



Did He Say the Body of Truth Remains Entire?

A sound mind, and one which does not expose its possessor to danger, and is devoted to piety and the love of truth, will eagerly meditate upon those things which God has placed within the power of mankind, and has subjected to our knowledge, and will make advancement in [acquaintance with] them, rendering the knowledge of them easy to him by means of daily study. These things are such as fall [plainly] under our observation, and are clearly and unambiguously in express terms set forth in the Sacred Scriptures.

And therefore the parables ought not to be adapted to ambiguous expressions. For, if this be not done, both he who explains them will do so without danger, and the parables will receive a like interpretation from all, and the body of truth remains entire, with a harmonious adaptation of its members, and without any collision [of its several parts]. But to apply expressions which are not clear or evident to interpretations of the parables, such as every one discovers for himself as inclination leads him, [is absurd.] For in this way no one will possess the rule of truth; but in accordance with the number of persons who explain the parables will be found the various systems of truth, in mutual opposition to each other, and setting forth antagonistic doctrines, like the questions current among the Gentile philosophers.

According to this course of procedure, therefore, man would always be inquiring but never finding, because he has rejected the very method of discovery. And when the Bridegroom comes, he who has his lamp untrimmed, and not burning with the brightness of a steady light, is classed among those who obscure the interpretations of the parables, forsaking Him who by His plain announcements freely imparts gifts to all who come to Him, and is excluded from His marriage-chamber. Since, therefore, the entire Scriptures, the prophets, and the Gospels, can be

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clearly, unambiguously, and harmoniously understood by all, although all do not believe them; and since they proclaim that one only God, to the exclusion of all others, formed all things by His word, whether visible or invisible, heavenly or earthly, in the water or under the earth, as I have shown from the very words of Scripture; and since the very system of creation to which we belong testifies, by what falls under our notice, that one Being made and governs it,—those persons will seem truly foolish who blind their eyes to such a clear demonstration, and will not behold the light of the announcement [made to them]; but they put fetters upon themselves, and every one of them imagines, by means of their obscure interpretations of the parables, that he has found out a God of his own.

For that there is nothing whatever openly, expressly, and without controversy said in any part of Scripture respecting the Father conceived of by those who hold a contrary opinion, they themselves testify, when they maintain that the Saviour privately taught these same things not to all, but to certain only of His disciples who could comprehend them, and who understood what was intended by Him through means of arguments, enigmas, and parables. They come, [in fine,] to this, that they maintain there is one Being who is proclaimed as God, and another as Father, He who is set forth as such through means of parables and enigmas.

Irenaeus, "Against Heresies," Book ii, Chap. xxvii, in Roberts and Donaldson (Eds.), *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, (1867), Vol. 1, p. 398.

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Published Quarterly by
Voice of Elijah, Inc.

Allen Friess, Executive Editor
Susan Clay, Managing Editor

Volume 8
Number 3
July 1997

All correspondence
should be addressed to:

Voice of Elijah, Inc.
P.O. Box 2257
Rockwall, TX 75087-2257

Subscription rates:
(1 year, U.S. Funds)

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

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A Note From the Editor

If you have paid attention to my comments in recent articles, you have no doubt noticed that I have little regard for most “teachers” in the Church today. The reason for this is simple: Most “teachers” know little of the Truth of God’s Word, yet they readily spout off their opinions about this, that, and the other to anyone who is willing to listen. Unfortunately, there are a lot of people willing to listen these days. As a result, the blind are still leading the blind just as they were when Christ walked the Earth (Matt. 15:14). And just as it happened in His day, so it will happen in our day: The blind (teachers and followers alike) will eventually end up in the Pit of Hell.

If you hope to avoid falling into that pit, now is the time to stop being a blind follower of any person or group—including *The Voice of Elijah*®. As I have stressed repeatedly in past issues, if you are a True Believer, it is imperative that you examine the Scriptures carefully and scrutinize everything you hear taught. The attitude of the Berean Christians in this regard is one you would be wise to emulate (Acts 17:11).

If you believe nothing else I say in this series of articles, believe the fact that the overwhelming majority of “teachers” in the Church today know little of the Truth of God’s Word and, as such, have certainly not been called by God to teach. Just because a teacher is sincere, dedicated, articulate, well-regarded, or well-educated doesn’t prove anything. Appearances count for nothing as far as God is concerned. The only thing that matters to Him is the Truth, the whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth. You would be wise to have that same concern.

As I have told you numerous times, every True Believer needs to be taught. God established the office of Teacher in the Church for that very purpose. The challenge that has always faced True Believers is in finding legitimate Teachers to teach them. In His wisdom, God has provided His People with a valuable tool to help them discern between true and false teachers—the Bible.

The purpose of this series of articles has been to offer you some advice on how to be more observant when reading the Scriptures. And the reason you need to be more observant is so you can verify whether the things you hear taught are true. To help you in this endeavor, I have tried to impress on you the importance of looking for specific things as you read the Bible. I have repeatedly told you to look for:

- ▲ *Stated reasons why something is true.*
- ▲ *How something is accomplished.*
- ▲ *Conditions that must be met.*
- ▲ *Who is being spoken to or spoken about.*
- ▲ *Contrasts and comparisons between two things.*
- ▲ *Exceptions or restrictions to what has been said.*

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- ▲ Repeated words and phrases.
- ▲ Cause and effect.
- ▲ Conclusions and summaries.

To help you find these things, I suggested you watch for specific key words and phrases which often indicate that one of the things listed above is being talked about or explained. The examples we have looked at in past issues make it unnecessary for me to explain how all of this fits together, so I won't review it here. If your memory needs to be refreshed, you can review the past five issues. For now, let's move on to the next item on the list.

Who Is Being Spoken To or About

In the last issue, we looked at the importance of paying attention to the conditions stipulated in Scripture which apply to True Believers. As I stated then, one of the serious failings of the modern Church is its failure to stress not only the importance, but the absolute need, of Christians to meet specific conditions set forth by God in order to receive His blessings. What I failed to point out, however, is that sometimes the opposite is also true. That is, the Church attaches conditions to Christians that don't specifically apply to them (at least not all of them). Here's a classic example:

But the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had designated. And when they saw Him, they worshiped {Him;} but some were doubtful. And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

(Matthew 28:16–20)

This passage contains what is known as the Great Commission. As you no doubt know, the Church has used this one passage above all others

to teach that every layman in the Church has the responsibility to present the Gospel to the world. The problem is, that's not true. (See "What's Left of the Right That Stayed Down When He Went Up?" *The Voice of Elijah*® Update, September 1995.)

If you look carefully at the context, you will see that Jesus was not addressing any and every Christian who might someday read His words. He was specifically addressing His eleven disciples and no one else. He was giving them—the eleven—the authority to make disciples and to teach those disciples all that He had taught them.

You see, at the heart of this matter is the question, *Who* was Jesus speaking to? As the text clearly tells us, He was speaking specifically to the eleven disciples *who* had walked with Him and had been taught by Him for nearly three years. He was not addressing anyone else nor was He handing over His authority to anyone but those eleven.

That's not to say others did not eventually gain authority to preach the Gospel and teach others. Indeed, they did. However, those who received such authority got it from someone who had the authority to pass it on to them. Obviously, once the Apostles received authority from Christ, they had the right to pass that authority on to others, just as Christ had given it to them. But that's another issue.

The point I'm trying to make here is simply this: *Who* is being spoken to or spoken about is not something to be overlooked when studying the Bible. As the example above illustrates, it can make a big difference in how we understand things.

Figuring Out Who's Who

In past issues, I have given you key words and phrases to watch for when reading Scripture because such things often point you toward specific information you need to know. This time is no exception. However, the key words I give you here may not help you as much as others I have given you in the past. On the other hand, they may help you quite a bit. I'll let you be the judge.

The main thing to keep in mind is that it's important to know who is being addressed (spoken to), who is being referred to (spoken about), and, in

some cases, who is actually doing the speaking. While this may be obvious in most cases, it's not as obvious in others. Even when it is obvious, however, that doesn't mean we always comprehend the meaning or significance of what has been said to or about a particular person or group.

For instance, with the exception of Paul's letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon, we know that each New Testament epistle was originally written to a large body of born-again Believers within the Church. Yet even though everyone knows who these letters were written to, very few are willing to concede that everything in these letters applies to Believers. For instance, here's a Scripture passage that many modern "Christians" refuse to believe could possibly apply to them:

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law. Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

(Galatians 5:16–21)

Do you know why today's "Christians" refuse to believe the highlighted portion of this passage applies to born-again Believers? Because false teachers have taught them that nothing in this world can keep a person from inheriting eternal life once they have been born again. Yet Paul has just stated this is not true. He warned the True Believers in the churches of Galatia—that's who he was writing to (Gal. 1:2)—on more than one occasion that it was possible for them to fall back into the ways of the flesh and be lost.

Most in the Church today refuse to believe what Paul clearly stated to the Galatians because they would rather have their ears tickled by the

soothing words of false teachers than face the facts. I hope you are not part of that crowd. If you are, perhaps Paul's warning to the "saints" in Ephesus will make you rethink your position:

*Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. But do not let immorality or any impurity or greed even be named among you, as is proper among saints; and {there must be no} filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. For this you know with certainty, that **no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.** Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.*

(Ephesians 5:1–6)

Once again, it is very clear who Paul is addressing here—True Believers. Besides the fact that he states this in his introduction (Eph. 1:1), he also makes it known when he talks about what is "proper among saints." So if Paul was specifically writing to the "saints" in Ephesus, who do you think he has in mind when he talks about the "immoral," "impure," "covetous ... idolater" who will have no "inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God"? He has in mind any born-again Believer (saint) who fails to hold tightly to his or her belief in the Truth (which is a condition of salvation—as discussed in the last newsletter) and decides to walk in the flesh. If you are a True Believer, you would be wise to take Paul's advice: Don't be deceived by the "empty words" of liars who teach that "saints" cannot be excluded from "the kingdom of Christ and God." Such words come straight from the mouth of Satan himself.

Some Key Words

The point I have tried to make so far is simple: *Who* is being spoken to or spoken about at any point in Scripture is extremely important. That's why it's imperative when you read Scripture that you

understand who the following key words are referring to: *I, you, your, he, she, his, her, me, we, us, our, whom, they, them, their, those, and these*. You should also include in this group any numerical words that refer to specific individuals or groups. For instance, we will look at several examples in a minute where the words *two* and *both* carry significance because of who they refer to.

These key words generally point back (although sometimes they point forward) to some particular individual or group previously mentioned. For instance, if you examine the context of the three passages quoted above, you will see numerous examples of these words being used. (Bear in mind that words like *these* and *those* can be used to refer to things and not just people and groups.)

In all likelihood, you probably passed over these words rather quickly because the context made it obvious who was being referred to so you didn't have to think about it. That will be the case in most instances, but not always. Sometimes you will find several different individuals or groups mentioned simultaneously and thus need to be more contemplative in ascertaining who is being talked about. Here's an example:

Therefore remember, that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called "Uncircumcision" by the so-called "Circumcision," {which is} performed in the flesh by human hands—{remember} that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who made both {groups into} one, and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, {which is} the Law of commandments {contained} in ordinances, that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, {thus} establishing peace, and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. AND HE CAME AND PREACHED PEACE TO YOU WHO WERE FAR AWAY, AND PEACE TO THOSE WHO WERE NEAR; for

through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father. 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 2:11–22)

If you have read *Not All Israel Is Israel*, you already have a basic understanding of what this passage is talking about. It is explained on page 192, note 7. This is the central question: Who are the two groups who have both been joined together into one body and one new man? Are they not Gentile Believers (those who were "far off") and Israel (those who were "near")? If these two have become one, then who are they? Are they not Jesus Christ—or more precisely, the Body of Jesus Christ—Who is Israel? Study the context and think about it. If after thinking about it you still doubt that Jesus Christ is Israel, then you must have overlooked the parallel that Paul made between Christ and Israel. Look again at what he said:

{Remember} that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.
(Ephesians 2:12)

Paul makes it clear that to be "separate from Christ" is to be "excluded from the commonwealth of Israel." That's because he knows that Jesus Christ (which includes His Body—the Church) and Israel are one and the same. If you are "in Christ," you are also "in Israel." That's exactly the way God sees it.

Think about it logically for a minute. God told the Prophet Jeremiah that He was one day going to make a New Covenant with "The House" of Israel (Jer. 31:31–34). If Gentiles are able to participate in that New Covenant through Christ, then by logical extension they would have to be part of "The House" of Israel because that's *who* the New

Covenant was promised to and made with. The fact that the Church today does not understand this fundamental doctrine speaks volumes about how completely ignorant and deceived the Church really is. That may not be nice to say, but it's true.

Here's another passage where several individuals and groups are spoken of simultaneously and where an understanding of *who* is specifically being referred to (near the end of the passage) is key. (Although this passage is pretty much self-explanatory, I have highlighted some of the key words mentioned above just to point out their frequency of use.)

*Wives, {be subject} to **your** own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, **He** Himself {being} the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives {ought to be} to **their** husbands in everything. Husbands, love **your** wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for **her**; that **He** might sanctify **her**, having cleansed **her** by the washing of water with the word, that **He** might present to Himself the church in all **her** glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that **she** should be holy and blameless. So husbands ought also to love **their** own wives as **their** own bodies. **He** who loves **his** own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated **his** own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also {does} the church, because **we** are members of **His** body. FOR THIS CAUSE A MAN SHALL LEAVE **HIS** FATHER AND MOTHER, AND SHALL CLEAVE TO **HIS** WIFE; AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH. This mystery is great; but **I** am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. Nevertheless let each individual among **you** also love **his** own wife even as himself; and {let} the wife {see to it} that **she** respect **her** husband.*
(Ephesians 5:22–33)

Did you follow Paul's line of thought? You probably did. That is, until you reached the point where he quotes Genesis 2:24:

FOR THIS CAUSE A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER, AND SHALL CLEAVE TO HIS WIFE; AND THE

TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH.
(Ephesians 5:31)

Now the question is this: *Who* is Paul referring to when he says "the two shall become one flesh"? You may think he is referring to a man and his wife. But he's not. He makes it clear in the verse that follows that he is speaking about the union of Christ and the Church—which he says is a great mystery:

This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.
(Ephesians 5:32)

Even though it is not readily apparent what the "mystery" is that Paul alludes to, it is nonetheless apparent that this mystery relates to Christ and the Church becoming one. Yet most "Christians" today will never believe that Paul's quotation of Genesis 2:24 has any significance beyond that of a man and woman. That's because they have been conditioned to believe that the mystery of "two becoming one" applies exclusively to a man and his wife. That's the problem with having preconceived ideas about what the Scriptures say. You assume all kinds of things you shouldn't and pay no attention to clearly stated facts that contradict your assumptions. Here's an example where a preconceived idea, this time by Bible translators, has obscured the Truth:

"Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming," says the LORD of hosts. "But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap. And He will sit as a smelter and purifier of silver, and He will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, so that they may present to the LORD offerings in righteousness."
(Malachi 3:1–3)

Ask yourself this question, *Who* is the person being spoken of *who* will be "like a refiner's fire and

fullers' soap" and who will also "purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver"? According to the translators of the New American Standard Bible, this person is the Lord. This is denoted by the fact that the translators capitalized every use of the word *he*. The only time *he* is not capitalized is in the first verse, when it obviously refers back to "the messenger" of the Lord.

This makes it apparent that the translators see a distinction between the Lord and the messenger of the Lord, as well they should. The problem is, the messenger is not just mentioned once in this passage; he is mentioned twice. If you examine the context in which he is mentioned the second time it strongly suggests that he—"the messenger of the covenant"—and not the Lord is the one being spoken of thereafter. And, in fact, he is.

Don't be fooled: The messenger is the one who will refine and purify the sons of Levi in these Last Days. The fact that the translators chose to attribute this activity to the Lord, rather than to the messenger (as the text clearly suggests), can be blamed on their own bias and preconceived ideas. The sad part is, many in these Last Days who need to listen to the messenger will never be refined and purified because they will allow their own preconceived ideas to stand in the way.

Here's one last example that illustrates how Bible translators often let their assumptions influence their interpretation of Scripture:

For He did not subject to angels the world to come, concerning which we are speaking. But one has testified somewhere, saying, "WHAT IS MAN, THAT THOU REMEMBEREST HIM? OR THE SON OF MAN, THAT THOU ART CONCERNED ABOUT HIM? THOU HAST MADE HIM FOR A LITTLE WHILE LOWER THAN THE ANGELS; THOU HAST CROWNED HIM WITH GLORY AND HONOR, AND HAST APPOINTED HIM OVER THE WORKS OF THY HANDS; THOU HAST PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET." For in subjecting all things to him, He left nothing that is not subject to him. But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him. But we do see Him who has been made for a little while lower than the angels, {namely,} Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace

of God He might taste death for everyone.
(Hebrews 2:5-9)

Did you catch where the translators interjected their own assumption into the text? It's in this verse:

For in subjecting all things to him, He left nothing that is not subject to him. But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him.
(Hebrews 2:8b)

This verse follows the author's quotation of Psalm 8:4-6. It's apparent the translators believe man is the One Who has "all things subjected to him." This is denoted by the fact that each mention of *him* is not capitalized. By contrast, *Him* is capitalized in the very next verse to rightly denote that Jesus is the One Who was made "for a little while lower than the angels." The translators got that part right because the writer of Hebrews clearly states he is speaking of Christ.

The issue at hand is whether the author of Hebrews is referring to man when he says all things have been "subjected to him." If we throw out the preconceived notion that sinful man holds a special place of honor in God's eyes and simply make our judgement based on the context, there is no reason to believe the author is referring to anyone but Christ throughout.

We know Hebrews 2:7 is pointing to Christ because the author tells us so in verse 9. So why should we assume that verse 8, which falls between verses 7 and 9, suddenly pertains to man? It doesn't fit the context. On top of this, it's obvious the author of Hebrews is still talking about the differences between Christ and angels that he began discussing in Hebrews 1.

So remember: Get rid of your assumptions when studying Scripture and focus on context, context, context.

Allen Friedman

Contrary to What You May Have Heard, Jeremiah Was No Bullfrog

In the “Questions & Answers” section of the January 1997 issue of *The Voice of Elijah*®, I was asked to explain the *meaning* and *significance* of a single verse of the Bible while at the same time showing how that verse fits into the context of the chapter and book in which it occurs, as well as into the overall context of the Scriptures. In doing that, I gave a brief synopsis of what Moses was trying to accomplish in each of the first five books of the Old Testament. As a result, in the same section of the April 1997 issue, I was asked to provide a similar succinct summary for each of the remaining thirty-four books of the Old Testament. I agreed to do that and then went on to summarize the purpose for which the Book of Ruth was written.

In that same issue, I included a brief introduction in which I *talked about* the nature and purpose of the Hebrew Scriptures. (See “The Holy Bible: What Is It? What Does It *Mean*? Who Wrote It? When and Why?” *The Voice of Elijah*®, April 1997.) In this article, I am continuing to do what I have been asked to do. In so doing, however, I am going to build on the information I provided in that introductory article and in the “Questions & Answers” section of the January and April 1997 issues of *The Voice of Elijah*®.

Let me begin by reminding you of what I said earlier. The Hebrew Scriptures are a combination of both history and prophecy. History explains *what God has done*. Prophecy explains *what God is going to do*. But I should also remind you why it is important to remember that: Moses hid some incredibly important information in the five books of the Bible that he authored. He did that by intentionally giving his readers the impression they were reading history when they were, in fact, reading prophecy. Since all the Prophets of

Israel took their lead from Moses, we should expect to find they used somewhat the same tactic in their works. And we will—later on. For now, let’s take a look at some of the historical books of the Old Testament.

The Deuteronomic History

During the last half of the nineteenth century, Satan allowed liberal scholars to see through some of the ridiculous lies the Church has believed for centuries. Consequently, they began to point out all of the apparent contradictions in the text of the Hebrew Scriptures. Now I’ll grant that Satan is an idiot, but he is certainly not completely stupid. He has enough sense to know that when he tells the Truth in one regard he has to compensate by telling an even greater lie. That’s why liberal scholars today believe things that are even more ridiculous than the absolutely astounding lies that are enshrined in some of the beliefs that have long been held by the Church.

One of Satan’s lies that liberals firmly believe concerning the authorship, nature, and purpose of the Hebrew Scriptures stems from the fact that the biblical books of Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, and 1 and 2 Kings all exhibit the same characteristics. That is, they all have a fairly uniform style, vocabulary, and historical perspective. Consequently, well over one hundred years ago, liberal scholars concluded that Deuteronomy and these six other books—which they call the “Deuteronomic History”—must have all been written by one man.

Since Deuteronomy evidently provided the basis for the reforms of Josiah (2 Kin. 22–23) and the Second Book of Kings ends its account at the time of the Babylonian Captivity, these learned scholars (and they

were certainly learned) naïvely concluded that Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic History were both written around that same time. It never occurred to them that the Prophet who wrote the Deuteronomic History might have been intentionally patterning his work after the things Moses wrote in the Book of Deuteronomy.

As I just mentioned, the Deuteronomic History consists of the Books of Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, and 1 and 2 Kings. You can see, therefore, that Deuteronomy and the six books of the Deuteronomic History provide a complete history of Israel from the Exodus to the Babylonian Captivity. That is their purpose. The Deuteronomic History was *meant* to take up where the Book of Deuteronomy leaves off and continue on to the time of the Babylonian Captivity. Yet each book in the series contributes its own unique set of information to the whole. We will look at the nature and purpose of the individual books in the series a bit later. For now, I want to tell you who wrote the Deuteronomic History and why he did it. That is, I intend to point out the *significance* of the things you find written in the six books of Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, and 1 and 2 Kings.

Historical Record and Prophecy

If you have done any reading at all in the historical books of the Old Testament, you have probably noticed that the author has not only put together an interesting record of historical events, he has also told you how God views those events. That is, he has *interpreted* the history of Israel for you. Let me give you an example:

Now again the anger of the LORD burned against Israel, and it incited David against them to say, "Go, number Israel and Judah." And the king said to Joab the commander of the army who was with him, "Go about now through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, and register the people, that I may know the number of the people." But Joab said to the king, "Now may the LORD your God add to the people a hundred times as many as they are, while the eyes of my lord the king {still} see; but why does my lord the king delight in this thing?" Nevertheless, the king's word prevailed against Joab and against the commanders of the army. So Joab and the commanders of the army went out from the

presence of the king, to register the people of Israel. (2 Samuel 24:1–4)

That passage, and others like it, tells us a Prophet wrote the Deuteronomic History. I say that because only a Prophet would have knowledge of how God felt about certain historical events and what He did to influence them. That makes identification of the author of the Deuteronomic History relatively easy. Liberal scholars have already ascertained that he lived around the time when Nebuchadnezzar took Israel captive to Babylonia (605–587 B.C.). So all we have to do is scrutinize the writings of the Prophets who prophesied at that time. Surely we can find one who betrays a bit of fondness for the historical perspective and phraseology of the Book of Deuteronomy.

The first Prophet we will look at is Zephaniah. In Zephaniah 1:1, the Prophet tells us he prophesied during the reign of Josiah (640–609 B.C.). But there is no evidence that his ministry continued down to the time when Ishmael's assassination of Gedaliah rudely and abruptly terminated his rule as governor and resulted in a mass exodus in which the Israelites went down to Egypt (2 Kin. 25:22–26). Moreover, Zephaniah exhibits a keen interest in the future but very little interest in the past. And his work contains nothing that would indicate he was heavily influenced by the Book of Deuteronomy. Hence, he seems at best only a remote possibility as the author of the Deuteronomic History.

Habakkuk is the next possible candidate. He is thought to have prophesied about the same time as Zephaniah. But since he does not specifically date his ministry in his work, we have no way of knowing that for certain. He, too, shows no evidence of having been greatly influenced by the Book of Deuteronomy. Therefore, since it seems best not to build a theory on unfounded assumptions instead of hard evidence, Habakkuk must be ruled out as the author of the Deuteronomic History.

The third Prophet is a much more likely prospect. Unlike Habakkuk, the Prophet Ezekiel tells us exactly when and where he prophesied. It was after the exile of Jehoiachin and while he was living in captivity among the exiles in Babylonia (Ezek. 1:1–3). That makes him a possible, but somewhat unlikely, candidate for the task of writing a Prophet's history of Israel. I say "unlikely" only because the author of the Deuteronomic History seems to be describing the final events in Judah from

firsthand experience. Yet Ezekiel would not have had immediate knowledge of events that occurred in Jerusalem after the exile of Jehoiachin (597 B.C.). However, Ezekiel does quote Deuteronomy. And he could have gotten the information he needed concerning final events in Judah from other sources. Therefore, he cannot be completely disqualified.

Our brief look at those three Prophets narrows our search down to the Prophet Jeremiah, the only Prophet left that we know of who could have actually written the Deuteronomic History. To tell the Truth, he is also the only one who actually fits all the criteria we have established. First of all, Jeremiah tells us in Jeremiah 1:1–3 that he prophesied from the time of Josiah down to the bitter end. And he also provides information that tells us he personally witnessed many of the events he records. But the evidence that Jeremiah wrote the Deuteronomic History is much greater than that.

I may have given you the impression earlier that the Book of 2 Kings ends with the assassination of Gedaliah, the Jewish governor of Judah. That is not completely accurate. It concludes with a brief note concerning Nebuchadnezzar's treatment of Jehoiachin in Babylon. This is what the author of the Book of 2 Kings says about those two events:

Now {as for} the people who were left in the land of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had left, he appointed Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan over them. When all the captains of the forces, they and {their} men, heard that the king of Babylon had appointed Gedaliah {governor,} they came to Gedaliah to Mizpah, namely, Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and Johanan the son of Kareah, and Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth the Netophathite, and Jaazaniah the son of the Maacathite, they and their men. And Gedaliah swore to them and their men and said to them, "Do not be afraid of the servants of the Chaldeans; live in the land and serve the king of Babylon, and it will be well with you." But it came about in the seventh month, that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, of the royal family, came with ten men and struck Gedaliah down so that he died along with the Jews and the Chaldeans who were with him at Mizpah. Then all the people, both small and great, and the captains of the forces arose and went to Egypt; for they were afraid of the Chaldeans.

Now it came about in the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-seventh {day} of the month, that Evil-merodach king of Babylon, in the year that he became king, released Jehoiachin king of Judah from prison; and he spoke kindly to him and set his throne above the throne of the kings who {were} with him in Babylon. And Jehoiachin changed his prison clothes, and had his meals in the king's presence regularly all the days of his life; and for his allowance, a regular allowance was given him by the king, a portion for each day, all the days of his life. (2 Kings 25:22–30)

The interesting thing about those two events is the fact that the Book of Jeremiah includes a description of them as well. However, if you compare Jeremiah's account with the one above, it is obvious that Jeremiah has not borrowed from the Book of 2 Kings, nor has the author of that book borrowed from him. Yet both accounts sound vaguely the same. Here is what Jeremiah says concerning the assassination of Gedaliah:

Now all the commanders of the forces that were in the field, they and their men, heard that the king of Babylon had appointed Gedaliah the son of Ahikam over the land and that he had put him in charge of the men, women and children, those of the poorest of the land who had not been exiled to Babylon. So they came to Gedaliah at Mizpah, along with Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and Johanan and Jonathan the sons of Kareah, and Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth, and the sons of Ephai the Netophathite, and Jezaniah the son of the Maacathite, {both} they and their men. Then Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, swore to them and to their men, saying, "Do not be afraid of serving the Chaldeans; stay in the land and serve the king of Babylon, that it may go well with you. Now as for me, behold, I am going to stay at Mizpah to stand {for you} before the Chaldeans who come to us; but as for you, gather in wine and summer fruit and oil, and put {them} in your {storage} vessels, and live in your cities that you have taken over." Likewise also all the Jews who were in Moab and among the sons of Ammon and in Edom, and who were in all the {other} countries, heard that the king of Babylon had left a remnant for Judah and that he had appointed over them Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan. Then all the Jews returned from all the places to which they had been driven

away and came to the land of Judah, to Gedaliah at Mizpah, and gathered in wine and summer fruit in great abundance. Now Johanan the son of Kareah and all the commanders of the forces that were in the field came to Gedaliah at Mizpah, and said to him, "Are you well aware that Baalis the king of the sons of Ammon has sent Ishmael the son of Nethaniah to take your life?" But Gedaliah the son of Ahikam did not believe them. Then Johanan the son of Kareah spoke secretly to Gedaliah in Mizpah, saying, "Let me go and kill Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and not a man will know! Why should he take your life, so that all the Jews who are gathered to you should be scattered and the remnant of Judah perish?" But Gedaliah the son of Ahikam said to Johanan the son of Kareah, "Do not do this thing, for you are telling a lie about Ishmael." Now it came about in the seventh month that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, of the royal family and {one} of the chief officers of the king, along with ten men, came to Mizpah to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam. While they were eating bread together there in Mizpah, Ishmael the son of Nethaniah and the ten men who were with him arose and struck down Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, with the sword and put to death the one whom the king of Babylon had appointed over the land. Ishmael also struck down all the Jews who were with him, {that is} with Gedaliah at Mizpah, and the Chaldeans who were found there, the men of war.

(Jeremiah 40:7–41:3)

Later on, Jeremiah mentions Nebuchadnezzar's treatment of Jehoiachin as well. Again, his account sounds vaguely the same as that found in the Book of 2 Kings, but the facts are stated differently:

Now it came about in the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-fifth of the month, that Evil-merodach king of Babylon, in the {first} year of his reign, showed favor to Jehoiachin king of Judah and brought him out of prison. Then he spoke kindly to him and set his throne above the thrones of the kings who {were} with him in Babylon. So Jehoiachin changed his prison clothes, and had his meals in the king's presence regularly all the days of his life. And for his allowance, a regular allowance was given him by the king of Babylon, a daily portion all the days of his life until the day of his death.

(Jeremiah 52:31–34)

I will tell you from the outset that the reason these two accounts sound so similar is because the Prophet Jeremiah wrote both the Book of Jeremiah and the Deuteronomic History. I am not going to try to "prove" that to you, however, since I have already explained that "proof" exists only in the mind of the Believer. [See "The Demons Also Believe (Poor Devils!)" *The Voice of Elijah*®, October 1991.] Instead, I am going to explain the evidence that points to that conclusion and then tell you why God inspired Jeremiah to write a history of Israel. Let me begin by explaining a few things so that you have a chronological framework to work with.

The Prophet and the Passover

Around 640 B.C., an eight-year-old boy named Josiah became king over Judah. He reigned over what was left of the twelve tribes of Israel for the next thirty-one years until he was thirty-nine. Then, in 609 B.C., he was killed by Pharaoh Neco of Egypt while on an ill-advised mission to aid the king of Assyria (2 Kin. 23:29). You can find a succinct summary of the pertinent details of his reign succinctly recorded in the following two verses:

Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem; and his mother's name {was} Jedidah the daughter of Adaiah of Bozkath. And he did right in the sight of the LORD and walked in all the way of his father David, nor did he turn aside to the right or to the left.

(2 Kings 22:1–2)

Sometime around 627 B.C., which was thirteen years after Josiah became king of Judah, Jeremiah began his prophetic ministry. He specifically dates the beginning of his ministry by linking it to Josiah's reign:

The words of Jeremiah, the son of Hilkiah, of the priests who were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin, to whom the word of the LORD came in the days of Josiah, the son of Amon, king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign. It came also in the days of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, king of Judah, until the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah, the son of Josiah, king of Judah, until the exile of Jerusalem in the fifth month.

(Jeremiah 1:1–3)

Around 622 B.C., five years after Jeremiah began prophesying and eighteen years after Josiah became king, a rather strange set of events began to unfold in Jerusalem. The high priest Hilkiah found an old scroll in the Temple in Jerusalem and had it delivered to King Josiah. When Josiah read it, he was astonished to discover Israel had made a covenant with God in the time of Moses but had not been living up to the terms of that agreement. The author of the Deuteronomic History tells us the king responded to that bit of news by making some rather radical changes in the way things were done by the Levitical priests. You can read the account for yourself in 2 Kings 22–23, but let me just hit the high points here.

Josiah immediately got rid of the paganism that the sons of Israel dearly loved and replaced it with the worship of the one true God—as much as he could. He even went so far as to reinstitute the Passover and reconfirm Israel’s covenant with God. Unfortunately, his reformation efforts were too little, too late. The author of the Deuteronomic History makes it clear God had already determined what He intended to do about Israel’s sin:

However, the LORD did not turn from the fierceness of His great wrath with which His anger burned against Judah, because of all the provocations with which Manasseh had provoked Him. And the LORD said, “I will remove Judah also from My sight, as I have removed Israel. And I will cast off Jerusalem, this city which I have chosen, and the temple of which I said, ‘My name shall be there.’”
(2 Kings 23:26–27)

Think for just a moment about the implications of the historical events that occurred during Josiah’s reign. The Prophet Jeremiah was a priest. He tells us that in Jeremiah 1:1. In that same verse, he also mentions his father’s name was Hilkiah. Now wouldn’t it be something if Jeremiah’s father was the high priest Hilkiah, the same Hilkiah who discovered the “book of the covenant” in the Temple (2 Kin. 22:8)? Can you imagine what impact his father’s discovery of that scroll would have had on him?

As a matter of fact, a good case can be made for the identification of Hilkiah, Jeremiah’s father, with Hilkiah, the high priest in Jerusalem; but I won’t make it. I don’t have to. The very fact that the Book of Deuteronomy—the “book of the covenant”—was discovered in the

Temple early on in Jeremiah’s watch as a Prophet should be enough to convince any reasonable person that it must have had a tremendous impact on him. If the Truth be known, the discovery of a copy of the Book of Deuteronomy in the Temple was the single-most important event in Jeremiah’s life next to his calling. The Book of Deuteronomy defined his ministry. It told him exactly why God had called him.

I suspect that Jeremiah was seventeen or eighteen when God called him. Perhaps he was a bit older, although I doubt he was much more than twenty. But I’ll let you be the judge. What do you think? Was the Prophet just speaking metaphorically when he tried to get out of his calling by telling God he was a “youth”?

Now the word of the LORD came to me saying,

*“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
And before you were born I consecrated you;
I have appointed you a prophet to the nations.”
Then I said, “Alas, Lord GOD!*

*Behold, I do not know how to speak,
Because I am a youth.”*

But the LORD said to me,

*“Do not say, ‘I am a youth,’
Because everywhere I send you, you shall go,
And all that I command you, you shall speak.
Do not be afraid of them,
For I am with you to deliver you,” declares the LORD.*

Then the LORD stretched out His hand and touched my mouth, and the LORD said to me,

*“Behold, I have put My words in your mouth.
See, I have appointed you this day
over the nations and over the kingdoms,
To pluck up and to break down,
To destroy and to overthrow,
To build and to plant.”
(Jeremiah 1:4–10)*

The term translated “youth” in that passage normally refers to someone in their teens who has not yet fully matured into a man. Since God did not dispute Jeremiah’s claim, I tend to think he had not yet turned twenty. Therefore, it seems likely that Jeremiah was, at the most, in his early twenties when, five years later, the high priest Hilkiah discovered the Book of

Deuteronomy in the Temple. That discovery, more than any other event in his life to that point, obviously had a tremendous impact on him.

It doesn't matter whether Jeremiah quickly obtained a copy of the Book of Deuteronomy because his father was Hilkiah, the high priest, or whether he had to wait until a copy was made available to the priests in Anathoth. There can be little doubt that, once he had a copy in his grasp, the young man spent a good bit of time with it. Indications are, he memorized every word. Then, with the words of Moses constantly washing across his mind, he began to view things from the same perspective and speak using the same terms and phrases that Moses used. That is not unusual. You've undoubtedly heard church folks who speak using words and phrases from the King James Version of the Bible. That is exactly how Jeremiah became the "deuteronomic historian," the Prophet who used the same words that Moses used and phrased things in much the same way that Moses did. I am now going to show you hard evidence of just how much Jeremiah was influenced by the Book of Deuteronomy. But first let me explain what the Prophet was about.

New Covenant, Old News

The two Prophets who, more than any others, describe the New Covenant that God would one day ratify with "The House" of Israel are the Prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel. And, to explain why God was going to replace the Old Covenant with a New Covenant, both Prophets quoted things that Moses wrote. Do you want to hazard a guess as to which one of them quotes Deuteronomy almost exclusively? —the Prophet Jeremiah. Ezekiel takes his quotes from both Deuteronomy and Leviticus. But, as I just told you, the purpose of these two Prophets is to explain why a New Covenant is necessary. Therefore, they want their readers to understand that both the Old Covenant and the sons of Israel were to blame for Israel's failure to *inherit the promise*. God had asked way too much, but Israel had given far too little. In case you take exception to that assessment, I didn't say it. The author of the Book of Hebrews did. I just borrowed it from him. And he quoted Jeremiah to make his point:

For if that first {covenant} had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second. For

*finding fault with them, He says,
"BEHOLD, DAYS ARE COMING, SAYS THE LORD,
WHEN I WILL EFFECT A NEW COVENANT
WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL
AND WITH THE HOUSE OF JUDAH;
NOT LIKE THE COVENANT
WHICH I MADE WITH THEIR FATHERS
ON THE DAY WHEN I TOOK THEM BY THE HAND
TO LEAD THEM OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT;
FOR THEY DID NOT CONTINUE IN MY COVENANT,
AND I DID NOT CARE FOR THEM, SAYS THE LORD.
FOR THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT
I WILL MAKE WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL
AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD:
I WILL PUT MY LAWS INTO THEIR MINDS,
AND I WILL WRITE THEM UPON THEIR HEARTS.
AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD,
AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.
AND THEY SHALL NOT TEACH
EVERYONE HIS FELLOW CITIZEN,
AND EVERYONE HIS BROTHER, SAYING,
'KNOW THE LORD,'
FOR ALL SHALL KNOW ME,
FROM THE LEAST TO THE GREATEST OF THEM.
FOR I WILL BE MERCIFUL TO THEIR INIQUITIES,
AND I WILL REMEMBER THEIR SINS NO MORE."
(Hebrews 8:7-12)*

I could easily explain what the author of that passage had in mind, but it's not relevant to our discussion here. If you're interested, he goes on to *talk about* Israel's *inheritance of the promise* under the terms of the New Covenant in the remainder of his work. He tells us how *inheritance* is possible only if one knows and believes the Truth. That's why, in Hebrews 11, he makes a big deal of the fact that certain folks in the Old Testament had faith. His point is, they understood what God was going to do in the Person of Jesus Christ. But that's not what I want to *talk about* here. My point is, Jeremiah's ministry was to remind Israel that God had *promised* Moses He would one day ratify a New Covenant with Israel. But so doing, Jeremiah also indicted them for their failure to adhere to the terms of the Old Covenant.

Just imagine what it must have been like in Jeremiah's day! The Pope discovers a crusty old copy of the Bible stashed away in a spare room of the Vatican and the Church suddenly realizes it is no longer worshipping the one true God. Under such circumstances,

who would fault God for rejecting the established Church hierarchy and taking a different approach? Something like that happened to Israel during the reign of Josiah, and Jeremiah was one of the Prophets God called to broadcast the news. However, Jeremiah knew that the New Covenant was not something God had suddenly pulled out of His hat. It was something He had planned all along. But Jeremiah knew that only because he understood what Moses wrote.

Unlike the pea-brained parrots who perch in the pulpit and pointlessly pontificate on the *possible meaning* of Scripture today, the Prophets quoted Scripture because they understood what had been written. They also knew God had called them to add pertinent details to that written record. Some of the Prophets, like Micah, quote Isaiah and then explain a bit more about the idioms and *parabolic imagery* that he used. Others merely allude to something one of the earlier Prophets said and then build on his foundation. But in one way or another, all of the Prophets refer back to the things that Moses wrote.

Some of the Prophets explain what God revealed to them using the same idioms and *parabolic imagery* that Moses established. Others quote what he wrote frequently and verbatim. But none of the Prophets do both of those things more energetically or more often than Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Those two seem driven to blast the sons of Israel continually by reminding them Moses had told them at the outset that they would spurn God. Therefore, perfectly in tune with the sarcastic Spirit that prompted all the Prophets to ridicule a mindless religiosity that is still with us to this day, the Prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel sang a mocking duet in a minor key with an extremely haunting refrain. God Himself gave them the melody. But Moses was the one who wrote the words.

Moses Said It, I Believe

The entirety of the Book of Deuteronomy had a tremendous influence on the young man Jeremiah. However, since Jeremiah's ministry was concerned with the proclamation of God's judgment on Israel and the *promise* of a New Covenant, I will focus on just the four chapters in the Book of Deuteronomy (28–31) where Moses *talks about* those things. Jeremiah weaves various words and phrases he has taken from those four chapters into nearly everything he says. But here

we will concentrate on some of the longer phrases he has quite obviously borrowed. Due to limitations of space, I won't be able to include any of the individual words he has used.

The first thing Jeremiah does is remind the sons of Israel that they had done exactly what Moses said they would. They had "forsaken" God. Moses said this:

"The LORD will send upon you curses, confusion, and rebuke, in all you undertake to do, until you are destroyed and until you perish quickly, on account of the evil of your deeds, because you have forsaken Me."
(Deuteronomy 28:20)

"Then {men} shall say, 'Because they forsook the covenant of the LORD, the God of their fathers, which He made with them when He brought them out of the land of Egypt.'"
(Deuteronomy 29:25)

Here's how Jeremiah puts it:

"And I will pronounce My judgments on them concerning all their wickedness, whereby they have forsaken Me and have offered sacrifices to other gods, and worshiped the works of their own hands."
(Jeremiah 1:16)

*"For My people have committed two evils:
They have forsaken Me,
The fountain of living waters,
To hew for themselves cisterns,
Broken cisterns,
That can hold no water."*
(Jeremiah 2:13)

*"Have you not done this to yourself,
By your forsaking the LORD your God,
When He led you in the way?"*
(Jeremiah 2:17)

*"Your own wickedness will correct you,
And your apostasies will reprove you;
Know therefore and see that it is evil and bitter
For you to forsake the LORD your God,
And the dread of Me is not in you,"*
declares the Lord GOD of hosts.
(Jeremiah 2:19)

"Why should I pardon you?

Your sons have forsaken Me

And sworn by those who are not gods.

When I had fed them to the full,

They committed adultery

And trooped to the harlot's house."

(Jeremiah 5:7)

"And it shall come about when they say, 'Why has the LORD our God done all these things to us?' then you shall say to them, 'As you have forsaken Me and served foreign gods in your land, so you shall serve strangers in a land that is not yours.'"

(Jeremiah 5:19)

And the LORD said, "Because they have forsaken My law which I set before them, and have not obeyed My voice nor walked according to it, but have walked after the stubbornness of their heart and after the Baals, as their fathers taught them," therefore thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, "behold, I will feed them, this people, with wormwood and give them poisoned water to drink."

(Jeremiah 9:13–15)

"Then you are to say to them, '{It is} because your forefathers have forsaken Me,' declares the LORD, 'and have followed other gods and served them and bowed down to them; but Me they have forsaken and have not kept My law.'"

(Jeremiah 16:11)

O LORD, the hope of Israel,

All who forsake Thee will be put to shame.

Those who turn away on earth will be written down,

Because they have forsaken the fountain of living water, even the LORD.

(Jeremiah 17:13)

"Because they have forsaken Me and have made this an alien place and have burned sacrifices in it to other gods that neither they nor their forefathers nor the kings of Judah had {ever} known, and {because} they have filled this place with the blood of the innocent and have built the high places of Baal to burn their sons in the fire as burnt offerings to Baal, a thing which I never commanded or spoke of, nor did it {ever} enter My mind; therefore, behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when this

place will no longer be called Topheth or the valley of Ben-hinnom, but rather the valley of Slaughter."

(Jeremiah 19:4–6)

"Then they will answer, 'Because they forsook the covenant of the LORD their God and bowed down to other gods and served them.'"

(Jeremiah 22:9)

Having repeatedly told the sons of Israel what they did wrong, Jeremiah then uses what Moses said to tell them what their fate will be. Moses said this:

"The LORD will cause you to be defeated before your enemies; you shall go out one way against them, but you shall flee seven ways before them, and you shall be {an example of} terror to all the kingdoms of the earth."

(Deuteronomy 28:25)

Jeremiah sings exactly that same refrain. As you look at what he says, however, you must keep in mind the fact that the translator evidently did not know Jeremiah was quoting Moses. Therefore, the Hebrew word translated "terror" in Deuteronomy has sometimes been translated "horror" in Jeremiah:

"And I shall make them an object of horror among all the kingdoms of the earth because of Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah, the king of Judah, for what he did in Jerusalem."

(Jeremiah 15:4)

"And I will make them a terror {and an} evil for all the kingdoms of the earth, as a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse in all places where I shall scatter them."

(Jeremiah 24:9)

"And I will pursue them with the sword, with famine and with pestilence; and I will make them a terror to all the kingdoms of the earth, to be a curse, and a horror, and a hissing, and a reproach among all the nations where I have driven them."

(Jeremiah 29:18)

"Therefore thus says the LORD, 'You have not obeyed Me in proclaiming release each man to his brother, and each man to his neighbor. Behold, I am proclaiming a release to

you,' declares the LORD, 'to the sword, to the pestilence, and to the famine; and **I will make you a terror to all the kingdoms of the earth.**'"
(Jeremiah 34:17)

In alluding to a bit of *parabolic imagery* that Moses has explained fully in the Pentateuch, Jeremiah several times makes almost exactly the same statement that Moses made. His purpose is to graphically depict the horrifying tragedy that is rapidly descending on the sons of Israel because they have "forsaken" the Lord. Moses put it this way:

"And your carcasses shall be food to all birds of the sky and to the beasts of the earth, and there shall be no one to frighten {them} away."
(Deuteronomy 28:26)

Jeremiah molds the prophecy of Moses a bit to suit his own purpose; but for the most part, he retains the essential wording that Moses used. Again, the translator evidently does not realize Jeremiah is quoting Moses. If he did, he did not consider that fact important enough to conform his translation to the one given above. More than that, his translation of the Hebrew word for *corpse* varies. One time it is translated "carcass," the next time "dead body." Nonetheless, he tells us Jeremiah said this:

"And the dead bodies of this people will be food for the birds of the sky, and for the beasts of the earth; and no one will frighten {them away}."
(Jeremiah 7:33)

"They will die of deadly diseases, they will not be lamented or buried; they will be as dung on the surface of the ground and come to an end by sword and famine, and their carcasses will become food for the birds of the sky and for the beasts of the earth."
(Jeremiah 16:4)

"And I shall make void the counsel of Judah and Jerusalem in this place, and I shall cause them to fall by the sword before their enemies and by the hand of those who seek their life; and I shall give over their carcasses as food for the birds of the sky and the beasts of the earth."
(Jeremiah 19:7)

"And I will give them into the hand of their enemies and into the hand of those who seek their life. And their dead bodies shall be food for the birds of the sky and the beasts of the earth."
(Jeremiah 34:20)

In another place, we find that Moses said this:

"And you shall become a horror, a proverb, and a taunt among all the people where the LORD will drive you."
(Deuteronomy 28:37)

Jeremiah also appropriated that concept from Moses, but he put it this way:

"And I will make them a terror {and an} evil for all the kingdoms of the earth, as a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse in all places where I shall scatter them."
(Jeremiah 24:9)

Then I took the cup from the LORD's hand, and made all the nations drink, to whom the LORD sent me: Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, and its kings {and} its princes, to make them a ruin, a horror, a hissing, and a curse, as it is this day.
(Jeremiah 25:17-18)

"And I will pursue them with the sword, with famine and with pestilence; and I will make them a terror to all the kingdoms of the earth, to be a curse, and a horror, and a hissing, and a reproach among all the nations where I have driven them."
(Jeremiah 29:18)

For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, "As My anger and wrath have been poured out on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so My wrath will be poured out on you when you enter Egypt. **And you will become a curse, an object of horror, an imprecation, and a reproach; and you will see this place no more.**"
(Jeremiah 42:18)

"And I will take away the remnant of Judah who have set their mind on entering the land of Egypt to reside there, and they will all meet their end in the land of Egypt; they will fall by the sword {and} meet their end by famine.

Both small and great will die by the sword and famine; and they will become a curse, an object of horror, an imprecation and a reproach."

(Jeremiah 44:12)

*"So the LORD was no longer able to endure {it,} because of the evil of your deeds, because of the abominations which you have committed; thus **your land has become a ruin, an object of horror and a curse, without an inhabitant, as {it is} this day.**"*

(Jeremiah 44:22)

*"For I have sworn by Myself," declares the LORD, "that **Bozrah will become an object of horror, a reproach, a ruin and a curse; and all its cities will become perpetual ruins.**"*

(Jeremiah 49:13)

You can get a fairly good idea of what Jeremiah was doing from reading those passages. He was merely telling the people that, because they had failed to keep the terms of their covenant with God, some of the things Moses had predicted were now about to happen to them. To do that, he quoted what Moses had said.

It would be a mistake to assume that Jeremiah was just another Prophet of doom. There are tremendous promises of restoration and blessing sprinkled throughout his work. Granted, they are interspersed with his graphic description of the horrifying curses of the covenant that God was about to bring on Israel. But just as he did when he predicted calamity, in each and every case where he promises future blessing, Jeremiah has taken his wording from something Moses said in Deuteronomy. In this case, however, he quotes from Deuteronomy 30.

An exhaustive listing of all of the instances where Jeremiah alludes to what Moses said in this one chapter would fill a small book. Consequently, the following examples will have to suffice. Again, the translator evidently did not realize Jeremiah was quoting Moses. Therefore, he did not use the same English words to translate the Hebrew words that Moses used. For example, the word translated "captivity" in Deuteronomy 30:3 is almost always translated "fortunes" in Jeremiah. Moses said this:

"So it shall be when all of these things have come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before

*you, and you call {them} to mind in **all nations where the LORD your God has banished you, and you return to the LORD your God and obey Him with all your heart and soul according to all that I command you today, you and your sons, then the LORD your God will restore you from captivity, and have compassion on you, and will gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you.**"*

(Deuteronomy 30:1-3)

The Prophet Jeremiah describes those same events this way:

"Then I Myself shall gather the remnant of My flock out of all the countries where I have driven them and shall bring them back to their pasture; and they will be fruitful and multiply."

(Jeremiah 23:3)

"And I will be found by you," declares the LORD, "and I will restore your fortunes and will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you," declares the LORD, "and I will bring you back to the place from where I sent you into exile."

(Jeremiah 29:14)

"For, behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will restore the fortunes of My people Israel and Judah." The LORD says, "I will also bring them back to the land that I gave to their forefathers, and they shall possess it."

(Jeremiah 30:3)

"Thus says the LORD,

'Behold, I will restore the fortunes of the tents of Jacob

And have compassion on his dwelling places;

And the city shall be rebuilt on its ruin,

And the palace shall stand on its rightful place."

(Jeremiah 30:18)

"Behold, I am bringing them from the north country,

And I will gather them

from the remote parts of the earth,

Among them the blind and the lame,

The woman with child

and she who is in labor with child, together;

*A great company, **they shall return here.***

With weeping they shall come,

And by supplication I will lead them;
 I will make them walk by streams of waters,
 On a straight path in which they shall not stumble;
 For I am a father to Israel,
 And Ephraim is My first-born."
 Hear the word of the LORD, O nations,
 And declare in the coastlands afar off,
 And say, "He who scattered Israel will gather him,
 And keep him as a shepherd keeps his flock."
 (Jeremiah 31:8–10)

Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, "Once again they will speak this word in the land of Judah and in its cities, **when I restore their fortunes**,
 "The LORD bless you, O abode of righteousness,
 O holy hill!"
 (Jeremiah 31:23)

"Behold, **I will gather them out of all the lands to which I have driven them** in My anger, in My wrath, and in great indignation; and **I will bring them back to this place** and make them dwell in safety."
 (Jeremiah 32:37)

"Men shall buy fields for money, sign and seal deeds, and call in witnesses in the land of Benjamin, in the environs of Jerusalem, in the cities of Judah, in the cities of the hill country, in the cities of the lowland, and in the cities of the Negev; for **I will restore their fortunes**," declares the LORD."
 (Jeremiah 32:44)

"And **I will restore the fortunes of Judah and the fortunes of Israel**, and I will rebuild them as they were at first."
 (Jeremiah 33:7)

"The voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voice of those who say,
 "Give thanks to the LORD of hosts,
 For the LORD is good,
 For His lovingkindness is everlasting";
 {and of those} who bring a thank offering into the house of the LORD. For **I will restore the fortunes of the land as they were at first**," says the LORD."
 (Jeremiah 33:11)

"Thus says the LORD, 'If My covenant {for} day and night {stand} not, {and} the fixed patterns of heaven and earth I have not established, then I would reject the descendants of Jacob and David My servant, not taking from his descendants rulers over the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But **I will restore their fortunes and will have mercy on them.**'"
 (Jeremiah 33:25–26)

As I said earlier, I can hardly do much more than show you some of the more obvious instances where Jeremiah takes something Moses said and weaves it into his own prophecy, thus making it his own. For the most part, his source is always the same. It is the Book of Deuteronomy. Yet the Truth is, the terminology, phrasing, and *parabolic imagery* that Moses uses in the first five books of the Hebrew Scriptures run through the Book of Jeremiah like extremely fine threads in a beautiful tapestry. Even when you can't see them, they are still there, silently contributing their bulk to the whole of the message that Jeremiah proclaimed.

Jeremiah's message was, for most in his day as it is for most in our own, a message of impending catastrophe. It was also a message that was vehemently rejected by the vast majority of those who heard it. Under those circumstances, God inspired Jeremiah to write a history of Israel that would take up where Moses left off in Deuteronomy and set the record straight. The purpose of that history was to show the sons of Israel that they had sinned and thus confirm that God had every right to bring the curses of the covenant down on their heads.

Can You Spell Affidavit?

Did you hear what I just said? I said *the purpose of the Deuteronomic History is to document Israel's sin*. So don't be misled by its apparent emphasis on what went right in Israel. Jeremiah's history is not a benign account of the things that men like Samson, Samuel, David, Solomon, and Hezekiah did right. It is instead an account of how the things that some in Israel did right were completely negated by things that others did wrong. In some (if not most) cases, it tells us that those who negated the good things done were the very men who did them in the first place.

Get one thing straight: Jeremiah was nothing more than one of God's many *witnesses*. But he was an

extremely important one. It was his assigned task as a Prophet to summarize the history of Israel and then add an account of his own ministry to it. Therefore, he and Moses together provide the bulk of the information that one needs in order to understand what the Prophets are *talking about*. That is why you must master Jeremiah's message first. Once you have gotten his message firmly fixed in your mind, you can then see what relevance the statements of Moses have for Gentiles. After all, God *promised* the New Covenant to Israel, not to Gentiles like you, me, and the Jews who call themselves Israel today.

Where did Jeremiah get the information he included in the Deuteronomic History? From things that other Prophets had written. You see, Jeremiah was galvanized into action by reading what Moses wrote in Deuteronomy, but he was thoroughly informed concerning Israel's plight by reading the works of anonymous men who are described in the Hebrew Scriptures only as "the sons of the Prophets." By that I *mean* the things you find recorded in the Deuteronomic History are merely Jeremiah's summary of all the things that God inspired an untold multitude of other Prophets to write down over the course of the seven or eight hundred years that the sons of Israel lived in the Promised Land.

You can find this righteous *remnant* of Israel mentioned in various places in the Deuteronomic History (e.g., 1 Sam. 10:5 ff.). Elijah and Elisha were apparently members in good standing (2 Kin. 2:1–15). And there were well over a hundred Prophets in the group a short while before Elijah came on the scene (1 Kin. 18:4, 13). The purpose for which God called these Prophets was to produce and maintain a written *testimony against* Israel. They did so by documenting Israel's sins.

Jeremiah identifies many of the prophetic sources from which he gained his information. He mentions *The Book of Jashar* in Joshua 10:13 and 2 Samuel 1:18 and *The Book of the Acts of Solomon* in 1 Kings 11:41. But the two major sources he used appear to be *The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah* and *The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel* (1 Kin. 14:19, 29; 15:7, 23, 31; 16:5, 14, 20, 27; 22:39, 45; 2 Kin. 1:18; 8:23; 10:34; 12:19; 13:8, 12; 14:6, 15, 18, 28; 15:6, 11, 15, 21, 26, 31, 36; 16:19; 20:20; 21:17, 25; 23:28; 24:5).

Parabolically speaking, the Prophet Jeremiah merely signed off on an affidavit that he had his scribe Baruch draw up. In it, he affirmed that the true

Prophets of Israel all agreed that God had good reason to "cut off from" Israel all who had sinned and then to "cut off" Israel completely whenever He chose, sending Him to suffer as a sacrifice so that everyone—Jew and Gentile alike—might have opportunity to join themselves to Israel under the terms of the New Covenant. Unfortunately, Jeremiah spoke cryptically, using the same idioms and *parabolic imagery* that Moses used. That is why not many have ever understood what he said. However, the one who has ears to hear in these Last Days will hear and understand what the Prophet said. So let me explain *why* Jeremiah wrote each of the six books in the Deuteronomic History. Then you can better understand the *significance* of what he wrote.

Joshua—The Parable of the Inheritance

The Book of Joshua is ostensibly an account of how God *fulfilled the promise* He made to the Patriarchs. That is exactly what Jeremiah wants the uninformed reader to think. The Truth is, Jeremiah is describing the conclusion to the *parabolic pantomime* that God orchestrated by forcing the sons of Israel to wander in the wilderness for forty years. (See *The Passover Parable*.) Jeremiah's point in the Book of Joshua is that after Moses—*the heir of the promise*—died, the sons of Israel *parabolically inherited what was promised*. Their *parabolic pantomime*, however, points to the death of Jesus Christ, *The Heir of the promise* Who died so that individual members of Israel might *inherit what was promised*.

When all is said and done, the individual members of Israel in Joshua's generation didn't *inherit* anything. Corporate Israel did. But the only thing it gained was *equitable title* to land that was being held in trust until the time when God would actually *fulfill the promise*. It held *equitable title* to that land as a *mediator* (Gal. 3:19–20) until Jesus Christ—*the Heir of the promise*—finally came along and He (as Israel) entered into a New Covenant with God. Then that *equitable title* became His alone under the terms of both the Old and New Covenants. When Christ died on the cross *as a sacrifice for His Own sins* (*parabolically* speaking) or, if you prefer to state it *parabolically*, *as a sacrifice for the sins of the members of His Body*, He gained *legal title* to the land and immediately began to transfer *the promise* to His *heirs* under the terms of His *will*. But, since I have already explained these things in

Not All Israel Is Israel (pp. 46–50), I needn't get into them any further here.

The point is, if you ever intend to understand the significance of the Book of Joshua, you must begin to think *parabolically*. The events it describes are literal historical events. But, for the most part, Joshua did everything he did under the direct supervision of God. So don't make ignorant assumptions about his actions or you'll miss the point of the *parabolic pantomime*. I have said it before, and I am certain I will say it time and time again: Whenever God instructs someone to do something, chances are extremely high that *parabolic imagery* is involved in one way or another. In Joshua's case, God was merely wrapping up a few loose ends regarding the imagery that pertains to the Passover Parable.

Judges—The Indictment of Israel

Jeremiah minces no words in telling us *why* he wrote the part of his work that is known today as the Book of Judges. It is a scalding indictment of Israel. He wants it understood from the outset that the sons of Israel forgot *The Teaching of Moses* (or, *parabolically speaking*, they “turned aside from *The Way*”) almost immediately after Joshua's generation died. Referring to *The Teaching* as “*The Way*,” Jeremiah says this concerning Israel's sin:

Then the sons of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Baals, and they forsook the LORD, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods from {among} the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed themselves down to them; thus they provoked the LORD to anger. So they forsook the LORD and served Baal and the Ashtaroth. And the anger of the LORD burned against Israel, and He gave them into the hands of plunderers who plundered them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies around {them,} so that they could no longer stand before their enemies. Wherever they went, the hand of the LORD was against them for evil, as the LORD had spoken and as the LORD had sworn to them, so that they were severely distressed. Then the LORD raised up judges who delivered them from the hands of those who plundered them. And yet they did not listen to their judges, for they played the harlot after other gods and bowed themselves down to

them. They turned aside quickly from the way in which their fathers had walked in obeying the commandments of the LORD; they did not do as {their fathers}. And when the LORD raised up judges for them, the LORD was with the judge and delivered them from the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; for the LORD was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who oppressed and afflicted them. But it came about when the judge died, that they would turn back and act more corruptly than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them and bow down to them; they did not abandon their practices or their stubborn ways. So the anger of the LORD burned against Israel, and He said, “Because this nation has transgressed My covenant which I commanded their fathers, and has not listened to My voice, I also will no longer drive out before them any of the nations which Joshua left when he died, in order to test Israel by them, whether they will keep the way of the LORD to walk in it as their fathers did, or not.” So the LORD allowed those nations to remain, not driving them out quickly; and He did not give them into the hand of Joshua.
(Judges 2:11–23)

To understand the purpose of the remaining four books of the Deuteronomistic History, you must focus on what Jeremiah says in this passage concerning God testing Israel to see “whether they will **keep the way of the LORD to walk in it** as their fathers did, or not.” He is going to show you by what he writes that they miserably failed that test.

First Samuel—The Teaching Restored

The purpose of the two books of Samuel is to tell you what you need to know about King David and how God dealt with him. In 1 Samuel, Jeremiah seeks to tell you how David came to be king over all Israel and how he gained an understanding of *The Teaching*. Most folks know the story of David and Goliath. Many have also heard how God rejected Saul and told Samuel to anoint David king in his place. But I dare say that nobody is aware that Samuel *restored The Teaching* so the king of Israel could rule over God's People with justice and equity. That's because Jeremiah cryptically tells us Samuel referred to *The Teaching* as “*The Way*”:

*Then all the people said to Samuel, "Pray for your servants to the LORD your God, so that we may not die, for we have added to all our sins {this} evil by asking for ourselves a king." And Samuel said to the people, "Do not fear. You have committed all this evil, yet **do not turn aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart.** And you must not turn aside, for {then you would go} after futile things which can not profit or deliver, because they are futile. For the LORD will not abandon His people on account of His great name, because the LORD has been pleased to make you a people for Himself. Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by ceasing to pray for you; but **I will instruct you in the good and right way.** Only fear the LORD and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you. **But if you still do wickedly, both you and your king shall be swept away.**"*
(1 Samuel 12:19–25)

Jeremiah's point is, Samuel understood the same Truth that Moses taught, and he taught that Truth to all Israel as "The Way." However, you should pay close attention to the part about Israel being "swept away." By including Samuel's warning in his history of Israel, Jeremiah is telling his generation that Samuel not only restored *The Teaching*, he also warned them at that time what would happen if they lost it again. In the remainder of his work, Jeremiah goes on to document exactly how the sons of Israel lost the Truth that Samuel restored. His purpose is to show his generation that they have no excuse. Therefore, both they and their king are going to be "swept away."

Second Samuel—Tracing the Heir

Without doubt, 2 Samuel is one of the most misunderstood books in the Old Testament. That is directly attributable to the fact that nobody understands the *meaning* or *significance* of Nathan's prophecy to David in 2 Samuel 7. In that prophecy, God *promised* David that He would function as his "Redeemer" and engender a son for David through a virgin should David's "house" ever be in danger of extinction. To understand that, however, you must first recognize the *meaning* and *significance* of the three idioms "build a house," "raise up a seed," and "make a name." Lacking that, your own "house" is in dire danger of extinction.

The Prophet Jeremiah's purpose in the first six chapters of 2 Samuel is to tell how David united "The House" of Israel under his leadership after Saul's death. But he also sets the stage for Nathan's prophecy by making sure we are aware of just how many sons David had. He does so in a couple of places:

Sons were born to David at Hebron: his first-born was Amnon, by Ahinoam the Jezreelitess; and his second, Chileab, by Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite; and the third, Absalom the son of Maacah, the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur; and the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith; and the fifth, Shephatiah the son of Abital; and the sixth, Ithream, by David's wife Eglah. These were born to David at Hebron.
(2 Samuel 3:2–5)

Meanwhile David took more concubines and wives from Jerusalem, after he came from Hebron; and more sons and daughters were born to David. Now these are the names of those who were born to him in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, Ithar, Elishua, Nepheg, Japhia, Elishama, Eliada and Eliphelet.
(2 Samuel 5:13–16)

Having told us about all the children that David had, Jeremiah even makes a point of telling you how David took back Saul's daughter Michal (3:14–16) but is also careful to tell us she had no children (6:23). Then in Chapter 7, he recounts how Nathan told David God would one day "raise up a seed" for David *after he had died*. Most folks overlook that last part because they want to believe Satan's lie that Solomon was the son that God *promised* David. That's not so. Jesus Christ is the only Son of David that God ever *promised* He would "raise up" for David.

After he tells us what Nathan told David, Jeremiah then goes on to explain how the various sons of David squandered their opportunity to be king. First he tells us about the birth of Solomon (11:1–12:25). Then he explains how Absalom killed his brother Amnon, who was David's firstborn, because he raped Absalom's sister Tamar (13:1–39). After that, he gives us an account of how Absalom tried to usurp the throne and ended up being killed himself (14:25–18:33). Later on, he tells us Solomon had his older brother Adonijah killed (1 Kin. 1:1–2:25). Thus, he completes his account of how Solomon succeeded David as king.

I realize Nathan's prophecy is not exactly what we are *talking about* here, but you need to understand that prophecy before you can fully comprehend *why* Jeremiah wrote 2 Samuel. The enlightened reader who understands what Nathan said to David will read Jeremiah's description of the intrigue that riddled David's "house" and ask but one question: Through which son of David did God "raise up a seed" for David? When one looks in Matthew 1:6–7, the answer would seem to be Solomon. Yet Luke 3:31 indicates it was Nathan. The intelligent reader will assimilate those two facts and deduce that there must have still been at least one son of David—Joseph—alive at that time, provided both of those genealogies are valid. So why would it have been necessary for God to "build a house" for David? The answer to the question lies hidden in the prophecies of Jeremiah, the one who told us what Nathan said to David in the first place. And I am not about to explain what Jeremiah said until I have had time to explain the *zonah* ritual because, lacking that information, you wouldn't be able to understand what God did anyway.

The Kings—Solomon's Sad Legacy

The two books of Kings are one complete account that has been artificially divided down the middle. Their combined purpose is to tell us what Solomon did wrong and how his sin affected subsequent generations of Israel. Most folks think Solomon was squeaky clean. But that is only because most folks believe Satan's lie concerning God's *promise* to David through Nathan. The Book of 1 Kings tells an entirely different story to the reader who understands what God actually *promised* David. Listen to this:

Now King Solomon loved many foreign women along with the daughter of Pharaoh: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women, from the nations concerning which the LORD had said to the sons of Israel, "You shall not associate with them, neither shall they associate with you, {for} they will surely turn your heart away after their gods." Solomon held fast to these in love. And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines, and his wives turned his heart away. For it came about when Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away after other gods; and his heart was not wholly devoted to the

LORD his God, as the heart of David his father {had been.} For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians and after Milcom the detestable idol of the Ammonites. And Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not follow the LORD fully, as David his father {had done.} Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable idol of Moab, on the mountain which is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the detestable idol of the sons of Ammon. Thus also he did for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.

Now the LORD was angry with Solomon because his heart was turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice, and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he did not observe what the LORD had commanded. So the LORD said to Solomon, "Because you have done this, and you have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you, and will give it to your servant. Nevertheless I will not do it in your days for the sake of your father David, {but} I will tear it out of the hand of your son. However, I will not tear away all the kingdom, {but} I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of My servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen."

(1 Kings 11:1–13)

In that one passage, Jeremiah tells us Solomon's sin set in motion a chain of events that resulted in the Northern Kingdom of Israel being completely "cut off from" Israel in 722 B.C. However, he also wants us to know that Solomon was not the source of any solution. He was, instead, the source of the problem. The observant reader quickly gets the message that Jeremiah intended to get across: The sons of Israel had already gone astray by the time Solomon died.

The one thing that Jeremiah does not mention—but only because it does not fit into the thread of his account—is the fact that David himself was not everything the idealists and hero-worshipers want to believe he was. Jeremiah does mention David's sin with Bathsheba, but that was necessary to his account of how Solomon rose to power. However, there is another facet of David's character that Jeremiah leaves unsaid. In the wisdom of God, he merely confirms what the author of 1 and 2 Chronicles tells us. But I'll say more about that sad situation next time. ■



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

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

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

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

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

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

The biblical text plainly tells us two things happened on the third "day." First, dry ground appeared out of the waters that had covered the Earth until that time. Then vegetation began to grow on that dry

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

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

(Genesis 2:4–9)

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

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

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

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

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

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

(Genesis 1:24–31)

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

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

(Genesis 2:15–20)

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

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

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

(Genesis 1:20–23)

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

In the face of all that evidence, why would anyone argue against the belief that God created Adam *IN THE MIDDLE OF* the third "day" of Creation? Only because they prefer to believe Satan's lie concerning the things Moses tells us God accomplished when He created a man in His image *ON* the sixth "day." Since I

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."
(John 8:31–32)

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

Elijah: The first passage you mentioned says this:

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

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

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

Malachi says "Elijah" is going to "restore" something to God's Chosen People before God in His wrath destroys this entire civilization. The text is intentionally enigmatic in describing what that is. However, Jesus mentions it in the text you pointed to in Matthew:

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

(Matthew 17:1–13)

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

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

Second Coming of Jesus Christ. The image of Elijah tells you what that person's ministry IS LIKE.

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

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

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

(Luke 1:13–17)

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

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

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

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

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

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

(Matthew 11:7-15)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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