



Seen Any Good Gods Lately?

But perhaps these declarations may seem to have less weight with those who wish to be instructed in divine things out of the holy Scriptures, and who seek to have it proved to them from that source how the nature of God surpasses the nature of bodies. See, therefore, if the apostle does not say the same thing, when, speaking of Christ, he declares, that "He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature."

Not, as some suppose, that the nature of God is visible to some and invisible to others: for the apostle does not say "the image of God invisible" to men or "invisible" to sinners, but with unvarying constancy pronounces on the nature of God in these words: "the image of the invisible God."

Moreover, John, in his Gospel, when asserting that "no one hath seen God at any time," manifestly declares to all who are capable of understanding, that there is no nature to which God is visible: not as if He were a being who was visible by nature, and merely escaped or baffled the view of a frailer creature, but because by the nature of His being it is impossible for Him to be seen.

And if you should ask of me what is my opinion regarding the Only-begotten Himself, whether the nature of God, which is naturally invisible, be not visible even to Him, let not such a question appear to you at once to be either absurd or impious, because we shall give you a logical reason.

It is one thing to see, and another to know: to see and to be seen is a property of bodies; to know and to be known, an attribute of intellectual being. Whatever,

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therefore, is a property of bodies, cannot be predicated either of the Father or of the Son; but what belongs to the nature of deity is common to the Father and the Son.

Finally, even He Himself, in the Gospel, did not say that no one has seen the Father, save the Son, nor any one the Son, save the Father; but His words are: "No one knoweth the Son, save the Father; nor any one the Father, save the Son."

By which it is clearly shown, that whatever among bodily natures is called seeing and being seen, is termed, between the Father and the Son, a knowing and being known, by means of the power of knowledge, not by the frailness of the sense of sight.

Because, then, neither seeing nor being seen can be properly applied to an incorporeal and invisible nature, neither is the Father, in the Gospel, said to be seen by the Son, nor the Son by the Father, but the one is said to be known by the other.

Here, if any one lay before us the passage where it is said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God," from that very passage in my opinion, will our position derive additional strength; for what else is seeing God in heart, but, according to our exposition as above, understanding and knowing Him with the mind?

Origen, "De Principiis," Book i, Chap. ii, in Roberts and Donaldson (Eds.), *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (1885), Vol. 4, p. 245.

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A Note From the Editor

In the last issue of the newsletter, I said that most readers of the Bible are highly unobservant. That is, they pay little attention to details in the biblical text. One reason is, they read the Scriptures too quickly. Rather than reading in a slow, contemplative manner, they read as though they were competing in a speed-reading contest. The end result is, they often overlook obvious Truth, Truth that is lying right on the surface for everyone to see. This is especially true in the New Testament where God's "treasure" has not been "sealed," as it has been in the Old Testament.

Another reason most students of the Bible pay little attention to detail is because they think they already know what the Bible says. Consequently, they don't go to the text to listen to what it says, they go seeking to have their current beliefs confirmed. Ultimately, their assumptions and preconceived ideas become blinders that keep them from seeing what is actually stated.

If you learn nothing else from *The Voice of Elijah*®, you should at least learn this: Assumptions and preconceived ideas about what the Bible says will ultimately send billions to Hell. Therefore, you would be wise not to assume anything. Your faith should never be based on assumptions. It should be based on the absolute certainty that you know and understand the Truth, which is why paying close attention to detail is so important. The Scriptures claim to be telling the Truth. If you have to assume something you believe is true, that can only mean you see nothing in the Scriptures to confirm that it actually is true.

In this issue of the newsletter, I want to share a few more things I learned years ago which have helped me to better read and study the Bible for myself. Since I'm no great authority in this area, what I have to say is going to be pretty simple. It's simple enough that laymen can apply these principles to their own Bible study and benefit from them. However, I want to stress that nothing I say is going to eliminate your need to be taught the Truth by a legitimate Teacher called by God. It can only help you validate whether or not the things you hear taught are true. Remember, your faith should be based on the absolute certainty that you've heard the Truth, not on some assumption.

A Few Comments About Bible Translations

Before I get started, let me say a few things about Bible translations. Everyone knows there are many different translations of the Bible (King James Version, New International Version, Revised Standard Version, New American Standard Bible, etc.). You must understand that every translation is, to some extent, a reflection of the translator's own beliefs about the Bible. Contrary to what you may think, trying to produce an

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accurate translation is not always the translator's foremost concern.

For instance, if a translator feels that a particular passage doesn't make sense, or that it doesn't read well in the original writings, he may decide to "clear up" the ambiguity by presenting his own version (interpretation) of what he thinks the text is saying. This "readability factor" often leads the translator to take liberties with the meaning of the various Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek words he is translating. The more "readable" a translator tries to make his version of the Bible, the more likely he is to interject traditional beliefs or, in some cases, his own personal beliefs into the text. (Those of us who are Next Step participants have already seen examples of this.)

The point I'm making is that all translations of the Bible are flawed to one extent or another. How badly they are flawed varies from version to version. In my opinion, the worst possible version of the Bible you can use for study is a paraphrased Bible (The Good News Bible, The Living Bible, The Phillips Bible, etc.). These versions are nothing more than translations of a translation. They may be easy to read (because everything is paraphrased), but they are too unreliable to trust because the personal beliefs of the author are often reflected in the wording of the text. I suggest you stay away from them if you want to understand what the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek text has to say.

The New American Standard Bible (NASB) is my personal favorite. I settled on the NASB as my primary study Bible several years before I became associated with *The Voice of Elijah*®. I picked it for one reason: I believed its translation came closest to replicating the wording of the original manuscripts. Years later, when I became a subscriber to *The Voice of Elijah*®, I was pleased to learn their view of the NASB was much the same as my own.

Regardless of which Bible version you use for study (it doesn't hurt to have two or three different ones at your disposal), you need to realize two things. (1) No English-language version is perfectly accurate because, as the saying goes, "You always lose something in the translation." Nonetheless,

most translations are fairly accurate and well worth your time to read and study. (2) No matter how diligently you study the Bible for yourself, you still need to hear the message of Scripture explained by a legitimate Teacher called by God. God would never have established the role of the Teacher in the Church if that were not the case.

The difficulty you face in putting yourself under the tutelage of a teacher is in knowing whether that person is actually teaching you the Truth. If you are a born-again Believer, the Bible and the Holy Spirit within you are the only things you have that can "testify" as to whether a teacher is speaking the Truth. The Holy Spirit testifies internally (within you), and the Bible testifies externally (through written words). Therefore, the more knowledgeable you are in regard to what is stated in Scripture, the more powerful the testimony of the Bible and the Holy Spirit will be. This is why paying attention to detail is so important when you are reading Scripture.

When I speak of "attention to detail," I'm talking about your need to notice specific things in the text. I don't pretend to know everything you should be looking for in the biblical text, but I am aware that certain things have helped me see that what I have been taught so far is the Truth. I want to share some of those things with you. Since I won't be able to complete all of my thoughts in this issue, I will continue what I start here over the next two or three issues.

What Should You Look For?

Here is a short list of things you should be noticing as you read Scripture. Look for:

- ▲ *stated reasons why something is the way it is.*
- ▲ *how something is accomplished.*
- ▲ *conditions that must be met (i.e., what must be done).*
- ▲ *who is being spoken to, or spoken about.*
- ▲ *contrasts and comparisons between two things.*
- ▲ *exceptions or restrictions.*
- ▲ *repeated words and phrases.*
- ▲ *cause and effect.*
- ▲ *conclusions or summaries.*

This is by no means an exhaustive list of things you should notice when reading the Scriptures, but it's a good start. These things may appear simplistic to some; they may seem complex to others. They are neither. They are not simplistic because when you actually start paying attention to these things, you will glean a lot more information from the time you spend in study. They are not all that complex because in many cases, you can find the things on the list by simply looking for specific words and phrases. The key words and phrases I'm talking about often indicate that something worth noting is in the vicinity. So if you will train yourself to look for these key words and phrases as you read through Scripture, you will be amazed at what you start to see. (You might even begin to see that *The Voice of Elijah*® is not as heretical as some would like you to think.)

A Key Word to Get You Started

One key word that I look for continually as I read Scripture is the word *because*. I like this simple word *because* it lets me know that a reason for something is being given. The reason given always answers the question "Why?" So, once I spot it, I know it's going to lead me straight to an explanation of *why* something is this, that, or the other. For instance, look at this statement by Jesus:

*"The world cannot hate you; but it hates Me because I testify of it, that its deeds are evil."
(John 7:7)*

Notice how the word *because* is used in that verse. It links a specific statement of fact ("the world hates Me") with the specific reason for that fact ("because I testify that its deeds are evil"). You may not have thought about it before, but this is the only way the word *because* is ever used. It always unites a specific thought to a specific reason *why* that thought is true. If you will take the time when you are reading the Bible to look for the word *because* (and a few other phrases I'm going to mention later), you will most likely start to see reasons for things you may never have noticed before.

Since we tend to read Scripture rather quickly, and we all have preconceived ideas about what it says, it is easy for us to overlook clearly stated reasons. That's why looking for a key word like *because* is so helpful. It acts like a flag, signaling us to stop and take notice that a reason is being given. And when men like Jesus Christ and the Apostles give us specific reasons for things they believe and understand, we would be wise to take notice.

Do You Want to Know Why?

Do you know how and why God loves us as individuals? If you believe what is being taught in the Church today, you undoubtedly think it's because He has unconditional love for everyone. If you believe *The Voice of Elijah*®, however, you already know the concept of God's unconditional love was contrived in the minds of sinful men. That is, it does not come out of the Scriptures. The Scriptures plainly state that God loves only His Son Jesus Christ and all those *in the Son* who have responded to the Father by repenting and believing the Gospel. The question is, Which teaching is correct?

Well, there are many places in the Bible where God's love is mentioned. But if we are to accurately answer the question above, we must get our answer from those passages that specifically tell us *why* God loves us. Any passage that speaks concerning the nature of God's love, or the greatness of His love, etc., will not provide the specific answer we seek.

Are there any verses in the Scriptures that tell us specifically why God loves us? Yes, there are. And those verses were spoken by Jesus Himself. As you read the following passage, look for the key word *because* and then use it to answer the question: *Why* does God love those whom He loves?

*"In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I will request the Father on your behalf; for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from the Father."
(John 16:26-27)*

You can slice and dice this passage any way you want to, but you can't change the fact that Jesus said there is a specific reason *why* God loved the Apostles. He did not say God already loved them, as does the heretical concept that He has unconditional love for everyone. He says God loved them *because* they loved Christ and believed that He came forth from God. It is self-evident that, if God loves us all unconditionally before we repent and believe, Jesus' statement could not possibly be true.

Unconditional love, by definition, means there is no condition you must meet for God to love you. According to that lie, as it is taught in the Church today, the person who doesn't love Christ or believe that He came forth from God is still loved unconditionally by God. Yet Jesus has clearly stated that is not the case. And this is not the only place where He has made such a statement. He says essentially the same thing in the following two verses:

"He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him."

(John 14:21)

Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him."

(John 14:23)

Even though the word *because* is missing in these two verses, it is still obvious that Jesus has given the reason *why* God loves us as individuals. It is exactly the same reason He gave before. God's love for an individual is based on whether that person loves Christ. (An astute reader will also pick up the fact that to love Christ an individual must "keep the commandments"—if you know what that particular Hebrew idiom means.)

Closing Point

The Bible gives all kinds of reasons for things. Looking for the word *because* is an easy way to find

some of them, but it's not going to locate them all. Not by a long shot. Nonetheless, with over 1300 uses of the word *because* in the entire Bible (NASB version), it's a good place to start. I challenge you to start looking for other stated reasons for things as you read the Bible. I suggest you do so in the New Testament *because* that "treasure" is not buried as deep as it is in the Old Testament. As we just saw, it is often lying right out on the surface where it confirms things you have already been taught.

If you have difficulty discerning whether a specific reason for something is being given, just ask yourself if the text is explaining *why* something is a certain way. It will also help if you look for phrases like *in order that*, *so that*, *for this reason*, and *for this purpose*. These phrases almost always indicate that a reason or purpose for something will follow immediately. In the New Testament alone, these four phrases are used a total of 302 times (NASB version). When you combine that with the 361 uses of the word *because* that also occur in the New Testament, you have good reason to pay closer attention to what is being said. If you're not afraid to write in your Bible, I suggest you highlight the word *because*, and the other phrases I mentioned above, when you find them. (I like to circle them in my Bible.) Once they have been highlighted, they stand out and are easy to spot later. Believe it or not, having key words and phrases jump off the page at you while you're reading is more helpful than you might think. Try it; I think you'll like it.

In the next issue, I want to give you several more key words and phrases you can look for. Until then, I wish you the best in your efforts to become a better biblical detective.

Allen Fried

The Sad, Sordid History of the People of God

This is the first in a series of articles that, when complete, will explain how the ancient Hebrew idioms “build/make a house,” “raise up a seed,” and “raise up/make a name” both conceal and reveal the first of seven messages God has hidden in the Hebrew Scriptures. Recommended reading for this series includes Michael David Coogan’s *Stories From Ancient Canaan* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1978) and N. K. Sandars’ *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (London: Penguin Books, 1972). Academically minded readers might also want to consult John Gibson’s revision of G.R. Driver’s *Canaanite Myths and Legends* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, Ltd., 1977).

Introduction

The above-mentioned works of Coogan and Gibson contain translations of some of the longer Canaanite mythological texts discovered at Ras Shamra (ancient Ugarit) in the years between 1929 and 1939. Coogan’s work gives both a translation and an interpretation of the original texts. Gibson provides a transliteration of the texts along with a literal translation. However, both men make unwarranted assumptions that undermine the validity of their translations, as I will explain below.

In this series, I will provide my own translation of the texts I quote, including the Hebrew Scriptures. I have to do that for the Canaanite texts because all other translations of these texts are protected by copyright. I include my own translation of the Hebrew Scriptures because specific words and idioms in the original language need to be imbued with a more salient English *meaning* than they are normally given.

At times, however, I am going to do nothing more than transliterate a Hebrew term and tell you what the term *means*. That way, you can read the text for yourself without having your understanding diminished by my use of an inaccurate English term that imparts an erroneous connotation to the text.

The importance of the clay tablets discovered at the ancient city of Ugarit lies in their subject matter. Several of them describe the death and resurrection of the Canaanite god Baal. Although some of the tablets were broken and had to be pieced back together, that is nothing compared to the many other factors that make their interpretation so difficult. For example, by the time they were found, much of the cuneiform writing on them had been etched away by centuries of exposure to moisture. However, even that is not the most imposing obstacle scholars have had to overcome.

The most severe impediment to understanding the Ugaritic texts uncovered at Ras Shamra is the fact that scholars do not know what purpose the texts served. Also, since many of the Baal texts were written by the same scribe, scholars have assumed that they are part of the same sequence of texts. That assumption is not valid. However, without an accurate understanding of the Hebrew idioms “build a house,” “raise up a seed,” and “make a name,” it is impossible for anyone—scholar and layman alike—to understand why these mythological texts were never intended to be understood that way.

I am going to explain in layman’s terms the Canaanite culture/religion that stands behind both these Canaanite texts and the Hebrew Scriptures. I do not make that claim idly, so pay close attention. Even the most learned scholars do not understand the mind-set that gave rise to the ancient mystery religions

in general and the message of the Hebrew Scriptures in specific. Only after I have completed my work will you be able to appreciate the incredibly rich *mythological imagery* the Prophets of Israel used to speak concerning Jesus Christ. I know my claims make me appear to be either arrogant, ridiculous, or suffering from serious delusions. They were *meant* to. However, the God Who called me has ensured that I have academic credentials equal to the best of them. So it's clear He intends to use what I teach to reveal the theories of proud but ignorant scholars for exactly what they are—the vain imagination of fools.

Now I realize my explanation of the seven messages hidden in the Hebrew Scriptures is not only subject to dispute, it is extremely controversial. So it will certainly be disputed. That's to be expected. Most folks would rather argue over minute details than agree with the obvious. So their kind will no doubt reject what I have to say. However, scholars only vaguely understand the Babylonian, Canaanite, Greek, and Hebrew texts from which I got my information. That is in spite of decades spent trying to understand the areas of biblical theology, Sumerology, Egyptology, Assyriology, Ugaritic mythology, comparative religion, and half a dozen other related fields. But their lack of insight is due, in large part, to the fact that they haven't yet been able to discern the *meaning* and *significance* of the various semitic idioms I am going to explain to you. If that notion seems farfetched, perhaps you should read what the Apostle Paul said about God making fools of the wise:

Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?
(1 Corinthians 1:20)

The ignorance of scholars concerning the things I teach doesn't concern me in the least. They wouldn't accept my explanation even if they had it explained to them. That's why I am not seeking to "prove" anything to them, or to anyone else for that matter. I'm only doing what God called me to do: I'm disseminating information, specifically, a detailed explanation of the vast body of "evidence" in the Hebrew Scriptures. God wants certain folks to understand the *meaning* of that evidence before the End. So He sent me to explain it to them.

You'll know if my explanation of the Scriptures is *meant* for you. It will make sense, and you will believe it. If it isn't *meant* for you, it won't make a bit of sense, and you won't believe it. But that's your choice. I've already told you "evidence" is the only objective thing. ["The Demons Also Believe (Poor Devils!)" *The Voice of Elijah*®, October 1991.] "Proof" is entirely subjective. It exists only in your mind. That is, whether or not you think something "proves" something else depends entirely on whether you find a particular explanation of the evidence convincing. That being the case, please don't bother writing me a pseudo-intellectual request asking for more "proof" of the things I write. If that's your mind-set, it's obvious God did not call me to teach you anything.

So there it is. In God's wisdom, He called me to do but one thing. That's the only thing I'm going to do. I'm going to put together an explanation of all the evidence God has gathered against you. Then, after I've done what God called me to do, He will Himself be along to judge you on the basis of whether or not you have admitted my explanation of the evidence against you is true. The Final Judgment will certainly "prove" to you once and for all time that it is true. Unfortunately, that will be a bit too late for your belief to do you any good. However, if you honestly believe what I teach, you will have already asked for and received the clemency of that Supreme Court.

Have I left sufficient room for anyone to misunderstand the claims I make concerning my calling? Undoubtedly. Most would rather believe I have a mental problem. Consequently, they will not even bother seriously considering my explanation of the evidence. But the God Who called me did not call me to teach morons. And by the time I have fulfilled my calling, only the morons among us will continue to refuse to believe that the God of the Bible is a God consumed by a fiery, burning wrath instead of the goofy god of unconditional love they want to go on believing He is (contrary, I might add, to the evidence one finds in the Scriptures).

There. Is that plain enough for you? The God of wrath Who created us all and will soon destroy the Wicked sent me to do exactly what I am doing—mock and ridicule those who think they are much more intelligent and sophisticated than they actually are. He did not call me to teach anyone who cannot recognize and admit their own ignorance. That includes

anyone who finds my use of terms like *stupid*, *idiot*, and *moron* even the slightest bit offensive—which only goes to show you the depth of God’s rage.

Let me do one additional bit of housekeeping for the benefit of those misguided souls who think the Apostles and Prophets wrote the King James Version. When I refer to the Hebrew Scriptures, I have in mind those books of Scripture that Christians usually call the Old Testament. By the same token, I normally call the New Testament the Greek Scriptures. I use that terminology to emphasize the fact that the Truth of the scriptural message lies hidden in the original languages in which they were written. It cannot be found in some translation, no matter how terrific anyone considers that translation to be.

My point is, although the Old Testament exists in various languages, the Hebrew Scriptures exist in only one. The same applies to the Greek Scriptures. Purists may find fault with the nomenclature I have chosen. So be it. Let them use whatever designation they find more appropriate. I’ll continue to use what I have chosen. I realize the Hebrew Scriptures have a bit of Aramaic mixed in. As a matter of fact, an even smaller amount of several other ancient languages is scattered around in them. But by and large, the Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew or, if you want to be even more picky, a Canaanite dialect we call Hebrew. Now that I’ve gotten that out of the way, let’s move on.

A Silent Witness to Change

It is an undeniable verity that the one sure thing in life is change. People change. Places change. Things change. People, places, and things—these are what make history history. But the trouble with history is, it leaves behind so few witnesses to testify concerning what used to be. And then there is always the idiot factor, that is, those ill-advised folks who ignorantly twist the testimony of the few surviving witnesses so that it better agrees with what they believe should have been. Yet in spite of the idiot factor, a multitude of silent witnesses continue to offer testimony for the benefit of all who have ears to hear.

The Hebrew Scriptures—the Christian Old Testament—is one such surviving witness. It stands today much as it has for the past 2500 years, silently testifying concerning Ages past. And the idiot factor

continues to believe it proclaims a benign message about a god of unconditional love. However, they do so only because they have chosen to believe that is what should have been. The Truth is, no matter how desperately those folks want to believe that lie, the Hebrew Scriptures tell quite a different story. They describe the God of Israel in no uncertain terms, and they tell us He is a God of unmitigated wrath.

Think about it: Change is the price we all pay for participating in history. And one day you, too, will be “history.” Just like everything else, you will fall prey to the inevitable “here today and gone tomorrow.” That’s a sobering thought, isn’t it? Like it or not, you will eventually submit to that sudden change. Face the facts, folks. You are going to shed your mortal body just as surely as a snake sheds its skin. That’s when you will be forced to deal with the angry God of Israel.

People, places, and things. They all change. You really should remember that. It’s important. But it is also important to keep in mind the fact that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob does not change. I didn’t say that, somebody else did. And if you’ve done your homework, you already know Who that certain someone was. Yet the idiot factor has twisted even that simple Truth to their own ignorant ends. That’s why most church-goers today prefer to believe that *means “The Way”* God deals with mankind will never change. Those folks are in for a big surprise. It’ll be along shortly. But first, God intends to tidy up a bit in regard to the nasty little issue of ignorant people distorting the testimony of the Hebrew Scriptures.

The Hebrew Scriptures have an easily understood tale to tell, and their tale will definitely be told before the End. It doesn’t matter whether or not you want to listen. You will eventually hear it anyway. And that will occur in spite of the temporarily comforting twist the idiot factor has applied to what God has said. So you can listen to the testimony of the Hebrew Scriptures now or, if you prefer, you can listen to it later—when it can’t possibly do you any good to know the Truth.

Did I mention things changing? I’m sure I did, but I’ve written so many things over the past few years that I sometimes forget what I’ve said. Actually, that’s not true. It was just a facetious transition to this: Over the past year and a half, various things have changed in regard to my calling. I’m not exactly sure

what all those “things” are right now. Understanding will undoubtedly come later. It usually does. Although I don’t understand everything right now, I do know that eighteen months ago I could never have stated openly what I explained in the last issue of this newsletter. I have in mind my explanation of the Book of Job. The same holds true for what I am going to tell you in these pages over the next several years.

You see, after seven years of writing about it in a cryptic, little-bit-here-little-bit-there fashion, I am now free to explain the sometimes sordid story the Hebrew Scriptures tell about how God “built *The House*” of Israel. You know—“*The House*.” That’s the first of the seven messages God concealed in the Hebrew Scriptures. (See “Did Jesus Leave a Will?” *The Voice of Elijah*®, July 1991.)

The Scriptures’ chronicle of how God “built *The House*” of Israel is, at its heart, a sarcastic mockery of the ridiculous religion the ancient Canaanites firmly believed and enthusiastically practiced. I’ll tell you all about their religion over the next few years. It’s a torrid tale of how idiot folk strived to attain eternal life by piously reciting religious pornography, religiously engaging in sexual intercourse with sacred prostitutes working out of the church-house, and inhumanely sacrificing bastard children intentionally conceived during sacred sex rites.

Now that I think about it, Canaanite beliefs are not a whole lot more ridiculous than folks today thinking they merit the Resurrection of the Righteous just because they warm a church pew two or three times a week. Small wonder. Religious fools have been with us ever since Adam chose Eve over God. So if all my talk about the seamy side of Canaanite religion is a bit too much for the saintly disposition you undoubtedly acquired while gracing a cold pew with your most holy backside, you should probably stop reading right now. Don’t even bother reading the next paragraph. What I’ve described so far is nothing compared to what I have yet to tell you about sacred sex rites and the ancient Israelites. But if you feel you have the stomach for more, sit back and relax. The worst is yet to come.

For the benefit of all who have decided to stay the course, let me remind you again of something I have stated elsewhere. (See *The Way, The Truth, The Life* listed on the Order Form.) The only way anyone will ever understand the Hebrew Scriptures is to first

understand the culture and religion of the people living at the time they were written. I’ve already told you the culture and religion that informs the first five books—the Books of Moses—is Egyptian. I’ll open that can of worms down the road a bit. Egyptian beliefs provide insight into the Hebrew idioms and *mythological images* that stand behind the second and third messages hidden in the Hebrew Scriptures—“*The Way*” and “*The Light*.” Before I can explain those messages, however, I have to explain the first message—“*The House*.” To understand that message, you need to know a few things about Canaanite beliefs. Those beliefs shed incredible light on statements the Prophets made.

You see, the Prophets use various Hebrew idioms, all with specific *meaning*, to tell the intricately detailed story of a male Child—the One Moses calls “the Man”—Whom the God of Israel *promised* King David He would engender for him through a virgin. Those Hebrew idioms are all based on images found in the myths and sacred rituals of the ancient Canaanites. As the story of the Prophets unfolds, however, we are also told that because of the circumstances of His birth, the Man Whom God was going to engender would not be His Son. He would first be the son of David and only afterward the Son of God. That is, the text tells us how God, after He has acted as David’s “Redeemer” by “raising up a seed” for him, would then demand that this “son of David” be “given” to Him by means of ritual sacrifice. That Son of David would thereby be used to “build a house” for “*The Name*” of God.

Everything I have just told you (and a whole lot more) lies hidden in the Hebrew idioms and *mythological images* I am going to show you in the Hebrew Scriptures. Should you view the things I teach as a mere intellectual curiosity, I remind you once again why these things were hidden. The Prophets intentionally concealed them to mock those who refused to believe what they heard. If that shoe fits you quite comfortably, let me point out one of the more elegant details that God Himself stitched into its uppers:

*The kings of the earth take their stand,
And the rulers take counsel together
Against the LORD and against His Anointed:
“Let us tear their fetters apart,
And cast away their cords from us!”*

*He who sits in the heavens laughs,
The Lord scoffs at them.
Then He will speak to them in His anger
And terrify them in His fury.
(Psalm 2:2–5)*

That doesn't sound like the goofy god of unconditional love you hear taught in the Church today, does it? That's because the god worshiped in most churches today isn't the God the Prophets describe in the Hebrew Scriptures. If you didn't know that already, you should spend more time reading the Old Testament. Unfortunately, if you don't understand the message of the Old Testament you can't fully appreciate that of the New.

For example, without an understanding of the message of "The House" that lies hidden in the Hebrew Scriptures, the fact that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was a virgin when she conceived her firstborn son holds no more *significance* than any other miracle of God. And lacking a knowledge of all the pertinent information the Prophets provide in the Hebrew Scriptures, you would forever remain ignorant of the fact that God actually "built *The House*" of David twice. The first time, He "built" it in the sense that the Hebrew idiom conveys when used to refer to Canaanite religious drama; the second time in the sense it conveys when used to refer to the spiritual reality the religious drama was *meant* to influence.

Is that confusing? Most likely. And it will continue to be for quite some time to come because nearly everything in the first message depends on your understanding of something else in the first message. That's why I have struggled for over twenty years trying to piece together statements the Prophets have made here and there in the Hebrew Scriptures. Yet I am still seeing pieces of the puzzle come together even now.

It will probably take me two or three years to explain everything you need to understand before the first message comes into perfect focus. No one piece of evidence is conclusive in itself, but all of it will ultimately fit together in one coherent whole. So I am not going to take the ridiculous "proof text" route and "prove" individual points by quoting Scripture like a parrot. I am merely going to explain what certain passages are *talking about*. Therefore, you may find it somewhat of a stretch to understand why I am

explaining certain things here at the beginning. After I've explained the basics of "The House" message, however, you can reread these earlier segments. They should make more sense then.

Have You Considered These Things?

I have told you repeatedly that your accurate understanding of the seven messages hidden in the Hebrew Scriptures depends on your insight into the *meaning* of various Hebrew idioms. However, you can gain that insight only by visualizing the *parabolic image* that corresponds to each idiom. For the time being, I am going to concentrate on explaining "The House" image that stands behind the Hebrew idiom "build/make a house." The other two idioms that help to conceal "The House" message—"raise up a seed" and "raise up/make a name"—have much the same *meaning* as "build a house," but they look at the same concepts from a slightly different perspective.

I will tell you at the outset that all three of these idioms generally *mean* "to engender a son." But I can't easily explain the precise idiomatic *meaning* of what it *means* to "build a house," "raise up a seed," or "make a name." That's because God in His wisdom has stated the Truth in terms of both an image—a myth or symbolic ritual—and a word or idiom that captures the essence of the myth or ritual. He has done that to make it easy for us to understand what He has said.

Researchers now know that different areas of the human brain work in tandem. One area stores words, another images, and yet a third stores grammatical rules. Therefore, everything God has hidden in the Hebrew Scriptures is part of a tightly integrated right-brain/left-brain combination of words, images, and grammatical rules. That is why you must understand every idiom of Scripture in terms of an ancient myth or ritual. The idioms the Canaanites used to talk about their rituals succinctly sum up the reason why they practiced them. Therefore, the image of the ritual rounds out the *meaning* of the idiom in your mind.

When you put the appropriate images together with the idiomatic statements of the Prophets and Apostles, an incredibly beautiful picture of what God has done (and is still doing) will begin to come together in your mind. But trust me on this one: It is possible for an unregenerate person to understand some of the things I am going to explain. For that reason many

will think they see the Truth God has reserved for His Children. But they won't actually see much of anything at all because they have never been born again. So I have but one word of advice for such folks. Actually, it's not my advice, it comes from the Lord Himself:

"The lamp of your body is your eye; when your eye is clear, your whole body also is full of light; but when it is bad, your body also is full of darkness. Then watch out that the light in you may not be darkness."

(Luke 11:34–35)

Just to emphasize that point for those who should pay close attention but won't, Matthew says Jesus put it this way:

"But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!"

(Matthew 6:23)

That is the same thing John tells us Jesus said in another place. However, he says Jesus said this:

And Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see; and that those who see may become blind." Those of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these things, and said to Him, "We are not blind too, are we?" Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, 'We see,' your sin remains."

(John 9:39–41)

Obviously, Jesus was speaking *parabolically*. But just in case you are one of those who arrogantly thinks they already "see" everything they need to know about the message of the Scriptures, consider this: Every book in the Greek Scriptures contains a variety of things stated *parabolically* in terms of idioms and images. Yet nowhere do the authors of those works ever explain that what they have written will make sense only if the reader thinks in terms of specific Hebrew idioms and their corresponding *parabolic images*. The reason for that is actually quite simple: They didn't feel it was necessary to explain the obvious. They assumed their readers would already be thinking idiomatically and *parabolically*.

For nearly a century after the Apostles died, Christians did, in fact, have a fairly well-informed understanding of the images and idioms of the Scriptures. So they understood the Apostles were speaking *parabolically*. Unfortunately, things change. (Have I mentioned that before?) After the Church lost *The Apostolic Teaching* and everybody started interpreting Scripture for themselves, understanding took a nose dive. As a result, we have idiots today who adamantly insist the Scriptures can only be understood if they are interpreted literally. Ah! If ignorance is bliss, those folks must already be living in Paradise.

Pay attention now! God has called me to *restore* the mind-set of the fathers. If you are one of those to whom I have been sent, bear with me while I explain what you need to know in order to think as the Apostles thought. Be patient. If you apply yourself, you will find yourself thinking *parabolically* and idiomatically in no time at all. When you do, what you find written in the Scriptures will begin to make more sense.

The Truth is, I could cite well over a hundred instances in the Greek Scriptures where the author is speaking in terms of a specific Hebrew idiom and its related image. In each and every case, a *parabolic statement* reveals an understanding of how the Prophets had spoken *parabolically* to describe how "The House" of God would be "built." Amazingly, it is just as clear that nobody in the Church today has anything more than a vague understanding of what Jesus and the Apostles *meant* by what they said.

If I expanded my count to include some of the other Hebrew idioms I have mentioned—"cut off from," "walk in *The Way*," and "keep the commandments"—the number of instances I could cite in the Greek Scriptures would easily double or even triple. Obviously, I can't begin to touch on all those here. But I do want to point out some of the more obvious places where "*The House*" image has been used.

There is, first of all, the *parabolic statement* that Jesus made when He drove the moneychangers out of the Temple:

The Jews therefore answered and said to Him, "What sign do You show to us, seeing that You do these things?" Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews therefore said, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will

You raise it up in three days?" But He was speaking of the temple of His body. When therefore He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had spoken.

(John 2:18–22)

Does Jesus' hostile attitude on that occasion seem out of character to you? It should. He was conducting a *parabolic pantomime*. His point becomes clear only if you understand the *meaning* of the idiom "build a house." He took the uncharacteristic action of driving merchants out of the Temple to emphasize that He would one day direct His anger at anyone who is illegitimately in His Father's "house." By His allusion to "*The House*" image, however, He indicated that will happen only after His Resurrection.

You see, the Resurrection of Jesus was the second occasion on which God "built a house" for David. The first was when He engendered a Child through the Virgin Mary. Yet the Resurrection was but the first time He "built a house" for Himself. That "house" is the one Jesus was depicting by driving the money-changers out of the Temple. Unfortunately, that's the best explanation of the pantomime I can give you right now. But I will tell you bluntly that you would not believe in the goofy god of unconditional love if you understood and believed the message of His pantomime.

From what Jesus said after He cleansed the Temple, it is obvious He was aware God had already "built a house" for David through His mother Mary. It is also clear He was absolutely certain God would resurrect Him after He had died on the cross as a sacrifice for sin. That can be seen, however, only by those who know Jesus was playing with the fact that the two Hebrew idioms "build a house" and "raise up a seed" have essentially synonymous *meaning*. That is, both idioms convey basically the same *meaning* but use a completely different *parabolic image* to do so.

John says Jesus' disciples believed the Scriptures when they remembered what Jesus had said about "raising up a house." That is because after His Resurrection, Jesus explained to His disciples the seven sealed messages that Moses and the Prophets concealed behind the various idioms and images one finds in the Hebrew Scriptures. Luke says Jesus said this on that occasion:

And He said to them, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?" And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.

(Luke 24:25–27)

One of the things Jesus revealed to His disciples that day was the message concerning "*The House*." The Apostles heard Jesus explain exactly the same things God is allowing me to explain to you now. The major difference between their day and our own is this: Jesus had to reveal the seven messages of the Hebrew Scriptures to them because the Scriptures were still sealed. Now that He has removed the seal from the first of those seven messages, the Truth concerning "*The House*" is available to anyone who is willing to read and understand it. God has merely called me to explain it to those who cannot read Hebrew so that anyone who wants to can hear and understand the Truth without having to figure it out for themselves. He is doing that in these Last Days in preparation for Judgment Day.

I hardly think God would have sent me to teach if He didn't expect you to listen and to learn. So pay close attention. I am certain He will one day test you to see how much you retain. (I'm mocking your ignorance of the Truth concerning testing that God has revealed in the Scriptures.)

The *parabolic pantomime* that John recounts was certainly not the only occasion on which Jesus mentioned He was going to "build *The House*" of God. How do I know that? Well, first of all, I know that Jesus was a Teacher. I also know that, like every good Teacher, He understood the most effective teaching depends on repetition. That *means* the statements you find recorded in the Greek Scriptures must be nothing but a sample of various things that Jesus said time and time again. It only makes sense that Jesus frequently explained how He was going to "build *The House*" of God. But He must have done so on at least one other occasion because His use of that idiom provided the basis for the only corroborated charge brought against Him:

Now the chief priests and the whole Council kept trying to obtain false testimony against Jesus, in order that

they might put Him to death; and they did not find {any,} even though many false witnesses came forward. But later on two came forward, and said, "This man stated, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to **rebuild it in three days.**'"
(Matthew 26:59-61)

The word *rebuild* in that last verse is the result of the translator's mistaken understanding of what Jesus meant by what He said. The Greek verb means nothing more than "build." My point is, Jesus did not mean He would "rebuild" the Temple. He was speaking *parabolically* about His physical body, just as John indicated, telling His listeners He was going to tear down the Temple of His body by enticing the Jewish leaders into arranging His execution. He would then "build a house" for God in three days through His Resurrection from the dead. However, the Resurrection was not a "rebuilding" of anything that had ever been before. It was the "building" of an entirely new Creation from part of this Creation. To understand why that is, however, you must first understand the second and third messages, "The Way" and "The Light."

The verb these witnesses claim Jesus used comes directly from the idiom "build a house." Yet the Apostle John specifically said Jesus used the verb "raise up." Jesus took that verb from the idiom "raise up a seed." However, it doesn't matter much which verb Jesus used as far as the essence of what He said is concerned. I've already told you both idioms have essentially the same meaning. They mean "to engender a son." Jesus was speaking *parabolically*, telling people He was going to "build a house" for God through His Resurrection from the dead. But before you take that bit of information and run with it, keep in mind the fact that there is a complete set of mythological beliefs standing behind the Prophets' explanation of how the Resurrection of Jesus Christ "built *The House*" of God.

The passages I just mentioned tend to indicate Jesus pointed to the Temple on at least two different occasions when He spoke *parabolically* concerning the certainty of His Resurrection from the dead. I have no doubt He did that on several other occasions as well, but I'll settle for just these two. Look at it logically: The *parabolic* message concerning "The House" is but the first of seven messages that lie hidden in the Hebrew Scriptures. However, it alone explains in precise detail God's purpose in orchestrating the death and

Resurrection of Jesus Christ. I seriously doubt that Jesus would have used only sparingly the idiom that provides the image most central to that message. If He had not done so fairly frequently, how would the leaders of the Jews have ever been able to find two witnesses who remembered Him making such a statement?

Enough of that. Let me point out a few places where the Apostle Paul uses the same imagery to speak *parabolically* concerning "The House" message. Again, these citations are not an exhaustive listing. They are just a few of the more obvious instances where Paul alludes to the *parabolic imagery* of "The House." After I have explained "The House" message, you will be able to see he has done the same thing in various other places as well.

The first instance is near the end of his letter to the Romans. Paul makes this brief *parabolic statement* concerning his ministry as one of the workmen involved in "building *The House*" of God:

And thus I aspired to preach the gospel, not where Christ was {already} named, that I might not build upon another man's foundation.
(Romans 15:20)

Paul makes another, somewhat more extended, use of "The House" image in his letter to the Corinthians. On this occasion he is urging the members of the church at Corinth to stop thinking of themselves as followers of a single Apostle and start thinking of themselves as members of "The (one) House" of God. As you read what Paul wrote about "The House," notice that he has coupled it with agricultural imagery related to the Hebrew idiom "raise up a seed." He did that because the two idioms and their corresponding images are used together in the Hebrew Scriptures to explain things you need to know about "The House":

What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave {opportunity} to each one. I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth. Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building.

According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building upon it. But let each man be careful how he builds upon it. For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

(1 Corinthians 3:5–11)

Paul continues on in that chapter to make other statements concerning the *parabolic image* in which Believers are members of the Body of Jesus Christ, which is, incidentally, “*The House*” of God. I won’t bother to quote the rest of what he said. You can read it for yourself. However, I will warn you that the individualistic mind-set of the Corinthians did not die with that generation. It is still alive and well in the Church today. That mind-set certainly won’t help you understand what Paul said about the fate that awaits the one who “corrupts the temple of God.” He was speaking *parabolically*, warning Pretenders of the dangers inherent in contaminating “*The House*” of God, that is, the Body of Jesus Christ, with their idiocy.

If you want to understand what Paul was saying to the Corinthians, keep in mind the fact that all the pronouns he uses to address them in that passage are plural. That tells us he was not addressing individuals; he was addressing the collective Body of Jesus Christ. You can get a better feel for what he had in mind if you take a look at the context in which he uses “*The House*” imagery in his letter to the Ephesians:

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

(Ephesians 2:19–22)

That translation is not perfect. No translation is. But it is about as close as the English can get to conveying the nuances of the original text. At the very least it allows you to see that Paul is using “*The House*” image along with the idiom “build a house” to speak concerning Believers who have become members of God’s “house.” The Greek word that has been translated

“household” actually comes from the same root as the word for “house.” It has the sense of belonging to a particular family, that is, of belonging to a “household.” Paul used it in this context because “*The House*” message explains how God made it possible for each of us to become a member of His family, that is, His “house.” That *House* is and always has been Israel, the Firstborn Son of God. That’s what Paul had in mind when he wrote this:

For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For indeed in this {house} we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven.

(2 Corinthians 5:1–2)

There is no bigger fool than the one who insists that statement has no greater *significance* than a desire to die and be with the Lord. An accurate understanding of what Paul has said depends on a knowledge of at least the first three messages hidden in the Hebrew Scriptures. If you take a closer look at the context in which Paul made that statement, you will find the word *glory*. The Glory of God is *Light*. God’s Glory provides the basic image for the third message concealed in the idioms and images of the Hebrew Scriptures—“*The Light*.” The purpose of that message is to further explain things that are mentioned only briefly in “*The House*” and “*The Way*.”

The Apostle uses the *parabolic image* of “*The House*” again in what he says to his disciple Timothy:

Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, “The Lord knows those who are His,” and, “Let everyone who names the name of the Lord abstain from wickedness.” Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor. Therefore, if a man cleanses himself from these {things}, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work.

(2 Timothy 2:19–21)

You can see that Paul introduces the image of “*The House*” by referring to its “foundation.” He then goes on to speak *parabolically* concerning Believers as “vessels” in “*The House*” of God. It is obvious he has in

mind the collective Body of Believers. He did so because he knew “*The House*” message tells how the eternal dwelling place of God is *parabolically* the resurrected Body of Jesus Christ. That *House* is a collective Body in which every member is humbly submitted to all others in fear of the Lord because they have seen and believed the seven sealed messages God has hidden in the Hebrew Scriptures. Their mind-set has little in common with the individualistic believe-what-you-want-to nonsense you hear taught in the Church today.

The passages I quoted above are just a few of the many I could have pointed out in the writings of the Apostle Paul. In each and every one of those passages, insight into “*The House*” message is essential to an accurate understanding of what the Apostle has said. However, Paul was not the only Apostle to allude to what the Prophets said about “*The House*.” His are not even the most revealing. The following two passages are perhaps the two clearest indications in the entire Greek Scriptures that the Apostles understood exactly the same message concerning “*The House*” that I am going to explain to you here. First, the author of the Book of Hebrews said this about Jesus “building *The House*” of God:

Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession. He was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was in all His house. For He has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, by just so much as the builder of the house has more honor than the house. For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God. Now Moses was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later; but Christ {was faithful} as a Son over His house whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end.
(Hebrews 3:1–6)

You can easily see the author’s viewpoint is one in which the Church, that is, the Body of Jesus Christ, is “*The House*” of Israel. I won’t bother telling you why Jesus Christ is Israel. I have already done that in the book *Not All Israel Is Israel* (see Order Form). However, I have not yet explained the *parabolic imagery* that stands behind the things I explained in that book. I intend to get a good start on that in these pages over

the next few years. Perhaps then you will be able to understand the *parabolic imagery* the Apostle Peter had in mind when he wrote this:

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

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

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

*“THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED,
THIS BECAME THE VERY CORNER {stone,}” and,
“A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE”;
for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this {doom} they were also appointed. But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR {God’s} OWN POSSESSION, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY.
(1 Peter 2:1–10)*

Wow! Peter has alluded to so many different facets of “*The House*” message in that passage that I feel completely overwhelmed by the task of having to explain everything to you. If you look closely, you will see he has quoted Moses (Ex. 19:6) and the psalmist (Ps. 118:22), along with the Prophets Isaiah (Is. 8:14; 28:16) and Hosea (Hos. 1:10; 2:23). He must have believed he saw something specific in what all those men said. Yet each of the statements he quoted has its own *context*, its own *meaning*, and its own *significance*. You must understand all of those things about each and every one of those passages before you can ever hope to comprehend what Peter had in mind when he put them all together. It is obvious he is *talking about*

"The House" that Jesus Christ said He was going to "build" for God. It is just as obvious that he understood what Moses and the Prophets said about "The House." So don't be stupid. Admit that you have no understanding at all of those things. Only then will you have ears to hear what God called me to teach.

You will never be able to understand the Truth the Prophets and Apostles understood if you are not willing to think in terms of the same Hebrew idioms and *parabolic imagery* that they understood. I am going to explain those things to you. If you actually want to understand the things I teach, however, you must keep this one thing in mind: The seven messages hidden in the Hebrew Scriptures are a mocking, taunting ridicule directed at the beliefs of an ancient semitic religion that, by the time of Christ, had spread throughout the civilized world. In their ridicule, the Prophets describe how the God of Israel is going to accomplish the very things those people stupidly believed their god would accomplish for them. So let's take a look at that lunacy.

Let's Talk About Sex and Resurrection

If you believe the accounts one finds in ancient Near Eastern mythological texts, Jesus Christ was not the first son of god to attain resurrection from the dead. By no means! The first such son of god is described in Sumerian mythological texts that were composed at least two, and perhaps more than three, thousand years before Christ was born. By the time of Christ, quite a long list of religions worshiped a son of god who had been resurrected from the dead. And the list of beliefs these religions held in common with Christianity was equally as long.

As a matter of fact, one of the "sons of god" worshiped by multiplied thousands at the time of Christ supposedly died an agonizing death on a tree. After he had been taken down and buried, however, his tomb was discovered to be empty, and his followers rejoiced because they knew he had come back to life. Interestingly enough, the religious drama of this particular cult even involved the sacrifice of an animal, which represented the slain "son of god," so that all who were "washed in the blood" might be "born again." Does all that have a familiar ring to it? It should. The symbolic message of this religion displays an uncanny resemblance to the *parabolic* message of Christianity.

I am by no means the first to have noticed the parallels that exist between Christianity and the Greek mystery religions. Scholars have known about them for a long time. They have logically concluded that one religion must have borrowed its symbols from the other. The question is, *Who borrowed what from whom?* Christians would prefer to believe they had the symbols first. Unfortunately, that is not the case. The religion I described above was the Phrygian cult of Attis and Cybele. That particular mystery religion is known to be several hundred years older than Christianity.

Shortly before the Church lost *The Apostolic Teaching*, even Early Church leaders pointed to the Greek mystery religions and accused Satan of having made what they called a "devilish counterfeit" of Christianity. Their accusations would seem to be completely unfounded. How could Satan have made a counterfeit of Christianity at a time when it did not even exist? Exactly the opposite assertion would seem to be a more reasonable claim: Christianity appears to have borrowed its message from these other religions.

Any prudent person who wants to know the Truth will at least ask themselves how these things could possibly be. The fool will continue merrily on his way, dismissing it all as irrelevant, continuing to believe whatever he wants to believe. The Truth is, the symbols of these ancient religions show up in Christianity because the Prophets of God used them to mock the stupid notions these people believed. I am going to show you how they did that.

One of the earliest reported cases of a corpse that supposedly turned up living the good life in Paradise involves the Sumerian god Dumuzi. Another is the Akkadian (Assyrian/Babylonian) god Tammuz, who is, incidentally, mentioned in the Hebrew Scriptures (Ez. 8:14). However, Tammuz and Dumuzi are actually one and the same "son of god," since the Akkadians absorbed the entire Sumerian culture, lock, stock, and resurrected god, sometime during the third millennium B.C. It's just that the Akkadians spoke a guttural semitic language rather than the agglutinative Sumerian which has more in common with Turkish, Finnish, and Hungarian than it does with semitic languages like Akkadian, Hebrew, and Arabic. Consequently, the Akkadians had a slightly different way of pronouncing dentals. (You know, "dentals." If you notice when you speak, you will find the "t" and

“d” sounds both begin with the tongue stuck to the same spot in back of your “dentals.”)

The Sumerians and Akkadians were not the only ancient people to believe in a resurrected son of god, however. The Egyptians had Horus, the son of god who became Osiris when he entered the resurrection. Although, to be perfectly honest, Osiris was the one who was resurrected, not Horus. (See *The Passover Parable* listed on the Order Form.) Horus was the “name” of Osiris whose reign on Earth made the resurrection of Osiris possible. Osiris had reportedly been murdered, hacked in pieces, buried in several different parts of the country, and then put back together and resurrected after the first successful scavenger hunt. Consequently, he offered the hope of resurrection to anyone who believed in him.

The gospel message of Osiris has a bit too much in common with the tale of Frankenstein for my taste, but it suited a lot of folks just fine for well over three thousand years. By the time of Christ, the entire civilized world knew about the god Osiris and the hope of eternal life he offered all who would believe. Then Christianity came along making slightly more believable, yet in some ways even more incredible, claims about a peasant from Galilee. That’s why the Jews, who knew all about these other religions, saw Christianity as nothing but warmed-over paganism.

The Greeks, being the avid religious syncretists that they were, worshiped various sons of god who had come back from the dead. Dionysus was one. Attis another. Adonis yet a third. However, it is well known that the Greeks borrowed Adonis from the Canaanites, who worshiped him as Baal, another resurrected son of god. The Greeks called Baal “Adonis” because he was known to the Canaanites as “lord” or “master,” which was pronounced *adon* in their tongue. And thus we come to the primary subject of our investigation: Baal, the lord of the Canaanite resurrection.

I would be extremely remiss if I allowed you to continue under the impression that all these “sons of god” lived a solitary mythological existence in which they supernaturally effected their own resurrection. Such was not the case. Each and every one of them owed his resurrection to the efforts of a heroic woman who risked life and limb to snatch the one she loved from the jaws of death. Dumuzi was loved by Inanna, Tammuz by Ishtar, Osiris by Isis, Attis by Cybele,

Adonis by Aphrodite, Baal by Anat. Dionysus was ostensibly loved only by the barbarian Mad Women of Euripides fame, but his is a story in and of itself. Remind me to tell you about it sometime.

So what do all these women have in common other than their apparent ability to bring about the resurrection of a dead god? They were all virgins. Yep, you heard me right. I said, “virgins.” And if you know anything at all about Inanna, Ishtar, or Anat, you know what a ridiculous claim that is. The Greek goddess Artemis was a bona fide virgin. However, the myths clearly indicate the “virgins” Inanna, Ishtar, and Anat were all whores. But then again, maybe my choice of terms isn’t all that appropriate. It’s just that I try to call ‘em as I see ‘em. Artemis probably didn’t start out as the supreme advocate of chastity either. She was evidently worshiped at some earlier time as a perpetually virgin prostitute in a fertility cult just like the others.

Did you notice I just said “fertility cult”? That’s what scholars think the various cults involving the worship of a virgin goddess and a resurrected son of god were all about—fertility. But there was a whole lot more to the mystery religions than fertility. We’ll get to that later on. For now, I need to explain what these ancient people were trying to accomplish through their sacred sex rituals. Then I can tell you where all these religions originated.

Way back then—in that part of the world at least—religious folks didn’t slip around on the sly to satisfy their lust surreptitiously like they do today. But then again, they didn’t have to. Engaging in sexual intercourse with a sacred prostitute at some sacred spot was a necessary part of life. Their compatriots viewed their willingness to fornicate with anyone and everyone as solid evidence of a deep spirituality. And none were more spiritual than the women (and men) who offered their favors to one and all out of complete devotion to their resurrected lord (Baal). So if your one and lonely has cheated on you and you feel bad, consider King Ahab. That poor sucker knew Jezebel was sleeping around and he never once suspected it was because she had a libido stuck in overdrive. He thought she was just being religious. In case you wonder how I know that about Jezebel, her makeup and hair covering gave it away (2 Kin. 9:30). But I’ll have more to say about her distinctive attire and her attempted seduction of Jehu a bit later.

Judah and Hosea are a couple of the more obvious examples I could point out where the Bible tells us Israelite men availed themselves of the services of sacred prostitutes (Gen. 38:12–26; Hos. 1:2–9). To be perfectly honest, however, Judah didn't do any such despicable deed. He only intended to and thought he did, but he really didn't. He merely enjoyed a brief respite with his daughter-in-law, which Moses tells us was an equally abominable act (Lev. 20:12). There's some extremely interesting information hidden in the story of Judah and Tamar. I'll tell you about it when you are better able to understand why Tamar did what she did. But I need to explain a few other things first. Actually, there are a few even more interesting details hidden in the *parabolic pantomime* of Hosea. Trust me. We'll get there. Eventually.

Gilead and Samson were evidently not above enjoying the pleasure of an intimate relationship with sacred prostitutes either (Judg. 11:1; 16:1). However, I probably should tell you "prostitute" is not an entirely accurate translation. The Hebrew term in the Scriptures that is routinely translated as "prostitute" or "harlot" is *zonah*. However, a woman who functioned as a *zonah* was not necessarily a career woman. Some, if not most, of these women were honest-to-goodness virgins doing an obligatory one-night stand out of devotion to their lord (Baal).

You see, before a devoutly religious Canaanite girl could consummate her marriage, she had to surrender her virginity to a stranger she picked up down at the sanctuary. Now you know why God made such a big deal about an Israelite woman being able to show evidence of her virginity when she married (Deut. 22:13–21). She couldn't very easily engage in one of the most basic rituals of Canaanite religion and still be a virgin on her wedding night.

The myth of the perpetually virgin goddess who offered herself to mortals as a prostitute (*zonah*) stands behind the semitic practice of a woman sacrificing her virginity to a stranger. These women were only playing the role of the virgin goddess, trying to entice the god into having sexual intercourse with them. The religious fiction was, the god quite often came down in human form seeking to cohabit with the virgin goddess. So a woman would put on a distinctive dress, paint her face in a certain way, and put a special type of veil over her face and head so that her facial details were obscured but her makeup

remained visible through the veil. Her goal was to hide her own identity while taking on the appearance of the virgin goddess. She would then do what the mythology told her the virgin goddess did. She would take a stand at some sacred spot and invite a stranger to "enter" her, hoping the stranger would be the god.

Now you know why Tamar dressed the way she did (Gen. 38:14–16) and what Jezebel was up to when she got all dolled up for Jehu (2 Kin. 9:30). Tamar just wanted to trick Judah into getting her pregnant. Jezebel knew Jehu would spare her if she could entice him into "taking" her. So the remark she made to him on that occasion (2 Kin. 9:31) was certainly not the hostile comment you have been led to believe it was.

We can see Tamar and Jezebel obviously had their reasons, but what motivated other women to do these things? Well, they were trying to acquire a human/divine son of god they could then offer as a sacrifice. Since the woman did not know the identity of the man who "entered" her, if she got pregnant it was assumed he was the god, which *meant* the child was a semi-divine son of god. That's why you find various women mentioned in Greek mythology who supposedly had a greater-than-mortal child fathered by the god Zeus. Zeus was, like Adonis, nothing more than a Greek adaptation of the Canaanite god Baal. The Greeks weren't as barbaric as the Canaanites, however. They didn't sacrifice the children produced by this ritual, they abandoned them at the foot of the mountain of the god.

By the same token, since her male partner did not know the identity of the woman, he did not know but what the goddess herself was seeking to seduce him. So it was not considered wise for a man to reject the advances of any woman who accosted him wearing the distinctive garb of the virgin goddess. The humor in that situation lies in the fact that the ancients evidently felt a need to ensure that a man did not traipse off to the sanctuary thinking he could pick and choose. If a woman dressed like the virgin goddess made overtures, he was expected to oblige her request lest he incur the wrath of the real thing.

Several myths drive that point home. For example, the Sumerians and Akkadians told one about Gilgamesh. When he spurned the goddess Inanna (Ishtar to the Akkadians), she went absolutely ballistic and nearly killed him. You can read the account for yourself in Sandars' *The Epic of Gilgamesh*. The moral

of that story is fairly obvious: One had best not refuse the virgin goddess when she offers her favors. However, the point of the Canaanite myth about Aqhat's "bow" in Coogan's *Stories From Ancient Canaan* is not quite as obvious. [Editor: To order either of these two books, use the Order Form.] In that case, one needs to know that the Canaanites, like other semitic peoples, were fond of euphemisms.

Aqhat's "bow" is not a literal bow. The virgin goddess wants Aqhat to give her a "bow" that will satisfy her sexual desire. That's the same *parabolic* "bow" that stands behind the psalmist's sarcastic mention of "arrows" and "quiver" in the same breath as "fruit of the womb" and "children" in Psalm 127:3-4. When Aqhat refuses to give the virgin goddess Anat what she wants, she takes his "bow" by force; that is, she emasculates him, killing him in the process. Emasculation is a recurrent theme in ancient myths. Such were the incentives given to any man who might consider rejecting the favors of a less well-endowed young lady in hopes of finding one more to his liking.

The Canaanite practice in which a woman had ritual sex with a stranger at some sacred spot is the reason why Moses prescribed that a widow woman was not to "belong to a stranger outside" her immediate family (Deut. 25:5). The key word in that text is *stranger*. That prohibition pertains to the *parabolic pantomime* that scholars have mistakenly called "levirate marriage." That's because God instituted the *parabolic pantomime* of levirate marriage as both a defense against and a mockery of the sacred prostitution practiced by the Canaanites.

The careful reader who wants to understand the Truth has probably already noticed that two of the three Hebrew idioms I mentioned above—"build a house" and "raise up a name"—occur in connection with the stipulation in Deuteronomy 25 that governed levirate marriage. So we'll have to look into that prescription later on. I should probably also mention that the idiom "build a house" occurs in the same context as the "bow" image I explained above (Ps. 127:1). In that case, the psalmist is *talking about* God "building His house" through the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. But we can *talk about* that later also.

Before I move on to other things, let me briefly point out that the Prophet Ezekiel, speaking *parabolically* concerning Israel as a woman, indicts her for

functioning as a *zonah*. That is, he mocks the people for doing what the Canaanites were doing, setting up shop in all the right places and engaging in the sacred sex ritual with every stranger who happened to come along. We will see later why he did that:

*"How could your heart [mind] be so feeble?" The Lord, His Majesty, declares: "In your doing all these things (the activity of a domineering **zonah** woman), in your building your sacred place at the head of every way (You even made your high place in every open area!), you were not like a **zonah** to refuse a gift. (The woman of adultery takes strangers instead of her man!) They give a tip to every **zonah**, but you have given your tips to all your lovers. You bribed them from all around to enter you during your practice of the **zonah** ritual. There was more perversity in you than the {other} women during your practice of the **zonah** ritual. (The **zonah** ritual was not practiced on your behalf when you gave a gift and a gift was not given to you.) You were {just doing it} to be perverse." Therefore, **zonah**! Hear the word of His Majesty. This is what the Lord, His Majesty, has said: "Because your brazenness was poured out and your nakedness was revealed during your practice of the **zonah** ritual for the benefit of your lovers and for the benefit of all the ancestral idols of your abominations, and because of the blood of your sons whom you gave to them, therefore, look! I am going to gather all your lovers for whose benefit you gave a pledge—even all those you loved—for the benefit of all those you hated. I will gather them against you from all around and I will reveal your nakedness to them so that they see all your nakedness."*

(Ezekiel 16:30-37) —my interim translation

Contrary to what scholars assume, Ezekiel uses several technical terms and idiomatic expressions related to the *zonah* ritual in that passage. All have specific *meaning* that goes far beyond anything scholars understand. Therefore, before you can understand what Ezekiel has said, I must first explain the mindset that stands behind the ritual. It will take me awhile to do that, so bear with me. We'll come back to this passage a bit later, when you are better able to appreciate what Ezekiel has said about Israel's great sin.

Ezekiel's condemnation of Israel is interesting for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is the fact that the Prophet is obviously speaking *parabolically*. In

the process, however, he has told us several things we need to know about what these women were doing and why. But his statements also hold promise of greater things to come because, in them, the Prophet has described Israel as a *zonah*. That is an extremely important bit of information if only because more than a century earlier, Hosea had—by means of *parabolic pantomime*—already said God would one day “take” the *zonah* Israel to “raise up a seed” for Himself. That’s why Peter quotes Hosea in 1 Peter 2.

A Man + a Woman + ? = a House

Let’s get one thing straight from the outset. In the ancient Near East, a “house” was a family long before it was ever a building with four walls and a roof. That can be seen from the fact that the Hebrew words for *son*, *daughter*, and *house* all come from the same root as the Hebrew verb *banah*, which means “build.” Not surprisingly, that verb also carries the meaning of “create/procreate.” And the three nouns I just mentioned were originally used to refer to “what has been procreated.” So it should be obvious that long before men ever built a house of wood, stone, or baked clay bricks, they were living in caves and “building houses” the old-fashioned way.

Building a house was a fairly intuitive process at first. Everyone sort of let nature take its course and nine months later another member of the house appeared, fully formed and functioning. Then along came a fellow who confused the issue. He “built” a “house” of baked clay bricks in which the members of the other “house” could live. What were folks supposed to do then? Well, they did the same thing they had been doing all along. They continued to use the noun *house* to refer to a family and the verb *build* to refer to the act of procreation. That is not a characteristic unique to Biblical Hebrew. All of the ancient semitic languages exhibit the same fundamental understanding of these terms. A “house” is both a group of people and the physical structure in which they live. To “build a house” is to engender a son or to erect a physical building.

Did that explanation make sense? I hope so, because I am now going to “build” on that “foundation.” I’ve already explained how the noun *house* is used in the Hebrew Scriptures. (See *The Mystery of Scripture, Volume 1*, listed on the Order Form.) That explanation is more than adequate to show you the term has the

general sense of “family” in the Hebrew Scriptures. So let me show you how the verb *build* is used.

There is, first of all, the account of how God created Eve. The text literally says He “built” her from one of Adam’s ribs:

The LORD God caused a sound sleep to fall on the man and he slept. Then He took one of his ribs and closed up his flesh in its place. Then the LORD God BUILT the rib He had taken from the man into a woman and brought her to the man.

(Genesis 2:21–22) —my interim translation

That’s interesting, isn’t it? Adam was formed from the dust of the ground. Everybody else has been “built” from part of somebody else. Those are the facts. And Eve is the only one that can ever be said to have been “well-built.” The rest of us will just have to settle for something less and, given the prevalence of modern methods of abortion, some for a whole lot less.

Now let me mention one other verse to illustrate the fact that the verb *build* also carries the sense of “procreate.” I’ll point out other occurrences as we go along. In this instance the verb *build* happens to be part of the idiom “build a house.”

And all the people who were in the gate, and the elders, said: “Witnesses! May the LORD give {a male child to} the woman who is entering your house as {He did to} Rachel and Leah who BUILT—both of them—“THE HOUSE” of Israel, so as to make a mighty host in Ephrathah and establish a name in Bethlehem. And may your house be the same as “The House” of Perez, whom Tamar bore for Judah, from the seed which the LORD will give to you from this young woman.”

(Ruth 4:11–12) —my interim translation

That verse provides us one extremely important piece of information. It tells us two women “built a house.” However, it also clearly indicates that “house” did not belong to those two women. It was “*The House*” of a man, the one man Israel. That was true of every “house.” Whether it had just a few members or several thousand, it was still “*The House*” of the one man who was the “head” of “*The House*.” Everybody else in “*The House*,” including the women who helped “build *The House*,” was nothing more than a member of “*The House*.” The man of whose “house” they were

members remained the only “head” and “master” of “The House” as long as he was alive. That *meant* he had the right to do as he pleased with any member of his “house.” For example, he could divorce a woman just by giving her divorce papers and “sending her away” (Deut. 24:1). He could disinherit a son the same way (Gen. 25:5–6) or, under certain circumstances, take his life (Deut. 21:18–21).

Does that put a new slant on what Paul had in mind when he *talked about* Jesus Christ being the “head” of the Church (Eph. 5:23)? It should because, in what he said, Paul didn’t use the English term *church*. He used a Greek term that clearly indicates he was *talking about* the “assembly,” or “congregation,” of “The House” of Israel. He also used the *parabolic image* of the “Body of Christ,” which is an image of that same “house.”

Whose Seed Was It, Anyway?

The ancient semitic culture was patriarchal. That is, lineage was reckoned through the male. So all a man had to do to “build a house” was “take” a woman and “enter” her. Any “seed” “raised up” from their union belonged to him unless he stipulated otherwise. (The words in quotes are all technical terms that refer specifically to the process of “building a house.”) As we shall see, a woman was necessary to the house-building process, but any woman would suffice to “raise up a seed” for the man. For example, Sarai urges Abram to use her slave for that purpose (Gen. 16:2). Rachel and Leah do likewise (Gen. 30:3, 9).

As far as the ancients were concerned, the “seed” (semen) of the man was the only essential ingredient. Their mind-set is more easily understood if you keep in mind the fact that they were ignorant of modern physiology. They knew nothing of the interaction of a sperm with an egg. They were obviously aware that semen was a *seed* of some kind. And they surmised that a male could “plant” that “seed” in a female and thereby “raise up a seed.” But from their perspective, a woman was like the ground in which they planted every other kind of seed. She merely incubated the “seed” of the man until it sprouted.

There are, as a matter of fact, ancient pornographic texts related to the practice of sacred prostitution in which the virgin goddess seeks to seduce her next lover. She invites him to “plough my furrow.” That language is

not merely metaphorical. It reflects the way these people thought. So the “seed” a man “planted” in a woman remained his “seed” unless he specifically stipulated otherwise. That is, unless he used a woman to “give a seed” to someone else. Barring that, his “seed” belonged to him alone.

The women who helped “build *The House*” of a man fell into one of three categories. There were, first of all, free women. Then there were concubines and, finally, the class of women known as the *zonah*. Free women voluntarily gave up their position in “*The House*” of their father and “entered” “*The House*” of another man. Circumstances varied from house to house, of course, but cultural norms still considered these women to be inferior to the “master,” or “lord,” of “*The House*” they had entered. Although they enjoyed greater respect than women in the other two categories, they were still expected to see that “*The House*” of their man was built, no matter what that entailed. Therefore, we find that Sarai, when it became obvious that she was past the age of bearing children, urged Abram to “enter” her maid Hagar so that he would have a son. Look at what she said:

Now Sarai, Abram’s woman, had not borne for him; but she had an Egyptian maid and her name was Hagar. So Sarai said to Abram: “Look! The LORD has kept me from bearing. Please enter my maid. Perhaps I will BE BUILT from her.” And Abram listened to Sarai’s voice. So Sarai, Abram’s woman, took Hagar the Egyptian—her maid—at the end of Abram dwelling ten years in the land of Canaan, and she gave her to Abram, her man—to him—as a woman.

(Genesis 16:1–3) —my interim translation

There’s that verb *build* again. Did you see it? Sarai wanted to “be built” through Hagar. That’s interesting, isn’t it? She must have thought Hagar’s child would be her own. According to ancient Canaanite custom, she was right. That’s why Moses mentions the fact that Abram had lived in Canaan for ten years. He wants us to know Abram was willing to do what Sarai suggested only because he had been exposed to the Canaanite practice. Ishmael, the son of a slave, would have been the firstborn son of Abram and Sarai had Hagar not poisoned the water in that well by acting like a total idiot. Consequently, Abram and Sarai backed out of the deal, and Hagar’s son ended up

with nothing to show for the opportunity he would have had to *inherit the promise* of God.

Two other women in exactly the same situation displayed a bit more humility and wound up retaining their position in respect to *the promise*. As a matter of fact, they even helped “build *The House*” of Israel. But they never got any credit for it. Do you remember Bilhah and Zilpah? They were slaves of Rachel and Leah. Together they bore four of the twelve sons of Jacob. Look at what Rachel said when she gave Bilhah to Jacob just as Sarai gave Hagar to Abram:

When Rachel saw that she was not bearing for Jacob, Rachel was jealous of her sister and she said to Jacob: “Give me sons! If not, I’m going to die!” Jacob’s anger burned against Rachel, and he said, “Is it I instead of God who have withheld the fruit of the womb from you?” So she said: “Look! My handmaid Bilhah! Enter her so that she can bear on my knees, so that I, even I, may BE BUILT from her.” Then she gave Bilhah, her maid, to him as a woman, and Jacob entered her. When Bilhah conceived and bore a son for Jacob, Rachel said: “God has judged me {innocent}! He has indeed heard my voice and given me a son!” Therefore, she called his name Dan. Then she—{that is}, Bilhah, Rachel’s maid—conceived again and bore a second son for Jacob. And Rachel said: “I have plaited the plaitings of God with my sister! Indeed, I am able!” So she called his name Naphtali.

(Genesis 30:1–8) —my interim translation

If you compare my translation of that passage to other translations, it should be obvious that I believe scholars have misunderstood a few things. That is because they don’t know why Rachel felt she had to provide Jacob a son even if she had to use the womb of a surrogate. I’ll eventually explain her mind-set to you. It’s reflected in her enigmatic statement concerning what she did with her sister. Did she “wrestle” with her as scholars would have you believe? Or did she acquire two sons (“plaitings”) who were added to the four sons Leah had already “plaited” into Jacob’s “cord”? To understand what Rachel said, you have to understand why she specifically says she wants sons, not daughters, and why she says she is going to die if she doesn’t get them. We are, after all, *talking about* a mentality in which eternal life was supposedly gained by “building” an eternal “house.”

Did you see the verb *build* in that passage? Rachel, like Sarai, used a slave woman so that she could “be built.” And when Dan was born, Rachel claimed him as her own. That’s why Bilhah and Zilpah get no credit for “building *The House*” of Israel in Ruth 4:11–12. The children they bore were credited to Rachel and Leah. Do you know what that tells us? It tells us these people lived in a culture where it was acceptable for one woman to “give a seed” to another woman. Now, if women could do that, why should we think it unusual that a man could “give a seed” to another man? We shouldn’t. They did it all the time. That’s the point of the Book of Ruth. But the woman a Canaanite man used to “raise up a seed” or “build a house” for another man was the *zonah*. Remember her? She was the sacred prostitute. We’ll have a whole lot more to say about her next time.

Before I conclude this segment, let me tell you where this is leading. In the Virgin Birth of Christ, God mocks the asinine notion that eternal life could be attained by sacrificing a son of god born to a virgin. In God’s *parabolic pantomime*, the Virgin Mary was a *zonah* that God “entered” to “raise up a seed” for David—a sacred prostitute He “took” so as to “build a house” for His “name.” Now, before some fool objects that “prostitute” is too crass a term to apply to Mary, I should probably tell you it doesn’t. The only part of the *parabolic image* that applies to Mary is that of the virgin. That’s what she was. The goddess part applies to Israel, the sacred prostitute (*zonah*) that Ezekiel denounces for her licentiousness. God merely dressed Mary in the guise of the virgin goddess.

You see, Ezekiel tells us that when Israel sinned against God, she became a *zonah*. That *meant* she made herself available to anyone, God included, who desired to use her to “build a house.” In the wisdom of God, however, the burden of bearing Israel’s obligation as a sacred prostitute fell on Mary, the mother of Jesus. How could that be? Actually, it was quite simple. I have already explained the process whereby Mary became Israel. (See my explanation of the idiom “cut off from Israel” in the book *Not All Israel Is Israel*.) When God finished His work of lopping off “branches,” Mary alone remained as “*The Remnant*” of Israel. But that’s just one example of God orchestrating an elaborate *parabolic pantomime* to mock the stupidity of men. I’ll tell you all about several others before I am through explaining “*The House*.” ■



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: On several occasions, you have named specific individuals who were guilty of introducing some particular lie into the Church. For instance, you have told us Origen introduced the “everybody-can-interpret-the-Bible-for-themselves” concept that ultimately led to The Apostolic Teaching being lost. You also pointed to Søren Kierkegaard as the one who concocted the “leap of faith” nonsense that Church leaders eventually adopted many years after his death.

Since disclosing the origin of a particular lie is sometimes helpful in exposing the lie for what it is, I was hoping you might tell us what you know about the origin of some other lies currently held by the Church. For example: When did the teaching that the Jews are still Israel begin to gain acceptance in the Church? Isn't it true that reformers like Martin Luther and John Calvin held to the view that the Church was the new Israel? If so, at what point did Protestants begin to lose sight of the fact that the Church is Israel? Was there any one person who was instrumental in creating and promoting this lie?

Another lie I would like for you to comment on is Dispensationalism. Can you explain the basic theory behind Dispensationalism and tell us who first propounded it? When did this theory become fact in the eyes of the Church? Also, do you have any idea why Dispensationalism is held in such high regard by so many scholars? How does this theory help their cause?

Elijah: Unfortunately, the Protestant Reformers' understanding of the Church as Israel was not as completely cut-and-dried as that. They saw that the Church had replaced the Jews in God's plan, but they had a decided ambivalence in their understanding of how that had happened. For example, John Calvin could, in his discussion concerning baptism, state flatly that the Jews were rejected in the time of Christ. He gained that bit of Truth from what Paul says in Romans 9:7–8. Consequently, he insists that Christians are the legitimate sons, and therefore *the heirs of the promise* of God to Abraham. He undoubtedly got that from Galatians 3. Yet he goes on to state that *the blessing* of God still resides among the Jews because “the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable” (Rom. 11:29). That is true. Israel can never lose the calling of God. But Calvin's understanding of how that applies is seriously flawed. Jesus Christ is “*The Remnant*” of Israel spoken of by the Prophets. There is no other Israel.

Calvin's ignorance in regard to the identity of Israel is due to the fact that he chose to focus on the *parabolic image* of the covenant rather than on the *parabolic image* of Israel. He also assumed, contrary to what Hebrews 8 says, that the Old Covenant continued in force after the New Covenant was ratified. That left him with two Israels—the Church and the Jews. So his beliefs concerning the Jews do not seriously undermine anything he says about the Church. He says Christians become members of the Body of Christ by being baptized as adults. They then take on the obligations of the New Covenant just as the Jews took on the obligations of the Old Covenant at the time of circumcision. Because of his preoccupation with the covenant image, however, Calvin failed to address the logical objection that God did not *promise* to ratify a New Covenant with Gentiles. He *promised* to do so with Israel. Since he and others did not know how that happened, their ignorance left room for Satan's lie.

John Calvin was obviously a born-again Believer. He was also an incredibly learned student of the Scriptures. I marvel at the number of things he accurately understood merely because he was willing to read the Scriptures and understand what he read in terms of the *parabolic imagery* he found there. Not a whole lot of theologians before or since have been able to do that. But John Calvin was still a victim of his time. He could only use the Hebrew Scriptures to formulate doctrine in terms of the *parabolic imagery* he

found clearly explained in the Greek Scriptures. That severely limited his understanding of the Truth.

An example of what I *mean* is his use of the “Body of Christ” image. He uses that *parabolic image* without defining exactly which “Body of Christ” the Apostles had in mind. Was it the mortal, physical “body of Christ”? Or was it the resurrected, immortal “Body of Christ”? The answer is an illogical “both.” Yet without an understanding of what stands behind the *parabolic imagery* that the Prophets and Apostles used to describe Israel, you will never understand how that can be. Neither will you understand what Paul had in mind when he said this:

If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.
(Colossians 3:1-4)

Now, as far as I can tell, I have not yet been “raised up with Christ.” I am still bound in the same old foul-smelling, pleasure-seeking, evil-oriented body I have inhabited since birth. But before some fool misses my point completely and displays his ignorance by making some off-the-wall remark about my destitute spiritual condition, let me explain what Paul *meant*. Paul is speaking *parabolically* to tell us what the new life in Christ IS LIKE. In so doing, he is using a *parabolic image* in which each True Believer is a member of the resurrected “Body of Jesus Christ.” However, he does not always use the image that way. He most often uses it as a *parabolic image* in which the physical Church is the “Body of Christ.” You can see that from what he says in Ephesians:

And He gave some {as} apostles, and some {as} prophets, and some {as} evangelists, and some {as} pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.
(Ephesians 4:11-13)

As that translator did, most theologians understand the term translated “building up” in a figurative sense. That is, they assume it *means* something like “edifying.” Therefore, the essence of what Paul has said completely eludes them. Paul is using the term with the *parabolic* sense it conveys in the idiom “build a house.” He has done that to bring to our mind things explained *parabolically* in the Hebrew Scriptures. He expects us to use our knowledge of those things as a basis for understanding what he says here. That tells me he cannot possibly be referring to the resurrected, immortal “Body of Christ” because that “house” has already been “built.” Therefore, he must be referring to the mortal, physical “body of Christ.”

Knowing what Paul had in mind when he used the *parabolic image* of the “Body of Christ” doesn’t help a whole lot, however, unless you also understand where the Prophets got the *parabolic image* of the “Body of Israel” and how they applied it in what they said about Jesus Christ. I have no intention of explaining all that to you until I have given you all the other information you need in order to understand the complete *parabolic image*. I can tell you this, however: The Prophets and Apostles are not applying the *parabolic image* to the living “Body of Christ.” Not at all! They have in mind the “three days” in which the dead “body of Christ” was being “built” into a completely new creation. That’s an entirely different image than the resurrected “Body of Christ.” But it is exactly the image Jesus used when He made this *parabolic statement* about His corpse:

“Behold, I have told you in advance. If therefore they say to you, ‘Behold, He is in the wilderness,’ do not go forth, {or,} ‘Behold, He is in the inner rooms,’ do not believe {them.} For just as the lightning comes from the east, and flashes even to the west, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be. Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.”
(Matthew 24:25-28)

Luke makes it a little clearer that Jesus was *talking about* the members of His dead “body,” which is a corpse whose members are completely exposed to consumption by birds of prey:

“Whoever seeks to keep his life shall lose it, and whoever loses {his life} shall preserve it. I tell you, on that night

there will be two men in one bed; one will be taken, and the other will be left. There will be two women grinding at the same place; one will be taken, and the other will be left. [Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other will be left.]” And answering they said to Him, “Where, Lord?” And He said to them, “Where the body {is,} there also will the vultures be gathered.”
(Luke 17:33–37)

The fool will object that the physical body of Jesus Christ was never exposed to mutilation by birds of prey. It was protected in a tomb. That misses the point completely. We are not discussing a literal body. We are discussing a *parabolic image* the Prophets used to describe the death and Resurrection of Israel, the Firstborn Son of God. That imagery points to the *parabolic pantomime* God orchestrated in the literal birth, death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. So unless the fool also wants to assert that we were also literally members of the “Body of Christ” during the time He lived here on Earth, I see no basis for any objection. But there will undoubtedly be those total imbeciles who refuse to comprehend what we are discussing here.

Calvin can easily be forgiven for his inability to see that the “Body of Christ” is a *parabolic image* of Israel, the Firstborn Son of God. He could not understand most of the *parabolic statements* made by the Prophets. So he had available to him nothing more than the relatively few *parabolic statements* that are made in the Greek Scriptures. That is because the Hebrew Scriptures have remained sealed until just recently. That’s why Calvin did what every other theologian before him had done. He understood the terminology of the Greek Scriptures in a figurative sense, never suspecting that it alluded to an incredibly detailed *parabolic* message hidden in the Prophets.

Nearly every theologian since the time of Origen has viewed the terminology of Scripture in exactly the same way. Hence, none have been able to see the *parabolic images* for what they actually are. I find it somewhat humorous that educated theologians today can cling to so many completely contradictory beliefs about things stated *parabolically* in the Scriptures, yet never see the dichotomy that exists between their disparate beliefs. I probably shouldn’t find that so amusing, considering the circumstances such people will face at the Judgment. But what can I do about it?

They wouldn’t believe the Truth if God Himself smacked them in the face with it.

On the other hand, I find it sad that a bunch of pompous, pious, pretentious air-heads are misleading a vast multitude for no reason other than the fact that it gratifies their egos to have others think they know what they are *talking about* when they really don’t have a clue. That is certainly the case in connection with the two lies you mentioned, both of which identify the Jews as the Israel spoken of by the Prophets. Although that ignorant belief did not actually originate with the fool John Nelson Darby, he was the one who promoted it the most assiduously.

It is interesting to see how Satan worked over the span of several centuries to introduce Dispensationalism—which will eventually prove to be one of his most potent lies—into the Church. He did it the same way he has introduced a whole host of other lies. He piggy-backed it on top of the Truth. I certainly don’t have the time or other resources available to me right now to explain how he was able to do that. But if you will remind me before the next issue, I’ll be happy to put together a more in-depth explanation.

John Darby was an Irishman who was born in 1800 and died in 1882. He worked his way up to become a leader of the Plymouth Brethren in his later years. Along the way, he developed a theological system in which a literal interpretation of the Scriptures was coupled with a strongly dispensational and premillennial interpretation of the prophecies concerning Israel. In that system, of course, the Jews were identified as Israel.

Darby’s detailed theological system was not well-accepted overseas, so he brought it to America. It found fertile ground here for a variety of reasons. One reason was because Satan had earlier inculcated American Christians with another lie, one known as “postmillennialism.” After that lie became a popular belief, he then allowed conservative Christians to see the lie for what it was. That’s when God, for His Own reasons—as Paul clearly explains in 2 Thessalonians 2:11–12—allowed Satan to use Darby in disseminating a totally distorted understanding of what the Prophets have described *parabolically* concerning the Body of Jesus Christ, that is, concerning Israel. However, God also allowed Darby to blend that lie with a fairly accurate version of the Truth the Early Church understood concerning premillennialism.

Darby's Dispensational Theory gained a much wider following in America than it otherwise might have if Americans had not begun to face the turn of the nineteenth century with a growing expectation that the End was near. Americans were looking for answers, and Satan had the perfect lie for them. Darby's blend of Truth and error satisfied their growing interest in biblical prophecies concerning the End. Consequently, Darby's deadly deception was readily accepted and widely distributed by a multitude.

In 1876, a group of conservative leaders initiated the annual Niagra Bible Conference for the purpose of prophetic study. That group, more than any other, was responsible for the spread of the literal interpretation of the Scriptures in general and the dispensational interpretation of biblical prophecy in specific. Their influence continues to this day in the notes included in every Scofield Bible. (C. I. Scofield was a leading advocate of Dispensational Theory in the early 1900s.)

Another reason conservative Christians found Darby's folly appealing relates to Darwin's introduction of the theory of evolution. The liberal goofiness that grew out of Darwin's theory drove conservative Christians into a ridiculous defensive position that they are still unwilling to abandon. And that attitude has resulted in many conservative churches today becoming mired in a quixotic quest for a spiritual utopia founded on nothing more than a mystical euphoria in which God Himself is attesting His good pleasure with various "signs and wonders." Those folks ignore completely what Paul said about Satan and his lying signs and wonders [Editor: 2 Thess. 2:9]. Moreover, most "fundamentalist" churches have long since rejected the Truth that God requires nothing more than a love of the Truth He has revealed in the Scriptures. They have no idea that, if you have that, everything else will follow.

Regrettably, the Father of All Lies fully intends to capitalize on the confusion he has introduced concerning the identity of Israel. As I have shown you repeatedly in *The Voice of Elijah® Update*, the Early Church Fathers knew the Jews had been rejected. They also understood the Church is now the only Israel there is in the eyes of God. Unfortunately, their accurate understanding of the Truth concerning the *parabolic image* of the Body of Jesus Christ was lost when Origen introduced his heresy. Now we have only the *parabolic statements* of the Prophets and

Apostles to verify the Truth. Will that be enough to convince most people of the Truth that I teach? No. Does it matter? No. God is going to do what He has *promised* to do no matter what the skeptics and scoffers ignorantly choose to believe.

Multitudes of "Christians" attend church regularly, yet they have nothing more than a bunch of "hope so" beliefs without any solid basis in the Scriptures for those beliefs. Consequently, the "hope" of most "Christians" today is nothing more than a wish. It reminds me of what I heard when I was a boy, constantly wishing for things I didn't have: "Why don't you spit in one hand and wish in the other? See which one fills up first." I don't have any reason to wish for anything anymore. I have a hope that is based firmly on an absolutely incredible insight into the Hebrew idioms and *parabolic images* that the Prophets and Apostles used. That is much more than I ever could have wished for in my wildest dreams.

Editor: With so many lies existing in the Church today, a book could probably be written explaining their origins. I'm not suggesting you write one, but I am curious to know if you have been able to trace the origin of most lies back to some particular person or period in history. Of the ones you have traced, have you ever been surprised by what you found? If so, would you talk about those things which surprised you the most?

Elijah: When you say "trace the origin of most lies back to some particular person," you imply that lies originate with people. They don't. Every lie comes directly from the Father of All Lies. People merely believe his lies and pass them along to others because they want to do what Satan's lies allow them to do. I didn't say that; Jesus Himself did:

"You are of {your} father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own {nature;} for he is a liar, and the father of lies."

(John 8:44)

In saying that lies originate with Satan, however, I am not saying that Satan does not use specific

individuals to propagate his lies. He does. He normally uses a single individual as his primary spokesman because a solitary dupe is easier to control than a group of deluded people whose egos easily get in the way of what he is seeking to accomplish. But God works essentially the same way. He doesn't call a group of people. He calls individuals, one at a time, and He expects each person He calls to accomplish one particular task. By that I *mean* He does not expect an Evangelist to teach or a Teacher to evangelize. He expects them to do what they were called to do.

Consider the implications of what it *means* for both God and Satan to work through individuals. Truth is an extremely narrowly defined body of information. So any person whom God has called will always have a specific message to adhere to and never deviate from or change. By contrast, since error has an infinite spectrum of notions to draw from, an agent of Satan can and will say almost anything that comes to his mind. But the limited character of the Truth is not a negative, it is a positive. By that I *mean* the cohesiveness of the Truth will always confirm its truthfulness in the minds of those who are seeking to know the Truth. They can easily recognize error because it does not agree with the Truth they understand.

Truth makes perfect sense when it is accurately understood. However, I learned a long time ago that anyone who sincerely wants to know the Truth about anything—I don't care what it is—faces one major hurdle: They must find someone or something who both knows the Truth and can explain it to them in terms that they can understand. That "someone" might be a living person who speaks to them face to face, or it could just as easily be a dead person who speaks to them through a book, a videotape, an audiotape, or some other means. It could even be an archaeological artifact that conveys an unwritten message concerning an Age long since vanished.

If a person can understand the message, anyone or anything can be a messenger. It doesn't matter who or what tells them what they need to know. But the fact remains that someone has to speak the Truth before we can understand it because, unless you want to assume divine revelation, we cannot reasonably expect to pluck the Truth out of thin air. After all, the accumulated knowledge we have today is the result of thousands of years of trial and error combined with scientific observation on the part of millions of people.

Only a fool would assume he could figure all that out in a single lifetime.

The problem with believing what people tell you is, most people don't know what they are *talking about*. And regrettably, most of their listeners don't care whether or not they know what they are talking about. That's because most people have no concern for Truth. If something sounds good, they believe it without question. Consequently, the person who wants to know the Truth gradually comes to realize that the only way to be certain about anything is to learn it from someone who is an authority in regard to that particular truth. That's why we have universities and technological institutes. The people who teach there are doing nothing more than distilling salient information out of a vast body of literature published by experts in the field. They are then making that information understandable to those of us who want to work our way up to the highest level of understanding.

Most "Christians" today are not willing to accept the fact that a knowledge of the Scriptures must be acquired in exactly the same way as a knowledge of any other area of study. They won't admit that everyone has to diligently apply themselves to studying the Scriptures if they ever hope to understand what the Scriptures have to say. That's because Satan has convinced this generation that some sort of mystical "illumination" provides Believers all they need in order to understand the message of the Scriptures. That is goofiness taken to an extreme. If that understanding of illumination were true, there would be no need for anyone to go to church, a Bible school, or a seminary. We could all just sit home and read the Bible. Everybody would come to exactly the same understanding of the Truth and we would all live in perfect harmony. That does not reflect the reality that exists in the Church today. Nor does it accurately represent the Reformers' view of illumination.

Nearly every Christian thinks that his or her understanding of the Scriptures is the only "right" one and everybody else is wrong. Either that, or they don't really care what anyone else believes because they have no interest in knowing the Truth. Yet the mere fact that one person preaches to or teaches another in a church service or Sunday School class demonstrates just how ridiculous the belief is that everybody can read and understand the message of

the Scriptures for themselves. The basic assumption underlying all teaching and preaching is that people can't come to an accurate understanding of the Truth on their own. They need someone to teach them. So the logical thing to do is to reject Satan's stupid "truth by osmosis" and get serious about the issue at hand. But they won't. They will adamantly refuse to accept the fact that the only way to learn what the Scriptures have to say is to hear it from someone who knows.

The question is, Who is sufficiently qualified to teach or preach the Scriptures in God's Church? Most folks occupying the pews on Sunday morning have been led to believe that anyone who has attended a seminary or Bible college is. But that assumes the teachers who teach at those institutions are also qualified to teach. That would appear to be a false assumption. It clearly ignores the fact that two teachers at the same theological institution will quite often teach doctrines that are diametrically opposed. Logic alone tells you one, if not both, of those two doctrines is a lie. That means one, if not both, of those teachers is not qualified to teach God's Truth.

In fact, some teachers merely explain the various theological doctrines and then leave the choice of which one is true up to the student. Since such folks don't even bother to pretend they are teaching God's Truth, one can hardly make the claim for them. That brings up another nasty little issue. If someone is not willing to make the claim that what they teach is true, they are obviously a Pretender. The only reason God calls anyone is to teach and preach the Truth.

I dare say that most who have done postgraduate work in the area of theology have come away with the conclusion that there is no definite Truth to be found in the Scriptures. They have been taught everything depends on what you choose to believe. That is a lie that God fully intends to disclose for what it is here at the End. And as to the question of who is qualified to teach the message of the Scriptures to God's Church, I won't beat around the bush. I claim that I am. But that is only because God called me to do it. And lest some fool object to that claim, I should remind you it is nothing more than the claim millions of others make for themselves every time they get up and teach in God's Church. So I'm content to let your readers decide for themselves if my calling is valid.

That was a diatribe. You asked me about tracing lies to one particular person, and all I did was confirm

that Satan normally uses a single individual to initiate his stupid notions. But it somehow felt right to take on a few of Satan's more insidious lies. Maybe somebody will see the Truth because of what I said.

To answer your question, however, yes, I have been surprised by what I have found in tracing lies and identifying liars down through history. And that has happened on more than one occasion. The most surprising thing I have found to date is probably the fact that the origin of modern Judaism can be traced back to one liar who claimed to be a prophet of God nearly a century and a half before the birth of Christ. That fool evidently stood up and made some astounding prophecy at a "Great Synagogue" attended by the leaders of the Jews. However, it appears those men accepted that man's prophecy as valid only because the high priest intervened on his behalf. The result was, what little bit of Truth the Jews still had at that time was lost to them forever.

I don't know a whole lot more than that about those events right now. I uncovered what I just told you while I was doing preliminary research for the second volume of *The Mystery of Scripture* a little over four years ago. I haven't gotten back to look into the matter since. But the Dead Sea Scrolls *talk about* the false prophet and what he said, so I assume everything will come together eventually. It is obvious that whoever wrote those texts understood the idioms and *parabolic imagery* the Prophets used. They use the same technical terms in order to convey an extremely precise *meaning*. Scholars who have studied the texts don't understand the Qumran sect's concerns that the false prophet had distorted *The Teaching*. The Qumran sect knew that is what had happened. But that is obvious only if you understand what Moses and the Prophets have to say concerning the ratification of the New Covenant with the individual members of Israel.

Editor: In past issues you have included the testimony of various individuals who are assisting you in what you do. As interesting as that is, I suspect most people want to hear your own "testimony" and about your calling. Since it might be some time before your autobiography, God Called; I Answered is completed, would you mind sharing a few things with our readers that you haven't talked about before? For instance, when did you first realize that God had called you for the specific purpose of restoring The Apostolic Teaching? What

circumstances led you to believe this is what He wanted you to do?

Elijah: I don't remember what I've already mentioned, so bear with me if I repeat myself. God called me on August 17, 1966, about 6 o'clock in the evening. At that time, I saw a vision in which a brilliant light was emanating from the throne of God and a man robed in white was standing just to the right of that throne. As soon as the vision appeared, my body became paralyzed, and I was forced to remain in a rigid upright position with my arms raised over my head for several minutes while I voiced my own calling. The words that poured out of my mouth came from a deep burning in the center of my chest. They told me I was "called for the Lord and God Almighty."

I had repented and been born again six years before God called me. But by the time God called me, I was an eighteen-year-old kid desperately trying to back out of my commitment to Jesus Christ. All I wanted was some way to hide from God. So I resisted, stubbornly trying to stop the words that were flowing like a fire out of my mouth. I struggled to get away from the experience for quite awhile. I surrendered my will to His only when I realized continued resistance was futile. God could kill me where I stood.

When I relented, the vision went away immediately, but the paralysis only gradually subsided. And the words that had come out of my mouth that day were the only thing I had to go on. I knew God had called me, but I had no direction of any kind from the Lord for over three years. I was left to muddle through, making one goofy mistake after the other. I can see that clearly now. But I certainly didn't know it at the time.

I had a second vision in October of 1969. In that vision, I saw a large book, which I immediately recognized as a Bible, spread out before me. A man robed in white came walking diagonally down and across the left page of the book with His right arm extended out to me, motioning me to get up and join Him. In one of those "whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know" experiences that Paul mentions in 2 Corinthians 12:2-3, I saw myself get up and join the man on the pages of that gigantic Bible. Then I watched while He and I spent between half an hour and an hour walking together through the Scriptures.

As we walked, the man explained specific passages of Scripture to me. He took me back and forth

from one passage to another, explaining how all the passages were related and what they were saying. The more He explained, the more excited I became. I kept saying: "I've never heard anyone teach these things before. I've got to get back and tell people what I've heard." Finally, just before the vision ended, the man warned me that very few would actually believe what He had told me. I specifically remember He said Christian leaders would be angry when I began teaching the things I understood about the Scriptures. After the vision ended, I got up to go tell others what I had heard. That's when I realized I could not remember anything the man had said except for His warning that people in the Church would be angry and reject what I had been called to teach.

Now most folks who read what I just told you are probably thinking I claim some special revelation from God. You know better than that because you have heard me deride anyone who says, "The Lord told me." Perhaps I haven't stated what I believe in exactly this way before, but the only Truth you need to know can be found hidden in the Greek and Hebrew Scriptures. And the Apostles were the last to receive any kind of *subjective revelation* concerning the Truth conveyed by that *objective revelation*. But I have also told you there is no longer any need for *subjective revelation* because the *objective revelation* of the Scriptures is at long last being opened for all to read. So I don't claim for myself anything other than what every other person ministering in the Church claims. I just read the Scriptures and teach what I find written. But you had best watch out for that one. In calling me to do what I am doing, God is mocking stupidity. He is mocking, taunting, and ridiculing the ignorant doctrines of men. Any time God says, "Okay, if that's the way you say it is, that's the way it is," you can rest assured He has a vicious, burning hatred directed at the stupidity of men.

Actually, for several years I did think that God must have revealed something to me that day. But I gradually realized that was illogical. If I couldn't remember anything that was said, He could not have revealed anything to me. Now that I think about it, however, He did tell me most Christians would reject my message and become angry when they heard what I had to say. So I suppose a case could be made for that as some kind of revelation, but it is hardly in the same category as an understanding of the seven sealed messages of the Hebrew Scriptures. It's more

like telling someone that people will get angry at you for telling them bluntly that they don't have the foggiest notion of what they are *talking about*. That fact goes without saying. And that information doesn't help all that much now that I understand God has called me to intentionally mock the idiots who are teaching His People lies. But I suppose I needed the warning at the time. And it has certainly tempered my attitude now that I have a better understanding of my calling and the sheer volume of information God has called me to teach.

It wasn't until April of 1974 that I finally began to understand the *meaning* and *significance* of the vision I had in 1969. At the time, I was trying to meet the deadline for submission of my Master's thesis. But I could not understand why Jeremiah and Ezekiel were quoting Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28-30 in those passages where they promise that God is going to ratify a New Covenant with Israel. I especially couldn't understand why they had rephrased Leviticus 26:12. It didn't make sense.

I went to bed a couple of nights before the May 1 deadline, rather despondent that I had no conclusion to present for the research I had done. But at exactly three o'clock in the morning, I woke up wide awake with the answer fairly dancing in my head: Jesus Christ had to be Israel. I went downstairs to the table where all my reference books were piled three deep, one on top of the other, and I began to do what I had been doing for nearly a month. I tracked the usage of one word after another through the Hebrew Scriptures and on into the Greek Scriptures. I don't even remember what those words were now. But that's when I realized I had been called to do in real life exactly what I had seen myself doing in the vision. God expected me to go back and forth in the original text of the Scriptures tracking how one passage referred back to what was stated in a previous passage. He was merely telling me that, as I worked, the One Who is that "Word" would speak to me from the Scriptures. That is certainly not any kind of revelation. That's nothing more than what everybody else in the Church thinks they can do. But they don't know the Hebrew Scriptures have been sealed with seven seals for the past two thousand years at least or that those seven seals are now being removed.

It became fairly obvious after my initial surge of understanding in April 1974 that nobody else saw the

things I saw in the Scriptures. But I had no idea what God expected me to do with my understanding of the Truth. Nothing was ever crystal-clear to me at first. Everything always had gaps in it to one degree or another. Consequently, I floundered badly, more often than not just going around in circles, chasing my tail, so to speak. I still do that today, although I am getting better at avoiding Satan's snares. If I were just a little smarter, a little more logical in my thinking, and a whole lot less prone to distraction, I probably could have been where I am now in my understanding of the Scriptures well over fifteen years ago. But I learned a long time ago not to regret the past. What's done is done. So we'll continue on from here.

My vague understanding of the things I have seen in the Scriptures is sometimes rather ridiculous when I look back at it. For example, the first seven or eight years after I saw that the Jews had been "cut off from Israel" and Jesus Christ was "*The Remnant*" of Israel, I *talked about* the things I saw in the Scriptures in terms of idioms and images. I had no idea those two things were the constituent parts of parables.

It wasn't until sometime in early 1981 that I was suddenly able to understand that God had spoken through the Prophets in terms of the same *parabolic images* and Hebrew idioms that Jesus Christ and the Apostles used. By that time, however, I had already seen the *parabolic imagery* related to the seven seals that sealed the "testament" of Jesus Christ, and I had concluded that God would not have called me to keep my understanding of the Scriptures to myself. So it was fairly obvious that He expected me to *restore* an understanding of what the Church had lost somewhere along the way. That was when I saw the *parabolic imagery* related to Elijah and the "latter rain." But I still had no idea why God had called me at this particular time in history.

It was not until April or May of 1992, while I was putting together the information in *The Advent of Christ and AntiChrist*, that I finally understood what my ministry was all about. Believe it or not, the Early Church Fathers told me. To put it mildly, that information was a bit of a shock. I am not a person with an intense craving for fame or fortune. I could be happy digging ditches and communing with the great outdoors. I did that for a couple of years when I was twenty-five or so. Then I worked for nearly fifteen years painting and remodeling houses. Satan was

even able to use those things to distract me because I enjoyed the peace and quiet working by myself. My point? I am not doing what I do because I chose to do it. I am doing it because God called me to do it. I certainly don't have a martyr complex that makes me crave the animosity I know is coming from those in the Church who want to keep God in a box of their own making. But, knowing what I know now, I have nothing but pity for those poor fools who are ministering in God's Church because they chose to rather than because God called them to. It doesn't work that way. Believe me, they would be better off ministering as a priest in some Satanic cult. At least then they would be honest about which god they serve.

Editor: Because of the "harsh" (i.e., truthful) things you say about the lies taught in the Church, many readers will probably find it hard to believe that you once held to most of the same beliefs you now castigate. I remember you saying in an early issue of The Voice of Elijah® newsletter ("Questions & Answers," July 1991, p. 18) that you became "furious with God" in 1973 because you had to give up one of your "most firmly held convictions" when you found it did not agree with the message of Scripture. Would you tell everyone what that "firmly held conviction" was? Would you also tell us about some of your other previously held convictions that the Truth of Scripture required you to give up?

Elijah: The theological belief I gave up in 1973 was the Pentecostal doctrine that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is always accompanied by the evidence of speaking in tongues. I had been taught that right after God called me. I got it from someone I assumed God had called as a Teacher. I was wrong. A Baptist would probably find my anger in regard to giving up that belief rather ridiculous. He has never believed it in the first place. But your question misses the point of what I said in that interview. I was not angry that I had to give up my belief in a lie. I was angry that God had *allowed* me to believe a lie in the first place. And, as I recall, that is how I stated it back in 1991.

I don't care whether I have to let go of some concocted doctrine of men. All I want is to know the Truth. So it doesn't matter to me how many goofy beliefs I give up along "The Way." However, when I finally saw the Truth about that particular doctrine, it amazed me that I had firmly believed it, yet it was so

obviously in contradiction to the Truth I saw in the Hebrew Scriptures. That made me angry.

It infuriated me that God had *allowed* me to believe something that I now knew was not true. Everything else I believed was suddenly suspect. The question then became, What other lies has God *allowed* me to believe? But then, as I sometimes do when I am being abjectly stupid, I felt the conviction of the Holy Spirit and the sudden realization that I was looking at my circumstances crookedly. God had not *allowed* me to believe a lie. As a matter of fact, He had *allowed* me to see the Truth. Does that make sense? It was one of those "It's not over 'til it's over" or "it's not over 'til the fat lady sings" kind of things. If I had gone to Hell because I believed a lie, I might have had reason for anger. Since I was not yet in Hell, God had not *allowed* me to believe a lie. Therefore, I didn't have a leg to stand on.

The fool is probably looking down his arrogant nose right now and rather smugly congratulating himself because he has never had to deal with the fact that he believed a lie. But he fails to understand that is only because he has never diligently sought the Truth. Everyone who seeks to know the Truth will one day face the fact that something they have firmly believed is a lie. Most will undoubtedly handle it better than I did. But then God has always had to drag me kicking and screaming into some new area of awareness because I am basically a whiner, a complainer, and an all-around not-so-very-obedient child.

I am well aware that the only reason God hasn't been done with me a long time ago is because He intends to use me. And since I am the least likely pick for the job, it should be fairly easy for all to see that God called me to do what I am doing. Unfortunately, most won't. My only consolation in that regard lies in the fact that I know the fools who don't believe what I teach are in a whole lot more trouble with God than I ever was. I may foul things up royally from time to time, but at least I firmly believe the Truth God called me to teach. So I am right up there with the best of them. As I've told you before, salvation is completely by faith. But that's faith in the sense of *WHAT you believe*, not faith in the sense of *THAT you believe*. Everybody believes something about God. The nasty little crux of the issue regarding salvation by faith (belief) relates to whether or not *WHAT you believe* about God is TRUE. ■