The uncertainty over whether he would raise a good wheat crop each year was very stressful to him I'm sure.

There was also one more thing I learned in Kansas City: Under the right circumstances (or perhaps I should say "wrong circumstances"), I was capable of being just as lazy, just as deceptive, and just as bad as everybody else. As time went by, my brother-in-law's business began to struggle. He couldn't always pay me regularly, yet my need to pay rent and buy food continued to come around regularly. So, to make ends meet when I had no money in my account, I would kite checks between several grocery stores. If I wrote a \$10.00 check for groceries one day, I would write a \$20.00 check for cash somewhere else the next day and put \$10.00 back into my account to cover the previously written bad check. Then, with the cash left over, I might buy more groceries, or

perhaps some gas for my car. Then, of course, when the next day came around, I would go somewhere else and repeat the whole process by writing an even larger check than the day before. Needless to say, once I got started on a cycle like this, it was a nerve-racking experience and created a lot of tension and guilt in me.

What made matters worse and added greatly to my shame was the fact that my "system" often broke down. The number of times I was humiliated at having to retrieve a bad check is more than I care to remember. But kiting checks between grocery stores was not the only place I ran into problems. I also wrote checks for the rent on my apartment when I knew there weren't sufficient funds in my account. Although I usually managed to scrape up enough money to cover those checks before they bounced, I can vividly remember one time when I didn't. After receiving a stern lecture from the apartment manager about the criminal consequences I would surely face if I continued to engage in such activity, I felt especially scared, miserable, and ashamed of myself. My view of myself as basically a "good person" was changing rapidly. However, the shame I felt within myself only intensified as I continued to write more hot checks.

My New-Birth Experience

It was during this period of time that I happened to turn on the TV one Sunday morning to find Oral Roberts preaching. I didn't know who this preacher was, but for some reason I decided to listen to him that morning as he talked about God. Since this event took place so long ago (1974), and since I didn't know at the time that it would be a significant event in my life, I can't honestly tell you the specifics of what Oral Roberts said. I can only tell you what I believe he must have said based on my reaction to it.

At the very least, I know he must have talked about God's willingness to forgive my sins. I assume he spoke of Jesus Christ as well since He died that my sins might be forgiven. I also suspect that he spoke of my need to repent and acknowledge my sins before God. I say all of this without being certain of any of it because I honestly do not remember the words I heard. The reason I don't is because it was at least six years before I looked back and tried to recall what he said that day. More about that in a moment.

Whatever Oral Roberts said, his words must have evoked great conviction in me because my subsequent actions were directly tied to his words. I'm certain I believed them because my immediate reaction was to shut off the television and get down on my knees and begin to acknowledge my wretched, sinful life before God. Fear, shame, and guilt had been building within me for quite some time prior to that morning, yet I had failed to do anything about it up to that point. That had caused me such great mental anguish that all I could think about was being released from this overwhelming burden of sin and starting my life over somehow. I can tell you with absolute certainty that my desire to start a new life was real. I was ready to leave behind everything associated with my past and surrender to God if only He would show me how I ought to live.

During the early stage of pouring out my heart to God in prayer, I began to do something I have seldom done in my adult life—I began to cry. Once I started crying, it seemed to create a release in me. Whether I was being released from my pride and stubborn will, or whether I was being released from something else, I can't say. I only know that my tears seemed to remove all my inhibitions to fully confess my sins before God. The longer I went on confessing my sins, the more I felt at peace and the more I desired to confess even more sins. This whole experience felt so good that I must have gone on for well over thirty minutes, confessing my sins, seeking God's forgiveness, and asking God to help me change my life.

When I finally arose from prayer, I honestly felt that somehow my life was going to be different from that point forward. I felt that I had renewed hope for my life, but more importantly my heart felt clean and free from the burden of sin I had been carrying around. However, it didn't take long for me to realize that other things had changed as well.

For instance, I knew right away that I would not be writing any more bad checks. I determined immediately that if I didn't have the money for something I would figure out a legitimate way of getting it. Sometimes that meant selling an item I owned, or simply doing without something I thought I needed. Other times that meant calling home for help, and one time it meant simply being honest with the apartment manager that my rent would be delayed until I

got some money (she actually commended me for that). Eventually, it meant moving out of my apartment and back in with my sister and brother-in-law. I also began looking for a different job which led me to the job I have had for over nineteen years now. In addition to my new-found honesty and integrity, I also felt the urge to clean up the filthy language I had brought with me from the farm.

Perhaps more important than all of these outward signs of improvement, however, was the new attitude I had about life, about myself, and about God. (I'll mention some of these changes in attitude later.) My initial reaction to the changes I witnessed in my life was that I had simply "found God." To my way of thinking, that's what had happened. But I eventually came to understand that, from a biblical perspective, I had been born again. Or had I?

My Confusion About the New Birth

I would not be honest if I failed to admit that I have wrestled with confusion on the issue of the new birth many times over the years. I did not even realize I may have been born again until 1980. In the six years that passed between 1974 and 1980, my memory of some things related to that event became somewhat clouded. My greatest difficulty was trying to recall Oral Roberts' specific words, and also trying to recall what I said in my own prayer to God. My concern was whether I had actually heard "the gospel," and whether I had then made a legitimate response to God based on the truth I had heard.

The fact that I have never remembered (with certainty) any of what Oral Roberts said, and can only remember part of what I said in response, has left me with gaps in my understanding. For instance, did I submit my life to follow Jesus Christ that day, or did I not? I know I stated in some mangled way that I was ready to give up my old way of life and follow God, but whether I actually stated I was submitting myself to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in that prayer, I can't say. I'm certain that my prayer was founded on what Oral Roberts said that morning, but since I'm not positive about what he said, I have often gone in hopeless circles trying to figure it all out.

Since it became a futile effort for me to try to remember what I simply can't remember, I decided to focus exclusively on what I know to be true. The

things I know to be true are these: (1) I was overwhelmed with the conviction that I was a sinner; (2) I repented and acknowledged before God that I was a sinner; (3) I confessed my sins before God; (4) I pleaded with God to forgive my sins; (5) I admitted that my life was in ruins and told God I was ready to follow Him if He would simply direct me; and (6) My life underwent a dramatic change because I became a different person than what I had been.

Perhaps the greatest confirmation in my own mind that I had actually been born again was the last item in the list. The changes I experienced in my life (especially my inner life) were, and still are, an extremely vivid memory to me. Consequently, whenever uncertainty or confusion about the reality of my new birth has arisen within me over the years, I have always reflected on the inner transformation that I experienced in 1974.

If I was not born again, then why did I suddenly feel such a passion to serve God like never before? Why did I have such feelings of love and joy that I had never experienced before? Why was I filled with a sense of peace and contentment about my life? Why did I not feel inclined to judge others as I previously had? Why did I have a sincere desire to give up my sinful way of life, and why did I feel such conviction whenever I failed in my attempts? Why did I develop a desire to start reading the Bible? Why was God on my mind so much? Why did I desire to spend so much time with God in prayer? Why did I sense the need to be taught spiritual things, and why did I seek to know and understand as much as I could about God and the Bible?

The one thing I have never doubted is the fact that these changes were definitely real in my life. I knew I wasn't imagining or feigning these changes, although it did cross my mind that this amazing transformation might have been caused by something other than the born-again experience. For instance, did my strong emotional encounter with God possibly create an illusion of change that was only temporary and not real? Or could it possibly have been that I was encouraged by the words of others to manufacture superficial changes through the power of suggestion?

While I will admit that either of these two things could create a false illusion of change, I reject both of these arguments in my case. First, while I did have an

emotional encounter with God, I know that such emotions (at least in me) die rather quickly. The fact that these changes were still present in my life after several years tells me that my changed inner life was being sustained by something other than emotions. Also, since I was not involved with any kind of emotion-based church, there was certainly no external stimuli to keep my emotions stirred up. As far as words of encouragement from others are concerned, there were none. The church I began attending after my conversion had no one person or group who sought to encourage me in any way. So any thought that I was being induced by others to artificially create (or even imagine) a change in my life is absurd.

My Return to the Catholic Church

You see, the church I went back to attending after my new birth was the Catholic Church. Although I had pretty much stopped going to church prior to my conversion, I immediately started back again because of my new desire to develop a closer relationship to God. I returned to the Catholic Church because I was familiar with it and because I didn't know where else to go. Although Catholicism had failed me in the past, I assumed the fault was mine and not the Catholic Church's. Consequently, I was determined this time to see that things were different. I was certain that, if I went to church with a real desire to learn about God and the Bible, everything would be different.

Over time, however, I found that the ritualistic nonsense of the Catholic Church did nothing to strengthen or encourage me in my new desire to serve God. Try as I might to find value in what I was being taught, I found practically nothing. Nor did I find any one person or group in the Church who sought to encourage me in any way.

In spite of the fact that I was taught nothing and was encouraged even less during this time, the inner transformation remained constant. Although I was essentially left alone with nothing but my own thoughts, something managed to keep the fire burning within me. While some of this may be attributable to my reading the King James Bible and watching an occasional Sunday morning religious program, the truth is I was not gleaning much from either of these because I still lacked sound teaching to assist me in

my walk with the Lord. And because I lacked sound teaching to guide me in my walk with God, over the next few years I slowly found myself losing the fervent desire I previously had to serve God. Yet at the same time, I can honestly say that my desire to be filled with a knowledge and understanding of the Truth was still alive. Unfortunately, I didn't know what to do or where to go to satisfy that desire.

My Move to the Protestant Church

Approximately four years after my conversion, I met a woman (who is now my wife) and we began to date. After a couple of years, we started discussing the possibility of marriage. Since my wife was a Baptist at the time, she was afraid I would expect her to convert to Catholicism if we got married. However, since I was already disgruntled with Catholicism by that time, I told her I did not expect her to convert. In fact, I said I was receptive to leaving Catholicism and attending any church that we both felt taught the truth of the Bible.

The end result was that I left Catholicism in 1980 and started attending a Protestant church. In comparison to the teachings of the Catholic Church, the things I heard in the Evangelical Free Church seemed to do a lot (I thought) to satisfy the desire I had for knowledge of the Bible. I still remember those first few years as being an exciting time because I really felt that I was finally learning the Truth. So, after several years of listening to the pastor preach Sunday morning sermons, my wife and I began attending a Sunday School class, and eventually, we even got involved in some small group Bible studies.

It was during those early years in the Protestant Church that I first heard many of the prevalent "easy believism" doctrines that are casually tossed about today. Until then, I had never heard of God's "unconditional love" for man, nor had I ever heard the "once saved, always saved" theory which teaches that a Christian can never lose his salvation. It was also during this time that I started hearing all the clichés about "accepting Christ" and "receiving Christ" so one could become "born again." That's when (as I mentioned earlier) I began thinking back to 1974, trying to evaluate the validity of my own born-again experience. While all these Protestant doctrines were new to me, I had no reason to believe they might be false. After all,

who was I to say the teachings of the Protestant Church were wrong? I certainly had no reason to believe that. They seemed to confirm my own new-birth experience, so I readily accepted them.

By 1988, after having been through numerous Bible studies (the kind where a question is asked and then a Bible verse is given so you can look up the answer the author wants you to find), I was encouraged to teach a Sunday School class. After deciding to give it a try, I immediately realized that being a responsible teacher was going to require much greater study of the Bible than I had ever invested before. If I was to have any hope of actually understanding the Scriptures, I knew I needed to find answers, lots of answers, to questions which naturally arose from reading the text.

I can remember spending twelve to fifteen hours (or more) each week pouring over the text I was supposed to teach. Although this was usually no more than fifteen verses, I had difficulty trying to answer all the questions I saw in the text. Each week I would pull my hair out trying to figure out why Jesus or Paul said what they did, and how their comments fit together with the logical flow of the text. It was obvious their teaching was intended to convey something specific, yet so often their statements seemed out of place with previously-made comments. One minute they would say one thing, and the next minute they would say something that seemed (to me) totally unrelated to what they had just said. This often baffled me to the point where I was forced to speculate about the meaning of various passages and how they fit together with surrounding passages.

Because of the intense effort I often put into preparing a single lesson, it wasn't long before I grew weary of being a teacher. Yet, for the first time in my life, I was beginning to see that there was much more depth to the Scriptures than what I had imagined. And because I could "see" there was a great deal of "mystery" to the Bible, I became all the more intrigued and challenged to find answers to the perplexing questions I had.

While at times it seemed I was making progress toward this goal, more often than not I felt frustrated by my own lack of understanding. However, because of the few things I could "see" in the Bible, I began to develop a nagging suspicion that many of the things I heard taught in the Protestant Church were not true.

I lacked the confidence in my own opinion to say this outwardly, but I became dismayed within that the Protestant Church and its many “teachers” seemed so unconcerned with serious questions raised by the text of Scripture. Without admitting it, they seemed unwilling to believe that everything stated in the Bible had equal value. They liked to quote those few selected passages of Scripture that supported their view, but any portion of Scripture that challenged their “traditional” thinking was readily passed over as insignificant, or explained away. Because of this, I started having doubts about various doctrines taught in the Protestant Church, just as I had doubts many years earlier about things taught by the Catholic Church.

My own frustration over not being able to understand the Bible intensified in 1991 when I tried to study the Book of Isaiah. I felt totally ignorant, and inadequate to the task of understanding this book. I was just as convinced that the authors of the various commentaries I was using lacked insight as well (only they wouldn't admit it). After realizing that I lacked the proper key(s) to understand this one book of the Bible, I gave up my study and told God in prayer that if He expected me to understand Isaiah, He would have to help me.

My Introduction to The Teaching

As it turned out, God began to answer my prayer soon afterward. I received a mailer from *The Voice of Elijah*® in the fall of 1991. Although I was probably tempted to throw this mailer away with only a cursory examination (like I do most junk mail), for some reason I took the time to read what it said. While parts of the letter spoke in general terms about things I had heard many times before, I suddenly got interested when it mentioned idioms and images as being important keys to understanding the Old Testament. Having been totally frustrated earlier that year in my study of the Book of Isaiah, I felt there might be validity to this concept since “conventional” methods of study had failed me so miserably. Thinking this could possibly be the answer to my prayer, I sent in a one-year subscription and ordered all the back issues.

When my order arrived, I had five issues of *The Voice of Elijah*® to start reading. Since the October 1990

issue was the premier issue, and since it talked about Saddam Hussein and the Persian Gulf War, I decided to read it first. I can vividly remember that my first impression was one of disappointment. I initially thought Larry Harper was just like everyone else. When I saw him quoting the same passages from Isaiah and Jeremiah that I had heard numerous other “teachers” quoting at the time of the Gulf War, I thought he was simply one more like them.

Since many of these “teachers” had made total fools out of themselves with all of their predictions prior to and during the war, I assumed Larry was no different. However, as I continued to read his comments I realized he was saying something totally different than I had thought at first. Rather than speaking of the Gulf War as the ultimate fulfillment of the passages from Isaiah and Jeremiah, he spoke of the Gulf War as only a “parabolic fulfillment of prophecy.” He explained that the events of the Gulf War were only a harbinger, or parabolic image, of a greater reality yet to come. That is, the destruction that leveled Iraq during the Gulf War was a parabolic image of the destruction God ultimately has planned for “mystery Babylon.”

By the time I had read the second issue of the newsletter (January 1991) in which he discussed who “mystery Babylon” really is, I began to “see” even more clearly that Larry was not like everyone else. I found that he not only made sense once I began to give his words some serious thought, I also found an identification with his teaching. That is, I found he spoke in a straightforward manner, which I liked, and he also spoke with a logical progression of thought I could follow and with which I could identify.

For instance, by the time I had finished reading the issues related to the Church's loss of *The Apostolic Teaching*, I had no doubt that everything he said was true. He had laid out his presentation of facts in such a way that only a fool would deny the Truth. In later issues, when he explained that true Christians don't have to go on sinning, I could see why that was true based on the evidence he presented from Scripture. So, when he called the “once saved, always saved” teaching of the Church a total lie, I could “see” the evidence in Scripture which supported that as well.

I admit that Larry's writings did raise a lot of questions in my mind that sometimes went unanswered. But of the things I was able to understand,

everything seemed so rational and logical that I often wondered why others hadn't seen it before.

However, the one thing I found to be absolutely necessary for acquiring understanding of the Truth Larry presented was an open mind. I learned I had to temporarily put aside my old beliefs in order to give his teaching a fair hearing. As long as I knew I could go back to those old beliefs whenever I wanted, it remained easy for me to consider The Teaching he sought to present. Over time, however, I found I had no desire to go back to those old beliefs. I soon discovered that my understanding of the Bible increased dramatically whenever I rid myself of old beliefs and examined Scripture in the light of the new teaching Larry presented. I have no doubt that the knowledge and understanding of the Truth I have gained over the past four years has only come about because I was willing to abandon the false teachings from my past.

Final Thoughts

In some ways, it's sad that I have to report that I now believe most of what is taught in the Church today is false and needs to be totally abandoned if one wants to "see" the Truth. The reason the True Believer needs to discard most of these doctrines is because Satan has been using lies to make those of us who are actually True Believers smug, overconfident, and complacent in our relationship to God.

For instance, if you are like I was, and like most other "Christians" are today, you no doubt have extreme confidence that your relationship to God is secure because of your "faith in Jesus Christ." While it is biblically correct to say that salvation comes through "faith in Jesus Christ," I now understand why it is wrong to assume the Church today understands the full implications of what this statement actually means.

Since I have not been called to teach, I won't attempt to tell you what "believing in Jesus Christ" is all about. That's the purpose for which *The Voice of Elijah*® exists, and I'm content to leave it that way. However, I would like to leave you one small clue. I now understand that Jesus Christ is parabolically much more than just a sacrificial lamb who died for our sins as the Church would have you believe. He has also been declared in Scripture to be the walking, talking, physical manifestation of the Truth. Or, as

John says in his gospel, Jesus Christ is the Word of God (John 1:1-14) that we must believe to be saved. Wouldn't it be something if having "faith in Jesus Christ" actually means believing the totality of the Word of God that Jesus Christ was and still is? Well, over the past four years, I've learned by reading the apostolic literature published in *The Voice of Elijah*® *Update* and by listening to The Next Step tapes that that's exactly what the Early Church understood "faith in Jesus Christ" to mean.

I can also see clearly that the Apostles taught the Early Church everything that they understood the Old Testament has to say concerning Jesus Christ. That's what Larry calls The Apostolic Teaching. One of the most important things I've learned through the things distributed by *The Voice of Elijah*® is that Jesus Christ, the Word of God, is Himself the same Word of God that can be found hidden in the Old Testament. Even Jesus Himself said that "the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms" (Luke 24:44) wrote all about Him. Yet nobody in the Church today can adequately explain how they do that. Consequently, those today who want to see Jesus Christ as nothing more than the Son of God Who died for their sins are going to find out too late that their "faith in Christ" lacks adequate content. If you are willing to believe that Jesus Christ is the Living Word of God, then I recommend you put your "faith" in the totality of the Word of God that He is, not in the clichés and trite sayings you hear in the Church today.

The question which remains to be answered is whether you believe God is working through *The Voice of Elijah*® to restore The Apostolic Teaching in these Last Days. If you have believed the things written in *The Voice of Elijah*® publications over the past several years, you already know The Apostolic Teaching was eventually lost a century or so after the death of the Apostles. So, for the past 1800 years, nobody in the Church has had the Truth of anything more than the message of salvation by faith—"the gospel."

If you have only been with *The Voice of Elijah*® for a short time, you may not know what to believe at this point, so I encourage you to hang in there. Listen and learn. If you have truly been born again, and if you listen to *The Voice of Elijah*® with an open mind, and if you have a love for the Truth, I have no doubt you will eventually "see" and come to have greater "faith in Jesus Christ," the Living Word of God. ■



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: Since The Voice of Elijah® has recently picked up some new subscribers, and since you haven't explained what parabolic pantomimes are in any detail for several years, would you take the time now to explain what they are, and why they play a significant role in our understanding of the Old Testament?

Elijah: Sure. First of all, let me say I've submitted the letter you wrote for the mailing campaign to fulfill part of my obligation for this issue. I did that for a couple of reasons. One, that letter and your testimony relieved me of quite a bit of work. For that I thank you very kindly. But two, the letter provides a fairly comprehensive summary of the things I've been stating publicly over the past five years. In that letter you explained the basics concerning parables and "The Way" God has intentionally used them to reveal and, at the same time, conceal what He has hidden in the Hebrew Scriptures.

The things you stated concerning parables apply to *parabolic pantomimes* as well. However, parables are normally straightforward little stories that present a comparison associated with only one, or at most two, idioms. For example, Jesus' parable about the wise man who "built his house" on the "rock" focuses on the meaning of the Hebrew idiom "to build a house" [Editor: Matt. 7:24–27]. By contrast, *parabolic pantomimes*

are historical events, and they tend to build on several idioms and images. Consequently, they are especially dangerous in the hands of fools. When an uninformed individual catches barely a glimpse of the historical events that provide the *parabolic pantomimes* of Scripture, they can, and some of them will, go absolutely crazy, seeing a pantomime in every event in Scripture. That merely shows that, as Jesus said, idiots have a distinct tendency to "strain out a gnat and swallow a camel" [Editor: Matt. 23:24].

Should you doubt that fools tend to drivel, I invite you to take a good look at "The Epistle of Barnabas." [Editor: See *The Voice of Elijah® Update*, December 1993.] That lamebrain completely ignored the *significance* of Abraham as a "type" of *the heir of the promise* and went off into the speculation inherent in numerology, telling us more than we ever wanted to know about the *significance* of Abraham circumcising 318 members of his "house." But enough of that. If I don't watch it, I'll break out my raggedy old soapbox and tell you more than you ever wanted to know about the dummkopf and the lummoX.

A *parabolic pantomime* is a historical event *orchestrated by God* in which one or more persons, places, or events are LIKE others at some other time in history. I say "other time in history" because the *parabolic pantomimes* of Scripture get incredibly complex, spanning the entire range of history, from the beginning of Creation to the final daybreak of the eternal Sabbath. Take, for example, the *parabolic pantomime* of the Prophet Hosea. Most people think that Hosea "married" a "prostitute." Actually, he "took" a *zonah* and "raised up seed" for God in a *parabolic pantomime*. But the purpose of the pantomime is not what I want to *talk about* here. I merely want to point out how many different idioms and images lie behind that one pantomime. In the process maybe you can see how the *parabolic pantomime* Hosea conducted at God's behest is a perfect illustration of how God has concealed His Truth in Scripture.

The key to understanding Hosea's pantomime lies in knowing the purpose of the *zonah* and the role she played in the Canaanite/Israelite version of the *sacred marriage* ritual. That information alone would take longer to explain than we have time for here. The point is, Hosea had three children through the sacred prostitute Gomer, but he only "raised up" two "seeds" for God. Or, if you prefer, he "built" God a couple of

“houses,” that is, he “made” God two “names.” Plainly speaking, he engendered two sons.

The *parabolic pantomime* Hosea conducted is inextricably connected to the message the Prophet Elijah *delivered* to the Northern Kingdom of Israel during the reign of Ahab. I’ve already explained the purpose of Elijah’s ministry in *Not All Israel Is Israel* so I won’t go into that here. Elijah was just proclaiming the fact that God was going to “cut off” the entire Northern Kingdom “from Israel.” To appreciate what Hosea did, however, you must realize he came along quite some time after Elijah flew the coop. He prophesied eternal damnation to the Northern Kingdom while God greased the skids under them. That stoked the fires of Hell that eventually licked their stinking bones clean as a whistle.

The names God told Hosea to give the three children explain the basic thrust of the pantomime. Hosea named the boys Jezreel and Lo-Ammi. He called his daughter Lo-Ruhamah. The name Jezreel refers back to the fact that Jehu fulfilled the prophecy of Elijah when he obliterated “*The House*” of Ahab at Jezreel. Lo-Ammi *means* “not My People” and points to God’s total rejection of the Northern Kingdom. The girl’s name *means* something like “She has not been shown compassion.” That indicates the rejection of “*The House*” of Israel was absolute, excluding even the possibility that a female could step in to “build *The House*” again as the Virgin Mary did “*The House*” of David through the birth of Jesus Christ.

Without going into a verse-by-verse explanation of Hosea’s message, it is difficult to explain the multifaceted statement God made in this one *parabolic pantomime*. I’ve merely pointed out the fact that an understanding of Hosea’s message depends on the four Hebrew idioms I have already mentioned—“cut off from,” “build a house,” “raise up a seed,” and “make a name”—and the *parabolic imagery* behind each of those four idioms. Lacking an understanding of those things, you will be left like everybody else—speculating as to why God would tell His Prophet to “marry” a whore. The Truth is, He didn’t.

I mentioned a bit earlier that Abraham was a “type” of *the heir of the promise*. There is an entire branch of biblical interpretation that is devoted to the study of “typology.” Those who adamantly insist on the literal interpretation of Scripture are some of the most ardent advocates of typology. That is typical of

the characteristically nonsensical stand quite often taken by the blind guides who delight in “showing” other blind folks things in Scripture that they cannot actually “see” themselves. Typological interpretation is essentially nothing more than the last surviving remnant of Origen’s allegorical method. You already know exactly how I feel about Origen’s ignorance. [Editor: See “The Origen of Folly” and “Did You Mean That Literally?” *The Voice of Elijah*®, January 1993.] I feel the same way about typological interpretation. It’s ignorant speculation taken to an extreme.

Those familiar with the methods of biblical interpretation know full well that the mention of “types” in Scripture must be accounted for by any interpretive methodology that seeks to uncover the *meaning* of Scripture. But anyone who thinks they can arbitrarily see a “type” in any person, place, or event mentioned in the text of the Hebrew Scriptures will soon find themselves wading around in Origen’s subjectivity without hip boots. Therefore, most folks today take a hands-off approach and apply typological interpretation only where the New Testament text specifically states a “type” can be found in the Hebrew Scriptures.

That restricts the applicability of the term to Adam, the Tabernacle, and Israel wandering in the wilderness because those are the only “types” specifically mentioned in the New Testament [Editor: Acts 7:44; Rom. 5:14; 1 Cor. 10:6; Heb. 8:5]. If you want to include the term *antitype* in that list, you can add the Holy of Holies as an *antitype* of Heaven itself and the rite of baptism as an *antitype* of the Flood [Editor: Heb. 9:24; 1 Pet. 3:21]. In spite of that short list, you can still find more than a few morons willing to take the completely subjective route and apply the term *type* to a whole host of other things. Most people have a bit more common sense.

I’ve already mentioned the imbecile who wrote “The Epistle of Barnabas.” If you read his work carefully, noting the number of times he uses the word *type*, you will find he was enticed into speculation by the typological method of interpretation. That’s an extremely easy trap to fall into, especially if, like him, you have a bit of insight into the *parabolic images* of the Prophets but lack an accurate understanding of their connection to the Hebrew idioms that provide the basis for the overall message of Scripture.

The problem with applying the designation *type* to things found in the Hebrew Scriptures inheres in

knowing where it has legitimate application. That, in turn, depends directly on whether you know that some activity is *parabolic pantomime*. If you know where those activities are, you can sneak in the back door and apply the designation *type* after the fact. That's all the New Testament authors were doing. They understood the *meaning* of the *parabolic pantomimes* Jesus had revealed to them in the Hebrew Scriptures, so they said things in the *parabolic pantomimes* were "types" of the actual person, place, or event in history that God was referring to.

I've already discussed what Paul says about the *parabolic pantomime* of Sarah and Hagar. [Editor: See "They've Put God in a Box! (or So They Think)," *The Voice of Elijah*®, January 1993.] The Book of Hebrews states the Truth openly with regard to the pantomime in which God told Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. The Greek text says Abraham received Isaac back "in a parable" [Editor: Heb. 11:19]. Yet nobody understands what God has said in that *parabolic pantomime*.

Before you can readily identify all of the *parabolic pantomimes* in the Hebrew Scriptures, you need a lot more insight into the Hebrew idioms and *parabolic images* of the Prophets than I can give you here. But don't let that bother you. In some unfathomable way that I certainly can't understand, God is sticking to a strict timetable that will lead us right up to the Second Coming. As amazing as it may sound, we are right on schedule. So be patient. You will know what you need to know well before you need to know it, provided you don't get caught up in speculation. Trust me when I tell you there will be more than a few who hear what I teach and then choose to take that route to their own distorted version of the "truth."

The speculation of some will make no difference at all to what God has called me to accomplish among His Children. God knows how to deal with liars. I especially like what Peter said about God's plans for such people because he talks in terms of them forsaking "The Way" to follow "the way of Balaam." I know I've read the passage to you in several other contexts, but let me read it again. Listen to what he says:

But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. And many will follow their

*sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; and in {their} greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep. For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment; and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; and {if} He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing {them} to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly thereafter; and {if} He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men (for by what he saw and heard {that} righteous man, while living among them, felt {his} righteous soul tormented day after day with {their} lawless deeds), {then} the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment, and especially those who indulge the flesh in {its} corrupt desires and despise authority. Daring, self-willed, they do not tremble when they revile angelic majesties, whereas angels who are greater in might and power do not bring a reviling judgment against them before the Lord. **But these, like unreasoning animals, born as creatures of instinct to be captured and killed, reviling where they have no knowledge, will in the destruction of those creatures also be destroyed, suffering wrong as the wages of doing wrong. They count it a pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are stains and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, as they carouse with you, having eyes full of adultery and that never cease from sin, enticing unstable souls, having a heart trained in greed, accursed children; forsaking the right way they have gone astray, having followed the way of Balaam, the {son} of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness, but he received a rebuke for his own transgression; {for} a dumb donkey, speaking with a voice of a man, restrained the madness of the prophet. These are springs without water, and mists driven by a storm, for whom the black darkness has been reserved.***

(2 Peter 2:1-17)

Editor: That leads me to another question. How are the parabolic pantomimes of the Old Testament connected to God's future plans for the Church and this world? For instance, would you explain the significance of God sparing Noah and his "house" at the time of the Flood

and also His sparing of Lot and his “house” at the time of Sodom and Gomorrah’s destruction?

Elijah: Those are two fairly obvious *parabolic pantomimes*. Some will undoubtedly dispute the application of the term *pantomime* to disasters of that magnitude. However, both events have the one crucial ingredient that every *parabolic pantomime* requires—the direct intervention of God in human affairs. I’m not saying that every mention in the Hebrew Scriptures of God intervening in history is *parabolic pantomime*. I’m merely saying that, without the specific direction of God to control historical events, you don’t have a *parabolic pantomime* illustrating how one historical person, place, or event is LIKE another. You have nothing more than mere coincidence.

No matter what anyone might choose to believe, I don’t even have to argue the case for taking the Flood and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah as *parabolic pantomime*. Jesus plainly said the Second Coming will be just LIKE the days of Noah [Editor: Matt. 24:37; Luke 17:26]. That tells us that particular historical disaster provides at least one legitimate point of comparison with the Last Days. So the Flood in the days of Noah was a gigantic *parabolic pantomime*, a sort of “dry run” for the Flood that is yet to inundate this Earth when Jesus Christ returns. But Luke tells us Jesus LIKENED His Second Coming to not only the Flood but also the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Let me read what He said:

“And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it shall be also in the days of the Son of Man: they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. It was the same as happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building; but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed.”

(Luke 17:26–30)

That passage tells me a whole lot of people have a big surprise in store for them a little bit farther down the road. But I guess they already knew that. You

can’t tell some folks anything they don’t already know. Now that wasn’t nice, was it? I’m sorry—sorry they are too stupid to listen. They won’t believe it, but sarcasm is a basic part of my calling. God hates idiots who stubbornly refuse to listen when they have opportunity to hear the Truth. They have no idea as to the rage they incite in Him. I’m here to tell them beforehand how stupid they are so that when they finally “see” the Truth they will have no excuse.

You mentioned the *parabolic image* of “The House” in your question. Actually, “The House” image isn’t even a focus of those two *parabolic pantomimes*. As a matter of fact, if Lot had any sons, his “house,” that is, his wife and sons, was destroyed in the disaster. So the salvation of Lot’s “house” is obviously not the main point of the pantomime. The text does relate how his “house” was “built” again after the disaster through his incestuous relations with his daughters. But Scripture doesn’t use that particular idiom to tell us that. It uses another idiom that I have not mentioned previously. I don’t intend to *talk about* that idiom here either, because it relates to the *parabolic image* of a *remnant*, which is connected to the image of a “harvest,” which brings in the image of “bread.” I don’t have the time to explain even the basics of how all those images are interwoven with the *parabolic image* of “building a house.” Don’t worry, I will later on down the road. In regard to the Flood, the writer of the Book of Hebrews does mention “The House” of Noah was saved, but only in passing [Editor: Heb. 11:7].

One solitary idiom provides the key to understanding how the Flood and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah are LIKE the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. That is the idiom “to rain on.” You can find it used in a literal sense in Genesis 7:4 and 19:24. You can also find it used in an idiomatic sense throughout the Prophets. I’ve already explained the *parabolic image* of “rain” elsewhere, so I’m going to be intentionally cryptic here. Those who love *The Word of Truth* will go look up that explanation for themselves. Those who are confident they already know the Truth won’t bother.

The “rain” that is going to “fall” on the Earth in these Last Days is the “latter rain” [Editor: Joel 2:23] that the one called Elijah brings when he appears. That “rain” began to fall first as a fine mist. Then it became a gentle drizzle, and it will increase to a steady downpour before long. It will eventually

become a mighty torrent that will not stop until the “water” represented *parabolically* as “rain” completely inundates the Earth, destroying everyone not protected from the effects of that “deluge.”

That’s what Jesus was *talking about* in the parable about the wise man who “built his house” on the “rock.” He used the *parabolic image* of “The House” in that parable, however, because He was pointing to “The *parabolic House*” in which the Israelites hid on the first Passover. There will be those who hide in a “house” from the “rain” that comes down in the days leading up to the Second Coming just as Jesus said. However, the Passover image is not directly linked to the Flood or to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by the shared use of a Hebrew idiom. They are linked only indirectly by what Jesus and the Prophets have said concerning the Antichrist.

If you prefer to describe the Second Coming in terms of the *parabolic image* of the fire and brimstone that fell LIKE “rain” on Sodom and Gomorrah, the same gradual increase in intensity applies. So we can just as easily point to the natural disasters that will herald the Second Coming. There already has been, and will continue to be, an obvious increase in the number of unpleasant “acts of God” here on Earth. Storms and earthquakes will grow gradually more intense and destructive over the next several years until they usher in that final, most unpleasant “act of God” which only those who have heeded God’s warning will escape. Noah, Lot, and the people who escaped back then provide the “type” for those folks. But not everyone who hears the Truth will escape. That’s why Jesus told us not to look back as Lot’s wife did [Editor: Luke 17:32]. Believe it if you care to. Disbelieve it if you dare to. I don’t care one way or the other. I’m merely doing what God called me to do.

Editor: Having brought up the issue of Noah and Lot each having their “house” spared, I want to ask another question related to a person’s “house” being saved. Acts 16:23–34 contains an account of the jailer who falls before Paul and Silas in faith and asks, “What must I do to be saved?” They respond by saying, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household” (Acts 16:31). The implications of that statement seem to suggest that if the jailer were to have faith, then his “house” would also be saved as well. However, the jailer obviously had no power to believe on behalf of his

family, so in what sense could Paul speak with confidence that the jailer’s “house” would be “saved” if he believed? If the “head” of a “house” has great individual faith, does that person’s faith garner any kind of special favor on behalf of his “house” before God? Acts 11:14 also speaks in similar terms.

Elijah: It never ceases to amaze me how people who have no idea how the Scriptures should be read can come away with a definite opinion concerning what the Scriptures have said. They can’t even see that they are projecting their own thoughts and opinions onto Scripture. So how could they possibly “see” what lies hidden in the Hebrew Scriptures? They would do well to heed a couple of passages in the New Testament that are fairly easy to understand. The first is what the writer of the Book of Hebrews has said about the Word of God. Listen to what he says:

For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.
(Hebrews 4:12–13)

The point of that *parabolic statement* is extremely simple. I’ve explained it in various ways elsewhere. The “Word of God” he has in mind is Jesus Christ Himself. That Word of God has been completely hidden in the Hebrew Scriptures for the past eighteen centuries. I realize some folks today mistakenly claim they can still “see” Him here or there in the Old Testament because He is partially revealed in the New Testament. Those people are completely deluded. The most important statement made in the passage I just read is this: The Word of God is not dead. He is alive, waiting to come to life in anyone who believes *The Word of Truth* that He is. But they must first “see” Him as “Light” [Editor: John 1:1–14].

That’s a *parabolic* explanation of an incredible reality that I cannot even begin to understand, much less explain in any other way. Under those circumstances, however, I would not care to be the one who casually explains some “truth” he *thinks* he has “seen” in Scripture. The *Living “Word”* of God that lies hidden in

the Hebrew Scriptures is *parabolically* LIKE a “sword.” He is going to hew into little bitty pieces any liar who takes on the task of teaching without first *receiving* authority as a Teacher in God’s Church. [Editor: See “What’s Left of the Right That Stayed Down When He Went Up?” *The Voice of Elijah*® *Update*, September 1995.] I’ll let others decide if they have that authority. What’s that saying? “Fools rush in....”

The second passage I want to mention is Paul’s admonition to Timothy. Listen to this:

Remind {them} of these things, and solemnly charge {them} in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless, {and leads} to the ruin of the hearers. Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.
(2 Timothy 2:14–15)

Keep in mind the fact that Timothy was Paul’s disciple, which *means* Paul had already explained *The Apostolic Teaching* to him. Therefore, Paul told him to remind others of what they had heard him teach and to warn them not to engage in destructive “theological discussion” concerning the possible *meaning* of individual words in the Scriptures. Paul had in mind especially those among us who feel it is their God-given obligation to make sure that everybody “sees” the same “truth” that they think they “see.” But notice what Paul says next. He tells Timothy to be diligent in fulfilling his calling by “handling accurately the word of truth.” The “word of truth” he had in mind is the *Living* “Word of God” mentioned by the author of the Book of Hebrews. It is the Word that lies hidden in the Hebrew Scriptures.

Now I ask you: If Timothy got his understanding of the Truth from the Apostle Paul and Paul got his straight from the Word Himself as he says he did in Galatians [Editor: Gal. 1:12], why would Paul need to admonish Timothy concerning “handling accurately the word of truth”? I’ll tell you why. Because it is extremely easy to overlook some crucial element related to a particular passage and thus end up believing a lie or, worse yet, teaching one. God called me to the specific “task” of *restoring* and teaching *The Apostolic Teaching*, yet I still run into that difficulty all the time even after twenty years of insight into the various Hebrew idioms and *parabolic images*.

Believe me when I tell you one very profound Truth. Given a billion years and the most powerful computers mankind could ever develop, the religious idiots of this world could never decipher the marvelously simple code that conceals the Truth of the Word hidden in the Hebrew Scriptures. I can tell you that with absolute certainty because I know the one thing about fools that prevents them from ever accomplishing that “task.” For all their pious pronouncements to the contrary, they don’t want to know the Truth. They want what they already believe to be true. That’s why they don’t go to the Scriptures looking for Truth. They go looking for confirmation.

With the exception of the Protestant doctrine of salvation by faith and my confidence in the reality of the new birth that God gave me thirty-five years ago, I gave up everything I ever believed or had been taught about the Scriptures a long time ago. So I know that anyone who wants to know the Truth is going to have to do exactly the same thing. There are just too many lies in the Church today, and most of them are nothing more than a slightly-bent version of the Truth. The father of all lies has long since seen to that. But let me get back to your question.

The way you approach the Scriptures determines whether or not you come away with the Truth. I’ve explained why that is in *The Way, The Truth, The Life*, but let me summarize it again. The Scriptures are a historical record of God’s dealings with mankind. But that record contains various types of literature.

There is, first of all, historical narrative on the one hand and Hebrew poetry on the other. You can’t read those two genre of literature in the same way. If you do, you’re an absolute idiot as far as understanding the Truth of God is concerned. Second, you have historical narrative text written in the first and third person. Those are sitting right alongside prophetic narrative text written in the first and third person. You can’t read any one of those four kinds of texts the same way. Finally, you find both human and divine discourse embedded not only in historical narrative and poetic texts but also in prophetic narrative and poetic texts.

That last eight-way combination snags everybody in one way or another. The trouble is, if you accord the words of an unbeliever the same value as those of a Believer, you are believing a lie of one kind or another. But if you imbue the speech of man with the same authority you accord the direct discourse of

God Himself through a Prophet or Apostle, you are an absolute moron. The Book of Job is considered by many to be the most obscure book in the Bible merely because it is a prophetic book containing narrative and poetic text in which you find Job, his wife, his three friends, Satan, and God speaking. Beyond that, most of the speakers are using Hebrew idioms and speaking in terms of the *parabolic imagery* of the Prophets. So, if you understand the message of the Book of Job, you undoubtedly understand all seven of the messages hidden in the Hebrew Scriptures.

Your question concerning the salvation of a "house" relates to discourses in the Book of Acts. That is historical narrative, which is the least likely place to find anything other than a record of historical events whose sole purpose is to provide a framework so that you can understand statements made elsewhere by God Himself, or by His Prophets and Apostles. The most likely place to find what you are seeking is in a prophetic text, in a general statement: (1) addressed to the entire body of Believers; and (2) made by a Prophet, an Apostle, or God Himself.

Now the statements you referred to were made, in the one case, by the Apostle Paul; in the other, by a messenger from God. On that basis alone, we know they contain the authoritative Word of God. So the question then becomes, "To whom were the statements made, to all Believers or to someone in particular?" If a statement found in Scripture was made to one specific individual or group of individuals in one specific circumstance, it has no definite applicability beyond that specific individual or group, and certainly not outside those same circumstances. If that applicability exists, it must be shown from some other prophetic or apostolic text.

In both of the cases you mentioned, the statements were made to specific individuals in specific circumstances. Therefore, they have no definite applicability to anyone else. You can totally disregard them as far as doctrinal formulation is concerned. Both statements must be taken as prophetic descriptions of what would happen to one specific individual in one specific circumstance. *The promise* of God was: If the "head" would willingly take the first step and believe, the rest of his "house" would follow. That *promise* of God does not apply to other Believers in other circumstances. If it did, God would not have said what He did in the eighteenth chapter of the

Book of Ezekiel about the individual repentance that is required for participation in the New Covenant. There you find a prophetic text and the very words of God Himself. You can certainly use that to formulate doctrine, provided you accurately understand the *meaning* and *significance* of that particular biblical text.

Should you doubt that what I have just said about the narrative account in the Book of Acts is true, listen to what Paul said to the Corinthians:

*But to the rest I say, not the Lord, that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, let him not send her away. And a woman who has an unbelieving husband, and he consents to live with her, let her not send her husband away. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified through her believing husband; for otherwise your children are unclean, but now they are holy. Yet if the unbelieving one leaves, let him leave; the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such {cases,} but God has called us to peace. For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save your wife?
(1 Corinthians 7:12-16)*

That certainly rules out the possibility that God automatically "saves" an entire "House" through the saving faith of the "head" of "The House," doesn't it? Now I realize some ignorant individual will ignore the obvious Truth I have stated and try to make an issue of what Paul said about a spouse being "sanctified" and children being "holy" instead of "unclean." However, if such a pedant actually knew as much as he pretends to, he would already know that holiness is not the same as righteousness. Therefore, it is not even relevant to what we are *talking about* here.

Righteousness comes by faith; sanctification by contact. Even dirt can be sanctified, unless of course you choose to believe Moses stood on a heap of holy bedouin while he looked at the burning bush [Editor: Ex. 3:5]. But I guess those folks already knew that. You can't tell some people anything they don't already know. Just in case some didn't know, however, I should tell you Paul is *talking about* people gaining holiness through intimate contact with the *Living Word* of God. A Believer easily gives that to his or her children and spouse just by living with them. ■