



Would You Believe Knowledge Is Light?

And he who is only regenerated—as the name necessarily indicates—and is enlightened, is delivered forthwith from darkness, and on the instant receives the light. As, then, those who have shaken off sleep forthwith become all awake within; or rather, as those who try to remove a film that is over the eyes, do not supply to them from without the light which they do not possess, but removing the obstacle from the eyes, leave the pupil free; thus also we who are baptized, having wiped off the sins which obscure the light of the Divine Spirit, have the eye of the spirit free, unimpeded, and full of light, by which alone we contemplate the Divine, the Holy Spirit flowing down to us from above.

This is the eternal adjustment of the vision, which is able to see the eternal light, since like loves like; and that which is holy, loves that from which holiness proceeds, which has appropriately been termed light. “Once ye were darkness, now are ye light in the Lord.” Hence I am of opinion man was called by the ancients $\Phi\omega\varsigma$. But he has not yet received, say they, the perfect gift. I also assent to this; but he is in the light, and the darkness comprehendeth him not. There is nothing intermediate between light and darkness. But the end is reserved till the resurrection of those who believe; and it is not the reception of some other thing, but the obtaining of the promise previously made. For we do not say that both take place together at the same time—both the arrival at the end, and the anticipation of that arrival. For eternity and time are not the same, neither is the attempt and the final result; but both have reference to the same thing, and one and the same person is concerned in both.

Faith, so to speak, is the attempt generated in time; the final result is the attainment of the promise, secured for eternity. Now the Lord Himself has most clearly revealed the equality of salvation, when He said: “For this is the will of my Father, that every one that seeth the

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Son, and believeth on Him, should have everlasting life; and I will raise him up in the last day." As far as possible in this world, which is what he means by the last day, and which is preserved till the time that it shall end, we believe that we are made perfect. Wherefore He says, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life."

If, then, those who have believed have life, what remains beyond the possession of eternal life? Nothing is wanting to faith, as it is perfect and complete in itself. If aught is wanting to it, it is not wholly perfect. But faith is not lame in any respect; nor after our departure from this world does it make us who have believed, and received without distinction the earnest of future good, wait; but having in anticipation grasped by faith that which is future, after the resurrection we receive it as present, in order that that may be fulfilled which was spoken, "Be it according to thy faith." And where faith is, there is the promise; and the consummation of the promise is rest. So that in illumination what we receive is knowledge, and the end of knowledge is rest—the last thing conceived as the object of aspiration.

As, then, inexperience comes to an end by experience, and perplexity by finding a clear outlet, so by illumination must darkness disappear. The darkness is ignorance, through which we fall into sins, purblind as to the truth. Knowledge, then, is the illumination we receive, which makes ignorance disappear, and endows us with clear vision. Further, the abandonment of what is bad is the adopting of what is better.

Clement of Alexandria, "The Instructor," Book i, Chap. vi, in Roberts and Donaldson (Eds.), *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, (1885), Vol. 2, p. 216.

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Published quarterly by
Voice of Elijah, Inc.

Allen Friess, Executive Editor
Susan Clay, Managing Editor

Volume 8
Number 4
October 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

This quote from a previous newsletter accurately relates how True Believers should react when they first hear the Truth of The Teaching:

They will be skeptical at first. Then they will begin to see the Truth. Eventually, the weight of evidence will convince them, and they will want to know everything they can. Finally, they will feel the conviction of the Holy Spirit within them as the Lord begins to draw them back to Himself.
("Questions & Answers," **The Voice of Elijah**®, April 1996, p. 34)

If you have been reading *The Voice of Elijah*® for any length of time, I hope this describes your reaction to the things you have read. For most of our readers over the past seven years, it does not. As a result, they are no longer with us. In due time, all who don't find themselves totally convinced by the "weight of evidence" we present will undoubtedly leave us as well. That's the way it should be.

Personally, I believe *The Voice of Elijah*® has presented more than enough evidence down through the years to show that the things we teach are true. I also believe that those who reject the Truth will be without excuse on the Day of Judgment because the Scriptures themselves will testify as a witness against them. They will testify that these individuals were shown overwhelming evidence from the Bible in support of the Truth, yet they chose to ignore the evidence so they could go on believing what they wanted to believe.

This series of articles on how to be more observant when reading the Bible is only one small example of the evidence we have provided which lends support to the Truth. The principles I have presented in this series are basic, common-sense principles that apply to everything we read, including the Bible. Whether we are aware of it or not, we apply these principles every day because it's a necessary part of what we must do to understand what we read. Yet it amazes me that so many people either totally ignore these principles or treat them as irrelevant when reading the Bible.

Imagine what it would be like to read other things the way most people read the Bible. How would you be able to make sense of the story line in a novel if you paid no attention to who is speaking to whom, who is doing what to whom, who the main character of the story is, and so forth? Or how would you know what your obligations were under the terms of a contract if you paid no attention to the conditions stipulated in it? Or how would you be able to repair your car if you ignored the explanation in the repair manual that told you how to fix what's broken?

The point is, it's impossible to read anything with understanding if you don't pay attention to the details (such as who, what, when, why, and how) of what is written. This is especially true when it comes to the

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Bible and is the point I have been emphasizing since I began this series: Understanding the Bible requires attention to detail.

However, it also requires a Teacher who can explain how all of those details fit together. Since I have already explained numerous times why True Believers need to be under the tutelage of a Teacher, I won't repeat myself here. If you haven't figured out by now that you need to listen to someone who can explain the mystery that is hidden in the Scriptures (Col. 1:25–26), I doubt you ever will.

The purpose of this series of articles is not to explain any "mysteries" to you. It is to help you become more observant as you read and study the Scriptures so you can see more of the evidence which supports our explanation of those mysteries. The more observant you are when reading the Scriptures, the better chance you have of *verifying* whether the things you have been taught are true.

Once you initially confirm, to your mind's satisfaction, what is true and what is false and start reading the Scriptures with that understanding in mind, you'll be amazed at the amount of evidence you find which supports the Truth and undermines Satan's lies. You'll also be amazed at how much easier it is for you to see that evidence. Facts and details you had never noticed before will suddenly start making a whole lot of sense. Over time, the weight of evidence from these facts and details will become so great that you will become convinced beyond any doubt that you know the Truth.

As I have said repeatedly, astute observation is an important key to seeing more facts and details when reading the Bible. To help you be more observant, I have stressed the importance of looking for these specific things:

- ▲ *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.*
- ▲ *Repeated words and phrases.*

- ▲ *Cause and effect.*
- ▲ *Conclusions and summaries.*

To help you see where these occur in the Scriptures, I suggested you watch for key words and phrases. Since we have examined various key words and phrases related to the first four items on this list in previous issues, you should know how this works by now.

It is important for you to remember that key words and phrases are nothing more than a means to an end. They don't provide you with answers in and of themselves. They simply let you know that some specific type of information (who, what, when, why, and how) is being conveyed. Your responsibility at that point is to examine the text and figure out, if possible, what is being said. With that in mind, let's lay some groundwork for the next item on the list.

Parables and Comparisons

If there is any one thing that we have tried to convey at *The Voice of Elijah*® over the past seven years, it's the fact that the message of the Old and New Testaments is parabolic in nature. By that, we mean the Bible seeks to convey information about spiritual reality by means of comparison. As we have often mentioned, the Greek and Hebrew words for parable mean "comparison." So when the Bible uses parables and parabolic images to explain spiritual things, it's not telling us what spiritual reality is, it's telling us what spiritual reality is like, comparatively speaking.

The reason the Bible speaks in comparative (parabolic) terms is simple. God is a spiritual being Who exists in a spiritual realm, and we are human beings who exist in a physical realm. As such, we have no way to understand Who God is or what He is about except by means of comparison. We can understand what spiritual reality is like only when it is compared to our own reality. That's why God and His inspired Scriptures speak to us parabolically.

This may sound simple enough on the surface, but the challenge in understanding parables lies in first figuring out what is being compared to what and then determining what is significant about those

comparisons. Think about it: If God has chosen to use comparisons as a way of illustrating what spiritual reality is like, it stands to reason that He would want us to understand specific things about those comparisons. It also stands to reason that anyone who does not understand the significance of those comparisons will be totally ignorant of the Truth. (Welcome to the Church today.)

If you've ever wondered why God thought it necessary to enlist Teachers in "building" the Church (Eph. 4:11-12), now you know. Contrary to popular belief, the parables of the Bible are not pithy little stories that can be interpreted to mean whatever someone wants them to mean. They must be understood exactly as God originally intended them to be understood. That's why they must be explained by a Teacher who understands where God appropriated the imagery for His parables in the first place.

Comparisons and Contrasts

As most of you know by now, we at *The Voice of Elijah*® contend that the parables God originally presented to Israel through Moses were tied to the religious concepts of the Egyptians and Canaanites of that day. God used these religious concepts for comparative purposes to show Israel what spiritual reality was like so that they could understand what they needed to know in order to be saved.

Although parables are comprised of idioms and images, the only thing I am going to touch on here are images because they carry the parabolic comparison. Nothing I say, however, is going to explain the meaning or significance of those comparisons. A Teacher needs to explain those things to you, and I'm not a Teacher. All I intend to do here is point out a few key words and phrases that can help you recognize some of the Scriptures' subtle, and not so subtle, allusions to parabolic images and other types of comparisons. I say "other types of comparisons" because, although all parables contain a comparison, the Bible (especially the New Testament) sometimes makes comparisons that are not parabolic in nature. Therefore, not every comparison you find in the Scriptures is a parabolic comparison.

The thing that sets a parabolic statement apart from a general statement of comparison is the fact that parables have a hidden meaning and significance attached to them which, after they have been explained, provide insight into what spiritual reality is like. By contrast, a general statement of comparison has no mysterious element to it. This type of statement can generally be understood without additional explanation because it almost always means literally what it says. But, as with everything in the Scriptures, you need to pay attention to the context when determining whether a comparison is parabolic in nature or simply a general statement that should be taken literally.

In addition to comparisons that tell us how things are alike, there are also contrasts which tell us how things differ. Although contrasts are not as prevalent in the Scriptures as comparisons, they are nonetheless important because they provide details we need to know. They do so, however, by pointing out differences rather than similarities.

Like comparisons, contrasts can be parabolic in nature (i.e., have an element of mystery to them that needs to be explained by a Teacher) or they can be straightforward statements that mean exactly what they say. Consequently, the need to pay close attention to the context is just as important with contrasts as with comparisons. With this in mind, let's look at some key words and phrases related to comparisons and contrasts. The key terms most often associated with comparisons are these: *like, as, just as, so also, so shall, likewise, and in the same way*. The primary key word associated with contrasts is *but*.

Although *but* is the only word that is used with any regularity to specify a contrast, it is often used for other purposes as well. With over four thousand occurrences in the Bible (NASB version), *but* is obviously a word that carries different shades of meaning, depending on how it is used in a sentence. So, as always, you need to let the context dictate how you should understand its usage. When in doubt, simply ask yourself whether *but* is being used to convey a distinction or difference between two or more people, places, or things. Here's an example:

*“As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, **but** He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. And His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, **but** He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”*
(Matthew 3:11–12)

There are several contrasts stated here. The first is a contrast, or distinction, between John the Baptist and Jesus. John baptized with water, *but* Jesus would one day baptize “with the Holy Spirit and fire.” The second contrast is between the wheat and the chaff. The wheat that makes it through the winnowing process will one day be gathered in, *but* the chaff that does not make it through the winnowing process will be destroyed with unquenchable fire.

I’m sure you see the contrasts, but do you understand the Truth they convey parabolically? I’m sure some of you do, but I’m just as sure that most of you don’t. You only think you do. If the meaning and significance of this particular parabolic reference has not been explained to you by a Teacher called of God, it’s highly unlikely that you actually understood what you just read. If you aren’t absolutely certain that you’re currently being taught by a Teacher that God has called, I suggest you find one. If you don’t know where to find one by now, you evidently haven’t been reading our newsletter with much understanding. Enough said. Let’s look at another example of a contrast:

*“Heaven and earth will pass away, **but** My words shall not pass away.”*
(Matthew 24:35)

The contrast here is between Heaven and Earth and the words of Christ. This verse says Heaven and Earth will someday pass away, *but* Christ’s words—the Word of God—will never pass away. While this may seem like a phenomenal statement, it’s exactly what the Apostle Peter understood Isaiah to be saying:

*For you have been born again not of seed which is perishable **but** imperishable, {that is,} through the living and abiding word of God. For,*
*“ALL FLESH IS LIKE GRASS,
AND ALL ITS GLORY LIKE THE FLOWER OF GRASS.
THE GRASS WITHERS, AND THE FLOWER FALLS OFF,
BUT THE WORD OF THE LORD ABIDES FOREVER.”*
And this is the word which was preached to you.
(1 Peter 1:23–25)

There are two contrasts here, and both state essentially the same thing. First, Peter alludes to a contrast between two kinds of seed. The first seed—God’s Word—is imperishable, *but* the second seed (by implication) is perishable. The second contrast is one that compares the Word of God to all flesh. Interestingly, this contrast is made more vivid by Isaiah’s comparison (note the twofold use of *like*) of all flesh to grass that flowers briefly and then withers. Peter’s point is clear: The Word of God will never perish and will abide forever, *but* everything associated with the flesh will most certainly perish and will not abide forever. Now that you’ve seen some examples, study the passages below and see if you can discern who or what is being contrasted. Then see if you can figure out what differentiates them.

*“Even so, every good tree bears good fruit; **but** the bad tree bears bad fruit.”*
(Matthew 7:17)

*“Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, ‘First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; **but** gather the wheat into my barn.’”*
(Matthew 13:30)

*“For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; **but** whoever loses his life for My sake shall find it.”*
(Matthew 16:25)

*“And five of them were foolish, and five were prudent. For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, **but** the prudent took oil in flasks along with their lamps.”*
(Matthew 25:2–4)

Although I could easily go on citing examples of contrasts, we need to move on to comparisons. Since the two primary key words associated with comparisons are *like* and *as*, let's look at them first. The importance of these two words is not something to be taken lightly. That is because they both play a pivotal role in helping you recognize parabolic statements. The last thing you want to do is attach literal meaning to something that should not be understood literally. To illustrate how facts can become distorted when this happens, let's examine a statement from the Scriptures that the Church today has totally misconstrued. You will recognize this passage where Christ was in the Garden of Gethsemane just prior to His arrest:

And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground.
(Luke 22:44)

If you've ever wondered how it was physically possible for Jesus to sweat blood, you can stop wondering. He did not sweat literal blood. The text says His sweat "became like drops of blood," which is not the same as saying His sweat *became* blood or that His sweat *was* blood. In spite of what is clearly stated here, I'm certain most of you have heard it preached countless times that Jesus was in such agony prior to His death that He actually did sweat blood.

I can even remember a pastor giving a detailed explanation of how it is physically possible for the human body to sweat blood. And maybe it is. Just because I've never done it or seen it done doesn't mean it's not possible. All I'm saying is that Luke clearly states that Jesus' sweat was *like* blood. That cannot be interpreted as anything but a comparative statement that tells us how one thing is *like* something else.

The interesting aspect of all this is why Luke chose to compare Christ's sweat to blood. The fact that he made this comparison just prior to Christ actually shedding His blood strikes me as being more than coincidence. In fact, I wouldn't be surprised if there is significance attached to what Luke wrote. I can't say for sure whether there is or not,

but one thing I do know is that, based on this passage, Jesus Christ did not literally sweat blood. And the reason I know He did not is because the little word *like* tells me that Luke was speaking comparatively, not literally.

An even smaller word that often indicates a comparison is being made is the word *as*. The only problem with this tiny word is that it's much like the word *but*—it can be used in different ways to convey a variety of thoughts. Fortunately, it's generally not difficult to discern when *as* is being used to make a comparison. When you have doubts, the best way to discern how it is used is to mentally substitute the word *like* or the phrase *in the same way* in place of *as*. If the verse or passage still makes sense with either of these terms in place, then you most likely have a comparison. Take a look at this verse:

"Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; therefore be shrewd as serpents, and innocent as doves."
(Matthew 10:16)

In this verse it's easy to see that *as* is being used as a comparative term. But you can also see that if the word *like* were substituted for *as*, the verse would still make perfect sense. But here's a passage where it's not so easy to discern how *as* is used:

*"Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors."*
(Matthew 6:10-12)

You no doubt recognize this passage as a part of the Lord's Prayer. The question here is whether the word *as* is being used comparatively in either, or both, of these instances. If we do our mental substitution, it would appear that both statements are comparative in nature. In the first, we are to pray that God's will be done on Earth *as* (*like, in the same way*) it is in Heaven. In the second, we are to ask God to forgive us of our debts *as* (*like, in the same way*) we have forgiven others.

In both instances, the statements still make sense when the substitution is made. That is not to say, however, that we automatically come away with a clear understanding of what these verses are saying. That depends on our knowledge of The Teaching and whether we accurately discern the nature of the comparisons being made: Are they parabolic statements or general statements to be taken literally or a mixture of both? (To gain a better understanding of what God's will is, I suggest you read the article "Thy Kingdom Come. Thy Will Be Done, on Earth," *The Voice of Elijah*®, April 1997.)

The final key terms that point to comparisons in the Scriptures are as follows: *just as*, *so also*, *so shall*, *likewise*, and *in the same way*. The thing I like about these terms is that they almost always, if not always, indicate some kind of comparison is being made. I want to close this article with some passages where these terms are used. See if you can figure out what two things are being compared in each passage and whether the comparisons are parabolic in nature or straightforward statements that literally mean what they say or, perhaps, a mixture of both.

Don't be discouraged if you read something you don't fully understand. There's nothing stated parabolically in these passages that a legitimate Teacher called by God can't explain. If you stick with *The Voice of Elijah*® long enough, your Teacher will eventually show you everything you need to know. For now, all I want you to see is how certain words and phrases are used in the Scriptures to indicate that comparisons are being made:

"Therefore just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age."
(Matthew 13:40)

"For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, they were marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so shall the coming of the Son of Man be."
(Matthew 24:37-39)

"Blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracize you, and cast insults at you, and spurn your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man. Be glad in that day, and leap {for joy,} for behold your reward is great in heaven; for in the same way their fathers used to treat the prophets."
(Luke 6:22-23)

"And just as you want people to treat you, treat them in the same way."
(Luke 6:31)

For he who was called in the Lord while a slave, is the Lord's freedman; likewise he who was called while free, is Christ's slave.
(1 Corinthians 7:22)

For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive.
(1 Corinthians 15:22)

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.
(Ephesians 5:24-25)

For just as the body without {the} spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.
(James 2:26)

But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.
(2 Peter 2:1)

Allen Friedman

So Why Would a Nomad “Build a House” and Settle Down?

This is the second in a series of articles that, when complete, will explain how the ancient Hebrew idioms “build/make a house,” “raise up a seed,” and “raise up/make a name” both conceal and reveal the first of seven messages God has hidden in the Hebrew Scriptures. The first article in this series appeared in the July 1996 issue of **The Voice of Elijah**[®]. Recommended reading for this series includes Michael David Coogan’s *Stories From Ancient Canaan* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1978) and N. K. Sandars’ *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (London: Penguin Books, 1972). Academically minded readers might also want to consult John Gibson’s revision of G. R. Driver’s *Canaanite Myths and Legends* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, Ltd., 1977). Recommended reading for this article also includes S. N. Kramer’s *The Sacred Marriage Rite* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1969).

Now that I have explained a bit about the roles that ancient Semitic slave women (concubines) and free women played in “building a house,” “raising up a seed,” or “making a name” for a man, let’s talk about the other type of woman that a man sometimes used to “build a house” for his “name.” The Hebrew Scriptures call that woman a *zonah*. Yet you will normally find her called a “harlot,” or “prostitute,” in most of the English translations because translators are unaware of the nature of her cultic function. Unfortunately, the words *harlot* and *prostitute* fail to accurately capture the essence of the role these women played in the ancient world. But then again no English word does. Therefore, I will not bother to translate the Hebrew term *zonah* in the translations that I provide. I will, instead, transliterate it and explain what the *zonah* did.

Pay attention now; I am going to define the term *zonah* for you little by little. Just be patient if I appear to be taking the long way around; I will eventually tie everything together. Then you will be able to see *why* these women did *what* they did and *why* God chose to use them and the role they played in ancient society as the fundamental *parabolic image* on which He based the first message that Moses and the other Prophets hid in the ancient Hebrew Scriptures. Having said that by way of introduction, let me begin my explanation as close to the beginning of God’s Book as I can without taking the lid completely off Pandora’s box.

One People, One Boat, One Blessing

While we’re on the subject of opening boxes, Moses tells us that, when Noah opened the big box in which he floated to safety above the Flood, God told Noah a few things that he needed to know about the future of mankind. There are three *significant* things to note about Moses’ account: (1) God told Noah the Truth, (2) Noah heard what God said and acted accordingly—at least for a little while, and (3) Moses wrote it all down for us. If you fail to take any one of those three things into account, you will not only not be able to understand *what* God said to Noah, you will also not comprehend the *significance* of *what* Moses tells us about those events. That is, you will not understand *why* Moses left us such a detailed record.

I am going to tell you *why* God said *what* He said to Noah and *why* Moses wrote it all down for us. But I do not intend to explain *what* God said to Noah. Instead, I am going to give you my translation of the biblical account so that you can read and interpret it in whatever way you care to. Moses wrote this:

By the six hundred and first year, by the first {month,} by the first {day} of the month, the water had dried up on the earth. When Noah removed the ark's covering, he looked, and lo!, the surface of the ground had dried up. But by the second month, by the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was {completely} dry. Then God spoke to Noah, saying: "Go out from the ark, you and your woman and your sons and your sons' women with you. Bring out with you every living thing that is with you from every flesh—the birds, the animals, and the crawling things that crawl on the earth—that they may swarm the earth and be fruitful and multiply on the earth."

(Genesis 8:13–17)—my interim translation

Two things in this translation need a bit of explanation. The first is my use of the phrase "every flesh" instead of the nearly ubiquitous translation "all flesh." The Hebrew term *kol* that I have translated "every" actually *means* something like "the whole of." You can see, therefore, that it does *mean* "all." However, the English translation "all" does not always convey the precise nuances inherent in the Scriptures' use of the term *kol*. For example, a non-English-speaking person might claim that the English phrases "all of the men" and "every man" have synonymous *meaning*. Yet anyone who has grown up speaking English can readily see that they do not. "All of the men" emphasizes the solidarity of the collective group called "men." "Every man" draws attention to the various individuals that make up the collective group. So it is also with the use of the Hebrew term *kol* in the Scriptures.

When the Hebrew word *kol* is used with a determinate plural noun such as *the men*, it emphasizes the collective nature of the one group "men" and carries the sense of "all." When it occurs with an indeterminate singular noun such as *man*, it places emphasis on the individual "man" within the larger group and thus conveys the sense of "every." That much is understood by anyone with even an elementary understanding of the Hebrew language, and it would seem to settle the issue. But then we come to the term *flesh*.

Since the Hebrew term translated "flesh" is both singular and indefinite—the definite plural form occurs in Proverbs 14:30—"every flesh" would appear to be the nuance Moses is seeking to convey. However, since Satan has obviously worked hard to instill the idiotic "all flesh" notion in us, we should at least stop to inquire as to what he has been hiding from us and

why. That is, we should ask ourselves what individual categories of "flesh" Moses might have had in mind.

Now, lest some fool wants to ignorantly dispute the fact that the Scriptures know of various and sundry types of "flesh," let me quickly remind you what the Apostle Paul—a Jew educated in the Pharisaic tradition—wrote to the Corinthians:

All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one {flesh} of men, and another flesh of beasts, and another flesh of birds, and another of fish.

(1 Corinthians 15:39)

Where do you suppose Paul got that information? He got it from what Moses wrote about "every flesh." You can find a major part of what Moses has to say about such things in Leviticus 11. But don't expect to understand everything you read there. Moses intentionally stated the Truth concerning "every flesh" cryptically because God does not readily suffer fools. Yet if you know anything at all about Leviticus 11, you already know that it *makes a clear distinction between* which kinds of "flesh" may be eaten and which may not be eaten. Therefore, since God also addressed the topic of eating flesh in what He said to Noah, it would not be a wise move on your part to reject the translation "every flesh." You never know what little bit of pertinent information you might thereby leave concealed.

For the benefit of those of you who were not aware that God has *made a distinction between* the four different categories of flesh that Paul mentions in his letter to the Corinthians, let me remind you that there are also two different kinds of flesh within each of those categories. That is, there is both clean and unclean flesh among birds, fish, animals, insects, and, yes, even mankind. That is what Jesus was *talking about* when He washed Peter's feet as a *parabolic pantomime*:

Jesus said to him, "He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all {of you.}" For He knew the one who was betraying Him; for this reason He said, "Not all of you are clean."

(John 13:10–11)

If you have difficulty accepting the notion that God considers some folks clean and others unclean, I'm not surprised. Moses spent forty years in the wilderness

with a bunch of imbeciles who refused to get the point that God was trying to get across through the *parabolic pantomimes* that Moses established. In describing the *parabolic pantomimes* related to the eating of flesh, Moses tells us that it is permissible to eat only the flesh of clean creatures. He also emphatically insists that God will not accept anything other than the flesh of clean birds and animals as a sacrifice, so don't bring Him any fish, insects, or human beings. (But here's something to consider: God excluded humans only because they were all unclean at the time. He demanded the sacrifice of the first clean One to come along.) Moses alludes to the *significance* of all those *parabolic pantomimes* by what he says next:

So Noah went out, and his sons and his woman and his sons' women were with him. Every living thing—all the crawling things and all the birds, everything that crawls on the earth—went out from the ark according to their families. Then Noah built an altar to His Majesty and took from every clean animal and every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar.

(Genesis 8:18–20)—my interim translation

Pay attention now. Noah offered sacrifices of only clean animals and birds, and Moses recorded that fact for our benefit. He also told us that God had Noah take seven pairs of every clean animal with him when he entered the ark:

Then His Majesty said to Noah: "You and all your house enter the ark because I have seen that you {Noah} are righteous before me in this generation. From every clean animal you must take for yourself seven {and} seven—a man and his woman. But from the animals that are not clean two—a man and his woman. Also from the birds of the Sea of Waters seven {and} seven—male and female—to keep seed alive on the surface of the whole earth."

(Genesis 7:1–3)—my interim translation

Did you see that God referred to clean animals as "a man and his woman" in verse 2, then He turned right around and referred to the birds as "male and female" in verse 3? That's one of those little anomalies in the Hebrew text that you will normally find glossed over in the translations. Yet you need to know it is there before you can understand the Truth that Moses hid in the Pentateuch. I translated the phrase "a man and his

woman" literally just to let you know it is there. If that translation sounds a bit strange to you, get used to it. There are a whole lot of things in the Hebrew Scriptures that are even stranger than that. The trouble is, the English reader never gets to see them because translators try to make the biblical text as "readable" as possible. That *means* they have to appeal to the mind-set of the modern reader rather than forcing the modern reader to take on the ancient mind-set. Too bad. When God said what He had to say, He was speaking in terms of the goofy concepts of the ancient mind-set instead of the goofy concepts that are floating around today. But, arrogance being what it is, folks today still think their goofy concepts are better.

Consider the implications of what Moses has just told us about clean animals and birds. Moses gave the Law concerning sacrifices and offerings a long time after Noah died. Yet Moses tells us Noah offered sacrifices in accordance with the Law that God established for the sons of Israel at Mt. Sinai. So *why* do you suppose Moses considered it important to make his ancient Israelite readers aware of that fact? Well, there are at least two reasons that would seem to be fairly obvious. Moses wanted them to know that (1) Noah had knowledge of the regulations that God ordained regarding sacrifices because those regulations were something God had established a long time before their own time and (2) Noah's proper observance of those regulations prompted God to do what He did next:

When His Majesty smelled the pleasant aroma, His Majesty said to His heart, "I will never again curse the ground on account of the man because the intent of the heart of the man is evil from his youth, and I will never again smite all life just as I have done."

(Genesis 8:21)—my interim translation

There are a couple of things you need to note concerning this verse as well: God resolved (1) to never again curse the ground on account of man and (2) to never again smite all life *just as* He had done. If I were you, I wouldn't make too much of either one of those statements. They are merely a smokescreen that Moses has used to conceal the Truth concerning the most important thing that God said to Noah. Fools will most likely continue to think otherwise, but how else do you explain the fact that God did not say He was going to remove the curse He had already placed on the

ground? He merely said He would never again place another curse on the ground. Then He explained that His curse could not be completely removed:

*“As long as all the days of the Earth,
Are seedtime and harvest.
Whether cold or hot,
Whether summer or winter,
Whether day or night,
They shall not rest.”*
(Genesis 8:22) —my interim translation

God is *talking about* the fact that His curse on the ground had made it impossible for mankind to obtain food from the ground without working continually—that is, without planting and harvesting every year. For those who have not recently read the part of the Scriptures where God’s curse is mentioned, here’s what God said to Adam when He cursed the ground:

But to the man He said: “Because you listened to the voice of your woman and you ate from the tree that I commanded you, saying, ‘Don’t eat from it!’ the ground is cursed on account of you. In pain you must eat from it all the days of your life. It will sprout thornbushes and thistles for you; nevertheless, you must eat the green plants of the field. You must eat bread [obtained] by the sweat of your brow until you return to the ground because you were taken from it, because you are dirt and to dirt you will return.”
(Genesis 3:17–19) —my interim translation

In telling us what God said to Adam and then following it with what He said to Noah, Moses would have us understand that God’s curse on the ground, like every spoken curse in the ancient world, could not be retracted. However, its effects could easily be mitigated by a *spoken blessing*. That is *why* God gave Noah a *blessing* in which He provided a source of food other than what he could gain by working the ground. Then Moses tells us God cryptically explained how His curse on the ground would eventually be subverted completely for all those fortunate enough to participate in *the blessing* He bestowed on Noah:

Then God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them: “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. Fear of you and terror of you shall be on every living thing of the

earth—on all the birds of the Sea of Waters, on all that crawls on the ground, and on all the fish of the sea. Into your hand they have been given. Every crawling thing that is alive shall become food for you. Just like the green plants, I have given everything to you. You most assuredly must not eat flesh with its soul—its blood. And, {just as} assuredly, I will require your blood for your souls. From every living thing I will require it. But from the Man—from each of His brothers—I will require the soul of the Man.

*{As for} the one who pours out the blood of the Man,
In the Man his blood will be poured out.
Because in the image of God He will make the Man.
But as for you, be fruitful and multiply;
Swarm the earth and multiply in it.”*
(Genesis 9:1–7) —my interim translation

As I told you earlier, it is not my intention to explain *what* Moses wrote. I am only going to tell you *why* he wrote it. In this case, I will tell you that “the Man” that God mentions in *the blessing* He *handed down* to Noah and his sons is none other than “The Man” Jesus Christ. I will also tell you that Moses has just told us how God concisely reminded Noah of the precise reason for which Jesus Christ—“The Man”—would one day be born, live, and die an agonizing death on the cross. But as amazing as all that is, it pales in comparison to the reason *why* Moses told us all these things. He did so because without an understanding of *why* he included these seven short verses in his account, one can never understand what the Prophets and Apostles tell us in the remainder of the Scriptures. So let me tell you *why* Moses told us *what* he has just told us here.

In the ancient world, a man’s relationship to a benevolent god was one of his most valuable assets. It was, in fact, so valuable that the theft of a man’s god was considered an act worthy of death (Gen. 31:32). It should come as no surprise to us, therefore, that such an asset would have been considered an integral part of a man’s estate, that is, as an *inheritance*. And it was. But the Hebrew Scriptures tell us ancient man had a unique way of *handing down* his relationship to his god. He did so by means of a *spoken blessing*. As we go through the Scriptures tracing *the blessing* that God *handed down* to Noah, we will find these things to be true.

My point is, Moses would have us understand that Noah and his three sons were the first to possess *the blessing* of God after the Flood. Therefore, we

should already be wondering where *the blessing* went from there. Who got it next? Moses will not be long in providing us the information we seek. But first, he needs to shift the attention of fools away from *the blessing* and focus it on something that has very little, if any, *significance* at all. He says this:

Then God said to Noah and his sons with him: “As for Me, Look! I am establishing My covenant with you and with your seed after you and with every soul of the living that is with you—{the soul} in the birds, in the domesticated animals, and in every living thing of the earth—from all those coming out of the ark to every {other} living thing of the earth. I will establish My covenant with you, and I will never again cut off every flesh with the waters of the flood. There will never again be a flood to destroy the earth.” Then God said: “This is the sign of the covenant that I am granting between Me and you and every soul of the living that is with you for eternal generations: I have put My bow in the cloud, and it shall become the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth. When I bring a cloud over the earth, the bow shall be seen in the cloud, and I will remember My covenant which is between Me and you and every soul of the living in every flesh: The waters will never again become a flood to destroy every flesh. When the bow is in the cloud, I will look at it to remember the eternal covenant between God and every soul of the living in every flesh that is on the earth.” Then God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between Me and every flesh that is on the earth.” (Genesis 9:8–17) —my interim translation

That passage leaves little doubt in the mind of anyone who understands the Truth: Moses was the greatest of all the Prophets. He clearly has no equal when it comes to his ability to effectively conceal the Truth. Nearly everyone comes away from reading this particular text with only one thing in their minds—God’s *promise* that He would never again destroy all life with a flood. That’s because Moses’ description of God’s covenant completely overshadows his account of what God said when He *handed down the blessing* to Noah. Yet Moses’ account of God’s covenant with “every flesh” contributes little to what he tells us about how God would accomplish the salvation of mankind through *the blessing*. Moreover, it provides not even one small comfort to a generation facing imminent

destruction by the fires of nuclear holocaust. Would to God that when those fires break out, the windows of Heaven could swing wide open to quench the flames.

In case you missed it, I am *talking about* the fact that God said nothing whatsoever about not destroying “every flesh” by some means other than water. He only *promised* there would be no more floods like the Flood that Noah survived. If you were not aware that God had any other such plan of destruction in mind, let me remind you that the Apostle Peter clearly understood God intends to use fire the next time around:

*Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with {their} mocking, following after their own lusts, and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For {ever} since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.” For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God {the} heavens existed long ago and {the} earth was formed out of water and by water, through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water. **But the present heavens and earth by His word are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.** (2 Peter 3:3–7)*

So much for God’s *promise* that He would never again cut off “every flesh” by means of a great flood.

One Blessing, One Fool, One Curse

After Moses neatly distracts uninformed readers from the main point of his story, he immediately gets back to telling us what we need to know about *the blessing*. He has already described how God *handed down the blessing* to Noah and his three sons. Those folks were, by birth, already “one people.” Therefore, he details the circumstances that led to the Earth being separated into two different peoples—the Blessed and the Cursed. He begins by telling us how Ham displeased his father Noah:

The sons of Noah—the ones who came out of the ark—were Shem, Ham, and Japheth; and Ham was the father of Canaan. These three were the sons of Noah, and from these all the earth was scattered. Then Noah—a man—profaned the ground and planted a vineyard. He drank some of the wine, became drunk, and uncovered himself

inside his tent. When Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, he told his two brothers outside. Then Shem and Japheth took the garment, and the two of them set {it} on a shoulder, walked backward, and covered the nakedness of their father. But their faces were turned, and they did not see the nakedness of their father. (Genesis 9:18–23) —my interim translation

Moses doesn't bother to explain much about *why* Noah objected to what Ham did. He assumes his readers will already understand the *significance* of Ham's actions. And the ancient people that Moses taught in the wilderness did. But folks today, not knowing anything at all about the role of the *zonah* or the ritual drama in which she played a leading role, are left to foolishly assume the point of the story has to do with nothing other than the laws Moses gave regarding nakedness (Lev. 18–20). Those laws certainly come into play, and Moses does want us to know that Noah had knowledge of them as well. But Moses would also have us understand that Noah was angry with Ham because his actions revealed a mind-set that would soon lead to disaster. Since I haven't yet explained the *significance* of the *zonah* ritual, I'll *talk about* Ham's stupidity another time. It is enough for now that you are aware that Noah immediately placed a curse on Canaan, Ham's youngest son, because he found Ham's actions completely repugnant:

When Noah woke up from his wine, he knew what his youngest son had done to him. So he said:

"Canaan is cursed!

He will be a servant of servants to his brothers."

Then he said:

*"His Majesty, God of Shem, is **blessed!***

Let Canaan be His servant.

May God be generous to Japheth

So that he may dwell in the tents of Shem,

So that Canaan may be their servant."

(Genesis 9:24–27) —my interim translation

Now the simpletons who read the Scriptures without giving much thought to what they read will automatically assume that these events occurred right after Noah got off the ark. But that is not so. How do I know that? Simple logic. Noah cursed Ham's youngest son, Canaan. That *means* enough time must have passed for Ham to engender his three older boys as

well as Canaan (Gen. 10:6–20) before he stumbled badly. Therefore, we can be certain that Ham crossed his father several years after the Flood. While we don't know exactly how long afterward, we don't have to speculate all that much about it. Moses gives us enough information to determine that it happened sometime within the first century.

The first thing you should note in this regard is that Moses tells us Noah lived for 350 years after the Flood (Gen. 9:28). He does that to let us know that Noah had plenty of time to lose sight of *the blessing*, go back to farming, and then succumb to an even more deadly practice. But Moses also gives us the precise point in time by which Noah must have cursed Canaan and thereby *made a distinction between* two separate "peoples"—the Blessed and the Cursed. He says this:

And to Eber were born two sons. The name of the one was Peleg because in his days the earth was divided.

And the name of his brother was Joktan.

(Genesis 10:25) —my interim translation

If you look closely at the context in which that verse occurs, you will find it tells us that Noah's oldest son, Shem, engendered a son named Arpachshad. Arpachshad engendered a son named Shelah, who engendered a son named Eber. That man named his son Peleg because God divided the Earth into the various nations sometime shortly before or shortly after the boy was born. Knowing that, you can then calculate the exact time of that sad occasion if you have a mind to. Moses gives you all the numbers you need in Genesis 11:10–16. I came up with a date one hundred and one years after the Flood. How about you?

The division of the Earth into all the nations a century after the Flood provides the latest possible date for Noah's curse on Canaan. The reason for that is easy to understand but somewhat difficult for me to explain adequately. You see, when Noah cursed Canaan, he "cut him off from" the "people" who held title to *the blessing*. For reasons I will explain later, the Tower of Babel was an attempt on the part of Ham and his descendants to obviate Noah's curse by once again making the Cursed "one people" with the Blessed. Therefore, Noah must have cursed Canaan sometime before the Hamites built that damnable edifice.

Let me ask you a question on another subject: Why did Noah curse Ham's youngest son Canaan

instead of cursing the culprit Ham himself or one of his older sons? Now let me give you an answer that you can either accept or reject as you deem fit. Noah could not curse Ham because God had already *blessed* him (Gen. 9:1), and odds are better than even that Ham had already *handed down the blessing* to his three oldest sons. But if you understand that answer, you probably also understand one supremely important fact regarding *the blessing*: Once you have it in your possession, nobody can ever take it away from you. You can only relinquish it voluntarily.

One City, One Tower, One People

Moses certainly didn't waste any time in telling us what we need to know about *the blessing*, did he? First, he described how God *handed it down* to Noah and his sons. Then he told us Noah cursed Canaan and thereby “cut him off from” all those who enjoyed the benefits of *the blessing*. Finally, he gave us a genealogy in Genesis 10 so that we could track *the blessing* down through the lineage of Shem. In Genesis 11:10–27, he is even going to tell us how *the blessing* made its way down to Abraham. But first he has to explain how the majority of mankind was “cut off from” the Blessed by God Himself when the cursed descendants of Canaan used the Tower of Babel to once again become “one people” with those who held title to *the blessing*.

Earlier, when I pointed out *the blessing* that God *handed down* to Noah and his three sons, I briefly mentioned how that *blessing* negated the effects of the curse that God had placed on the ground when He drove Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden. I didn't tell you everything you need to know about those things. But then again, I can't tell you everything you need to know about *the blessing* because most of it derives from a variety of other Scriptures that I have not yet explained. While those things are not entirely relevant to our current subject of discussion, you do need to understand the *significance* of what God did when He *blessed* Noah and his three sons. So let me explain that.

When God cursed the ground, He also restricted Adam to eating only what he could produce by tilling the soil. Therefore, the descendants of Adam—at least those who obeyed God—were vegetarians. Yet when God cursed Cain, He ordered him to be “a transient and a wanderer” and made it impossible for him to

farm the ground (Gen. 4:12). However, instead of obediently becoming the “transient and wanderer” that God had ordained as his fate, Cain settled down and built a city. His descendants became merchants, manufacturers, and entertainers (Gen. 4:16–22), probably so they could obtain food from those who were farming the ground. Some of them even turned to herding sheep and cattle (Gen. 4:20), most likely so they could eat the meat of those animals. The important thing to note in this regard is that none of the activities of the Cainites had been officially sanctioned by God. They were, instead, actions taken by sinful men who were seeking to lessen the effects of God's curse on Cain.

Moses tells us in Genesis 5 that Noah was a descendant of Adam's son, Seth. That is *significant* because it tells us the Flood completely wiped out the descendants of Cain, leaving only the lineage of Seth alive. Unlike Cain, Seth suffered only from the curse God had placed on the ground. Therefore, when God *blessed* Noah after the Flood, He intentionally mitigated the effects of that curse by permitting the Blessed—Noah and his sons—to eat the flesh of clean animals without incurring guilt. That is the point Moses is seeking to make by telling us what Noah's father said on the occasion of Noah's birth:

When Lamech had lived one hundred and eighty-two years, he engendered Noah. He called his name Noah, saying, “This one will give us relief from our works and from the ache of our hands—from {working} the ground that His Majesty cursed.”

(Genesis 5:28–29) —my interim translation

Moses leaves completely unstated one of the most important bits of information we should take away from his account of how God *handed down the blessing* to Noah, so let me explain that. His point is, in *blessing* Noah and his sons, God told them they did not have to labor any longer under the curse He had placed on the ground. They could, instead, hunt wild game and raise animals for food. Moreover, by telling us that Noah “profaned” the ground when he planted a vineyard (Gen. 9:20), Moses wants us to understand that meat became such an important source of food that for several years after the Flood, nobody even bothered to farm the ground. They obtained food by being shepherds and hunters instead. Then Noah “profaned” the ground by planting a vineyard, and the

rest is history. Ham sinned against his father, and Noah responded by cursing Canaan.

It is extremely important that you grasp the main point that Moses has hidden in his account of Noah and the Flood. He wants it understood that the Flood completely blotted out the descendants of Cain. It thereby made all mankind once again "one people." That is *why* he tells us God *handed down the blessing* to every male member of that "one people." Yet he also would have us see that when he cursed Canaan, Noah "cut him off from" the benefits of *the blessing* that God had bestowed on his father Ham. Since one of those benefits was the right to eat—with God's complete approval—the flesh of clean animals, Noah consigned Canaan and his descendants to once again farming the ground to obtain sanctioned food. Therefore, Noah's curse on Canaan, like God's curse on Cain, separated the Earth into two completely different "peoples" with two entirely different cultures. Those who held title to *the blessing* were nomadic tribesmen who were free to live off the flesh of the animals they raised. The descendants of Canaan were required to be farmers because they could not—without incurring God's wrath—eat anything but agricultural produce.

You need to remember what I have just told you if you ever intend to understand the *parabolic imagery* related to the twelve *nomadic* tribes of Israel that God has used in the Hebrew Scriptures. Moses wants it understood that those who held title to *the blessing* had obediently remained nomadic herdsmen and shepherds since the time of Noah. They were not farmers like the descendants of Canaan, who had to work the ground because they stood under the curse of God.

It is in this context that Moses reveals the purpose that these two "peoples" had when they built the city of Babylon and the Tower of Babel. He tells us they used that infernal tower to join themselves together and once again become "one people," jointly holding title to *the blessing* that God *handed down* to Noah and his sons. Look at what Moses says:

All the earth was one speech and the same words. And while they were journeying from the east, they found a broad valley in the land of Shinar and settled there. Then each one said to his neighbor, "Come on! Let's form bricks and burn {them} 'til burnt." So the brick became stone to them, and the bitumen became mortar to them. Then they said, "Come on! Let's build for ourselves a city and a

tower—its top will be in the Sea of Waters—and let's make a name for ourselves lest we be scattered over the surface of all the earth." Then His Majesty came down to see the city and the tower (which the sons of the man had {already} built). *And His Majesty said: "Look! All of them are one people and have one speech. But doing this has profaned them, and now nothing that they plan to do will be withheld from them. Come on! Let's go down and make their speech senseless there so that each one cannot listen to the speech of his neighbor."* So His Majesty scattered them from there over the surface of all the earth, and they stopped building the city. Therefore, He called its name Babel because there His Majesty mixed up the speech of all the earth and from there His Majesty scattered them over the surface of all the earth.

(Genesis 11:1–9) —my interim translation

The point of this passage is to tell us God did not approve of the Blessed and the Cursed becoming "one people." So instead of reaffirming *the blessing* He had given to Noah and his sons, God cursed all those who went along with the plan—the Blessed along with the Cursed. We know that because the text tells us He scattered them. And the avid student of the Hebrew Scriptures is well aware that the one sure sign of God's curse has always been the scattering of a "people." (If you doubt that, read Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28–29. Then take a good, long look at the history of the Jews.) A bit later, however, Moses is going to confirm that God did not "cut off" everyone "from" the Blessed. That is, he will tell us that *the blessing* was still firmly in the possession of one family in the lineage of Shem.

With all that behind us, we finally come to the primary subject of our investigation—the woman the ancient Hebrews called a *zonah*. Her image is clearly stamped all over Moses' account of the Tower of Babel; but before you can see it, you must first understand a few things about what these ancient people said to one another and how all that relates to the *sacred marriage* ceremony. Let me begin by pointing out a couple of things you need to note in the passage above. The first is the Semitic idiom "make a name" in verse 4. The ancient myth that stands behind that idiom is one of a trilogy of myths that together provide startling insight into the *parabolic imagery* related to "make a name," "build a house," and "raise up a seed." All three of these idioms generally *mean* "engender a son" and are

directly related to the mythological *significance* of the *sacred marriage* ceremony. Yet the appearance of the idiom "make a name" in this context is *significant* only because it tells us the Blessed and the Cursed definitely used the *zonah* ritual to become "one people." The central question is, Which "people" gave up their heritage to become a part of the other "people"? That question is answered by the second *significant* thing you should notice about the passage.

In saying "but doing this has *profaned* them and now nothing that they plan to do will be withheld from them," God is *talking about* the fact that the Cursed had become "one people" *in* the Blessed and had thereby gained access to the ultimate benefit for which He gave *the blessing*. That is particularly interesting because the dominant role of the Blessed is also attested in the secular Sumerian texts that speak concerning the original *sacred marriage* ceremony. Those texts tell us the shepherd Dumuzi won out over some unnamed farmer to become the one who "took" the virgin Innana (the *zonah*) in the annual ritual that celebrated these peoples' success in "raising up a seed" and "building a house" for "The Name" of God. But the issue of who joined whom doesn't matter much one way or the other as far as the fate of the Blessed is concerned. Their union with the Cursed would have immediately contaminated them. So they would have become subject to God's curse either way.

If you compare my translation of Genesis 11:6 with other translations, you will find that the term I have translated as "profane" is normally translated "began." You will find that same thing in connection with my translation of Genesis 9:20, where the text clearly indicates Noah did something to the ground when he planted a vineyard. The Hebrew verb at issue is the verb *chalal*. It means "profane." But it sometimes has the sense of "begin" when it is used with another verb that specifies what action has "begun." That *means* either translation is possible in Genesis 11:6 because *chalal* is used with an infinitive form of the verb "to do." However, the translation "began" stretches the limits of credibility in Genesis 9:20 because there is no second verb in that verse to tell us what Noah "began" to do to the ground. Therefore, "profane" is the more logical choice, and it makes perfect sense when you understand that Noah voluntarily went back to farming after being released from the curse that God placed on the ground.

You will have to decide for yourself whether you find my translation of the biblical text acceptable. That decision will most likely depend on whether you agree with my explanation of what Moses is *talking about* in the early chapters of the Book of Genesis. I have no doubt the Blessed will understand. The Cursed, on the other hand, are—and will remain until the bitter End—without understanding.

One People, One Name, One King

Most folks think the idiom "make a name" in Genesis 11:4 means "become famous" or something equally inane. Yet in using that idiom, Moses is doing what every one of the Prophets did: He is mocking the stupidity of those among us who ignorantly approach the Scriptures with the assumption that they can easily understand what they find written. In this case, the complete Truth concerning the Tower of Babel is both complex and extremely controversial. However, the only Truth you need to know right now lies hidden just beneath the surface of the text. Therefore, I'm only going to peel back the first layer or two, just enough for you to understand what Moses tells us later about *the blessing*. So hang on; here we go.

As long as the Blessed remained herdsmen and shepherds, they traveled around in a clan looking for better pastures. However, it is only logical that before long some of the Blessed would tire of the vagabond life and seek to settle down. That is exactly the circumstance that Moses is describing in these two verses:

All the earth was one speech and the same words. And while they were journeying from the east, they found a broad valley in the land of Shinar and settled there.
(Genesis 11:1–2) —my interim translation

Logic alone tells you that's when Noah planted his vineyard. He couldn't have done it earlier because the clan was still on the move. But Noah's first mistake resulted in his second: He got drunk, then Ham acted the fool, and Noah cursed Canaan. That's when things went from bad to worse. A bit later, somebody (probably Ham) suggested that they undo Noah's curse on Canaan by building the Tower of Babel. It's hard to say whether Noah was aware of their decision. But he was the head of the clan, and it occurred on his watch, so he certainly must share the blame.

Moses even tells us which one of the Blessed was definitely involved in the debacle at the Tower of Babel. It was Ham's eldest son, Cush. He says this:

*The sons of Ham were Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan. The sons of Cush were Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabteca. The sons of Raamah were Sheba and Dedan. But Cush {also} engendered Nimrod. He was the one who profaned by becoming a **gibbor** in the earth. He was a **gibbor** of hunting before His Majesty. Therefore, it is said, "Like Nimrod, a **gibbor** of hunting before His Majesty." **The beginning of his kingdom was Babel**, then Erech, then Akkad, then Calneh, in the land of Shinar. From that land he went out into Assyria, and built Nineveh, Rehoboth-Ir, Calah, and Resen between Nineveh and Calah. (That was the greatest city.)*
(Genesis 10:6–12)—my interim translation

In that passage, Moses alludes to several things we need to know about the *who*, *what*, and *why* of the Tower of Babel. He cryptically tells us Nimrod was the "name" the people "made" at the Tower of Babel by tersely saying, "The beginning of his kingdom was Babel." His point is, Nimrod was the first king to reign as a divine son of god after the Flood. That is, he was the king (the *gibbor*) in whom the Blessed and the Cursed were once again united.

Moses knows, as he expects his reader to know, that, in spite of the fact that he says "But Cush {also} engendered Nimrod," Nimrod was still the product of a *sacred marriage* ceremony. Think about it: How do you suppose the Egyptian Pharaohs, the Babylonian kings, the Assyrian kings, the Hittite kings, the Canaanite kings, and so on, could all be both human and divine unless those ancient folks thought some supernatural hanky-panky had gone on between a human woman (the *zonah*) and a god at some point in the past? The ancient Sumerians *talked about* that signal event in terms of the time "when kingship was lowered from heaven." (James Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts* [Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1969], p. 265.) Moses merely tells us the people "made a name" for themselves.

My point is, Moses and various other ancient sources indicate that the first king after the Flood was the product of a sacred union between some god and a virgin woman. Moses wants us to know that first divine king was Nimrod. In his case, the woman who

bore him just happened to be a virgin daughter of Ham's son Cush. But that first mother of god could have been anyone. That's just the way it has always been with lightning bolts, lotteries, and the *sacred marriage* ceremony. The recipient doesn't necessarily have any superior qualifications. Being in the right place at the right time is all it takes.

If you have difficulty reconciling the statement "But Cush {also} engendered Nimrod" with the fact that I said his daughter actually engendered the boy, you need to see if you can find Mary's name in the genealogies of Jesus Christ (Matt. 1:1–16; Luke 3:23–38). You see, Mary and the virgin daughter of Cush had a lot in common because both engendered a son that some considered to be the Son of God.

The identity of the first god-king is not the only thing, nor even the most important thing, Moses has explained in this passage. You should also know that the Hebrew term I translated "profaned" in verse 8 is the same term that I translated that way in connection with Noah planting a vineyard (Gen. 9:20) and the building of the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:6). You are going to see that same word a few more times before we leave the early chapters of the Book of Genesis, so you may as well get used to it. The "profaning" of *the blessing* is a theme that Moses used to tie all those chapters together. Knowing that, you can easily understand why Satan has lied to us about the *meaning* of the term. Without it, what Moses wrote doesn't hang together as a completely coherent account.

You probably noticed that I left the Hebrew term *gibbor* untranslated in the passage above. That's because the term is impossible to translate. Like the Hebrew term *zonah*, it has no precise English equivalent. Therefore, I will remain content to transliterate it and tell you what a *gibbor* was. He was generally any male who was qualified to "take" a woman and "enter" her in order to "build a house," "raise up a seed," and "make a name" through her. Obviously, that *meant* he was virile. And the term *gibbor* seems to have been used with little more than that connotation later on. But Moses has used it in the early chapters of Genesis to point specifically to the only man who was qualified to participate in the ancient *sacred marriage* ceremony. That man was the king. Just keep in mind the fact that the king was also considered to be a god. That way, you can understand why the annual ritual in which the king "took" a virgin (a *zonah*) was a "*sacred*" marriage.

In the passage above, Moses is telling us that Nimrod, the first king of Babylon, was the only virile man who was qualified to impregnate the virgin (the *zonah*) after the first *sacred marriage* at the Tower of Babel. The description "*gibbor* of hunting" may be a bit difficult to fathom until you look at it in terms of what the union of these two "peoples" was intended to accomplish for the Cursed: It would restore to them the right to eat the flesh of all clean animals—including wild animals—without incurring guilt.

One God, One Blessing, One History

Moses definitely hasn't minced words, has he? He portrays these ancient men in the worst possible light. He begins by telling us God *blessed* Noah and his three sons. But then he recounts how Noah cursed Canaan and "cut him off from" *the blessing*. Finally, he cryptically describes how some of Canaan's kinfolks stretched out a helping hand, thinking they could easily undo Noah's curse and bring the Cursed back into the fold. His point is clear: That was the worst sort of blasphemy against God. Yet it happens all the time in the Church today, and stupid folk applaud the thought. Unfortunately, this generation is about to learn the same lesson that God taught those ancient people: A cold, hard distinction exists between those who hold title to *the blessing* and those who don't.

If it appears to you that I have presented quite a few new concepts without a whole lot to substantiate them, be patient. I will. But if you are still waiting for that one powerful "proof text" to hit you right between the eyes, I have news for you. You will be well on your way to rotting in Hell before the awesome weight of the Truth finally dawns on you: There isn't going to be one. I am only going to explain *what* the Scriptures are *talking about*. That is all that some folks will ever need to enable them to understand when I begin to explain *what* the Scriptures have to say *to them*. If you can't discern the Truth by the time I have accomplished the first part of my mission, that's your problem. I have warned you in no uncertain terms, so you certainly won't be able to say I failed to do my part.

Let me explain where Ham and his son Cush got the idea that the ancient *sacred marriage* ceremony could solve their particular problem. Moses gives us a fairly good overview of what we need to know. I'll just fill in a few pertinent details now and leave the rest

until next time. The first thing you should be aware of is this: *The Teaching* did not begin with Moses. Moses makes that point by telling us Noah knew all about the regulations concerning sacrifice, eating clean and unclean animals, and nakedness. He does something similar in his account of how Cain killed Abel:

Now the man knew Eve his woman, and she conceived and delivered Cain. Then she said, "I have acquired a man—His Majesty," and she went on to deliver his brother Abel. Now Abel was a shepherd of a flock, but Cain was one who worked ground. At the end of days, Cain brought a cereal offering to His Majesty from the fruit of the ground. But Abel also brought from the firstfruits of his flock and from their fat. When His Majesty had regard for Abel and his cereal offering, but for Cain and his cereal offering he had no regard, then Cain became extremely angry and his face fell. Then His Majesty said to Cain: "Why are you angry? And why did your face fall? If you do well, will you not carry {the name}? But if you don't do well, sin is reclining against the door and his desire is for you; but you must master him." When Cain spoke to his brother Abel while they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him.

(Genesis 4:1–8)—my interim translation

Moses has hidden a lot of things in this passage that are more important than the fact that Cain and Abel were twins. For example, he tells us Abel was a shepherd and Cain a farmer because he wants to point out the fact that God preferred shepherds, even at a time when He allowed mankind to raise animals only for sacrifice and for their milk. However, that fact is relatively insignificant in comparison to the two things in the passage that infer Adam and Eve understood *The Teaching* when they left the Garden.

The first allusion to *The Teaching* is in the pronouncement Eve made when Cain was born. She says "I have acquired a man—His Majesty" because she knew *The Teaching* explains how a virgin (which Moses implies Eve was when she conceived Cain and Abel) would one day bear the One Who would rule over all creation as a divine King. She thought she was that virgin and, therefore, believed Cain was the Son of God that God had *promised* would one day be born.

The second thing that Moses says to let his reader know Adam and Eve had knowledge of *The Teaching* is

the statement God made to Cain before he killed Abel. I have translated the statement literally as "If you do well, will you not carry" and then supplied the implied "the name" to bring out the fact that God was pointing to Cain's favored position as the firstborn of Adam. Cain would have been the son of Adam through whom "The Name" of God was transferred down to the next generation had he not been "cut off from" *the blessing*. Since I have explained the basics related to "carrying The Name" in the first volume of *The Mystery of Scripture* (see the Order Form in this issue), I need not get into that again here. Moses' point in telling us what God said to Cain is actually quite simple: When God cursed Cain, the honor of "carrying The Name" fell to Adam's third son, Seth.

The question is, Does Moses give us any indication at all that God *handed down* The Teaching to Adam and Eve before they left the Garden? Certainly. The position of the Church has always been that God was *talking about* Jesus Christ when He said this:

Then His Majesty—God—said to the Serpent: "Because you have done this, you are more cursed than all the domesticated animals and all the wildlife of the field! You will go on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life! But I will establish hostility between you and the woman and between your seed and her Seed. He will bruise you {as} Head and you will bruise Him {as} heel." (Genesis 3:14–15) —my interim translation

You need to understand that from the very beginning, *The Teaching* has contained both *the blessing* and *the curse*. It was spoken to Satan *and* to the woman. To his "seed" it is a curse, but to every "seed" of the woman fortunate enough to *receive* it, it is a *blessing*.

One People, One History, One Teaching

Here's something liberal theologians have been telling us for years: The rigid chronology in Genesis 5 and 11:10–12:4 doesn't fit together with *their interpretation* of the archaeological data. That's true. It doesn't. Yet that is because they do not understand the biblical account. Nothing that Moses says flatly contradicts anything archaeologists have discovered in the Near East. But *their interpretation* of the archaeological data certainly does not agree with what Moses wrote. So let me explain the point Moses is making in his account.

If you put the numbers that Moses provides (Gen. 5; 11:10–12:4; 21:5; 25:20; 47:28; and Ex. 12:40) together with a conservative dating of the Exodus, you will find that he claims Adam and Eve left the Garden of Eden sometime around 4000 B.C. He also claims the Flood occurred around 2450 B.C. and the Tower of Babel was built a century later, about 2350 B.C. Now the documents of the Mesopotamian civilization rise up out of the mist no earlier than 2300 B.C. So they do not necessarily dispute Moses' account. But anyone with even a smattering of knowledge of ancient history should be able to see the one apparent incongruity in what Moses claims: Most of the great stone pyramids of Egypt were built before 2450 B.C. That *means* they must have been built before the Flood.

The question is, How could the ancient Egyptians (*mizraim*), who Moses tells us descended from Cush after the Flood (Gen. 10:6), have built the pyramids before the Flood? The answer is, They didn't. Moses would have us understand that the Egyptians living in the land of Egypt when Moses wrote the Pentateuch only spoke and wrote the same language as the people who built the pyramids before the Flood. In other words, Cush knew why the descendants of Cain, who lived in Egypt before the Flood, had written all those Egyptian hieroglyphics on the walls of the pyramid tombs. He passed that knowledge along to his son Mizraim, from whom the Egyptians descended. That is important because Moses wants us to know why God chose to explain *The Teaching* to a bunch of ancient Egyptians. As incredible as it may sound at first, it was because their religion was the least corrupt version of *The Teaching* that Adam and Eve *handed down* to Cain, Abel, and Seth after they came out of the Garden.

To understand the circumstances with which God dealt in the time of Moses, you have only to compare them to a couple of similar situations. You see, folks in the Church today think they are worshiping the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They aren't, but they don't know that because they believe a corrupted version of *The Teaching* that resulted from the work of Clement of Alexandria and his star pupil Origen. (See "The Origen of Folly," *The Voice of Elijah*®, January 1993.) In other words, the rough outlines of *The Teaching* can still be found in what the Church teaches, but most of the details have long since been lost.

The same thing can be seen in what the Jews did with *The Teaching of Moses*. When Jesus ridiculed the

scribes and Pharisees for their beliefs, He told them flatly that they were trusting in a lie. Yet I have already shown you in *The Mystery of Scripture, Volume 1*, that Moses taught their ancestors the Truth. So what happened to *The Teaching* between the time of Moses and the time of Christ? The same thing that happened to it after Noah got off the ark: Rather than *handing The Teaching down* from generation to generation as God had intended, ignorant men decided they had a better idea. In adding their better ideas to *The Teaching*, they corrupted the Truth that Noah understood. In case you missed it, I am merely affirming things the Apostles stated rather plainly. So, rather than give you my translation of the biblical text, I will give you that of another:

By faith Noah, being warned {by God} about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

(Hebrews 11:7)

Most people can't understand the point of that verse, beguiled as they are by the notion that saving faith has, wants, and needs no definite content. So let me give a clue to the clueless: The author of the Book of Hebrews is listing people down through history who knew, understood, and believed *The Teaching*. He just wants it understood that Noah was a crucial link—an *heir*—in an unbroken chain of *heirs* that goes all the way back to Adam. Then, of course, Peter tells us Noah not only believed the Truth, he also preached it:

For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment; and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; ...

(2 Peter 2:4–5)

Isn't that interesting? Peter claims Noah preached the Truth to his generation. But where do you think Noah got the Truth that he understood? Well, Moses tells us he got it from his father, who got it from his father, who got it from his father, all the way back to Adam, who—as I have already explained—got it from God. If you didn't understand that when you read

Genesis 5, you obviously didn't read the text carefully enough. Or maybe you thought Enoch could walk with God for three hundred years and end up being translated (Gen. 5:22–24) without ever having any definite knowledge of God or His plan of salvation.

Whatever the reason for your ignorance, you evidently failed to get the point of what Moses wrote right before he began listing the key members of the godly lineage of Seth that produced Noah. Unfortunately, I have to give you my own translation of the biblical text to show you what Moses said because that naughty little word *profane* is hidden by other translations:

Then Adam knew his woman again, and she delivered a son. She called his name Seth because “God has set for me another seed instead of Abel, because Cain killed him.” Now a son was also delivered for Seth, and he called his name Enosh. At that time calling on the name of His Majesty was profaned.

(Genesis 4:25–26) —my interim translation

Did you see that? Moses wants us to understand that Noah's lineage had absolutely nothing to do with mankind's corruption of the Truth that God had *handed down* to Adam. He tells us that by the time Enosh, Seth's first boy, had children, the descendants of Cain had already twisted the Truth of *The Teaching* to suit their own sinful purposes. That's *why* he describes some of the ungodly things those folks did. He wants you to know they were perfectly capable of “profaning” the Truth. Would it surprise you to find that they did that in exactly the same way that Ham and his crowd of clowns did it after the Flood? If so, you must not have seen this text:

When the man began to multiply on the surface of the ground and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw the daughters of the man—that they were good—and they took women for themselves from all that they chose.

(Genesis 6:1–2) —my interim translation

Whoever the “sons of God” were, they were obviously thought to be gods, and some of the women they “took” were undoubtedly virgins. And that sounds like the *sacred marriage* ceremony, doesn't it? Sure it does. But we'll talk more about *what* the Cainites were doing and *why* next time. It is enough for now that you know they built the pyramids. ■



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: Some of the information you have presented in recent issues of the newsletter has been amazing. I'm sure many of our readers wonder how you are able to glean so much information from the Scriptures that no one else (in modern times) has seen before. Although I know your calling plays a key role in your ability to extract the Truth, I also know it's because God is currently in the process of removing the seven seals that have, until now, sealed up the seven hidden messages of the Old Testament. Since this concept probably seems farfetched to most people, would you discuss it in greater detail? Would you also show us the Scripture passages that talk about God removing the seals and explain the parabolic image related to this? Then will you explain why God is now removing the seven seals and what we can expect to see happen as each seal is removed?

Elijah: When you say that some of the things I have submitted for publication in *The Voice of Elijah*[®] are "amazing," I'm not certain what you have in mind. Most people who read your newsletter will not find anything at all amazing in what I have written. So I dare say your view is colored by the fact that you are reading what I have written in "The Light" of what you have heard me say in *The Voice of Elijah*[®] Update and in The Next Step program. I also will not hesitate to tell you that what you hear in The Next Step program is

about to become even more "amazing" in days to come. That's because before long—God willing—I am going to give you a basic outline of the biblical message concerning the Man, Jesus Christ. That bit of information will completely revolutionize "The Way" you view the Bible. Things in the Scriptures that you have never noticed before will suddenly stand out in bold relief.

Before you can fully appreciate the *meaning* and *significance* of what I am going to tell you, however, you need to have a few more fundamental concepts firmly fixed in your mind. So we'll continue plodding along in The Next Step program the way we have been, with me pointing out things here and there in the Scriptures, little things that don't make a whole lot of sense until you look at them from a different point of view. I'll get around to showing you the outline of the scriptural message—eventually.

Speaking of pointing out things here and there in the Scriptures, let me show you something Isaiah said. He is *talking about* the seven messages God hid in the Hebrew Scriptures, so listen carefully:

*"To whom would He teach knowledge?
And to whom would He interpret the message?
Those {just} weaned from milk?
Those {just} taken from the breast?
For {He says,}
'Order on order, order on order,
Line on line, line on line,
A little here, a little there.'
Indeed, He will speak to this people
Through stammering lips and a foreign tongue,
He who said to them, "Here is rest, give rest to the weary,"
And, "Here is repose," but they would not listen.
So the word of the LORD to them will be,
"Order on order, order on order,
Line on line, line on line,
A little here, a little there,"
That they may go and stumble backward,
be broken, snared, and taken captive."
(Isaiah 28:9-13)*

Isaiah is *talking about* the fact that God became extremely angry with the sons of Israel because, through Moses and the other Prophets, He repeatedly tried to teach them *The Teaching of Moses*, but they wouldn't listen. So God said to them:

*"Here is rest, give rest to the weary,"
And, "Here is repose," but they would not listen.
(Isaiah 28:12b)*

The *significance* of God's use of the term *rest* in this verse lies in the fact that *The Teaching of Moses* explains what God did in preparation for His Sabbath Day rest on the seventh "day" of Creation. But His point is, when the sons of Israel would not listen to the Truth He had revealed to Moses concerning the Sabbath Day rest, He concealed it from them in His wrath. That's the point of the early chapters of the Book of Hebrews. I'm merely telling you He hid it in the things that Moses and the Prophets wrote.

Most people won't believe what I just told you. But that's to be expected. Most people don't know much about the God Who is. They desperately want to believe He is the goofy god of unconditional love that Satan has avidly promoted over the past century and a half. Unfortunately, those folks are in for a rude awakening. And it will be along shortly. Satan's fictitious god is obviously not the same God Who called Isaiah and the other Prophets. That God is described over and over in the Scriptures as an angry God Who has *promised* to exact full retribution on all those who dare to believe that true religion is based on ritual and pretense rather than on a firmly believed knowledge of the Truth. That is the Apostle Paul's point in this passage:

*And do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment upon those who practice such things and do the same {yourself,} that you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance? But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who WILL RENDER TO EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS: to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation. {There will be} tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek, but glory and honor and peace to every man who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God.
(Romans 2:3-11)*

It should be obvious to anyone with a shred of common sense that at least one essential belief must stand at the heart of every religion. That belief is what distinguishes that particular religion from all others. For example, most people would agree that Christianity would not be Christianity without some belief about Jesus Christ. Even liberal theologians who preach their adolescent notions concerning the Gospel "myths" cannot get away from the fact that, at the very least, Jesus of Nazareth must have been a historical person who claimed to be the Messiah of the Jews. If He didn't, someone certainly forgot to tell the Jewish historian Josephus. He says Jesus claimed to be the Christ the Jews were expecting (*Antiquities* xviii, iii).

Consider the *significance* of what I just told you: If every religion is based on one essential belief, the first logical step that every adherent of Christianity should take is to seek to determine whether or not Jesus Christ actually was the Messiah the Jews are expecting. In the process of determining that, every "Christian" should ask a whole lot of questions that begin with *why* and *how*. That's where nearly all born-again Believers run afoul of the angry God of Israel. Instead of seeking to *verify* the Truth they *experienced* when they first believed, most eventually opt to mindlessly believe what all the Pretenders around them believe—that Christianity is based on ritual and pretense rather than on a knowledge of the Truth.

Unfortunately, any Christianity based on ritual and pretense is nothing more than Satan's lie. And having made the crucial decision to believe that lie, all those folks—Pretenders and born-again Believers alike—will one day suffer according to God's decree:

*He who said to them,
"Here is rest, give rest to the weary,"
And, "Here is repose," but they would not listen.
So the word of the LORD to them will be,
"Order on order, order on order,
Line on line, line on line,
A little here, a little there,"
That they may go and stumble backward,
be broken, snared, and taken captive.
(Isaiah 28:12-13)*

That "order on order, line on line" chant is a mocking ridicule of mankind's stupidity. The Hebrew sounds something like this:

Zav lazav, zav lazav
Qav laqav, qav laqav
Zegier sham, zegier sham

If I were to hazard a guess, I would say that is an antiphonal chant that mockingly mimics a popular ditty that children in Isaiah's day chanted as they played an ancient form of blind man's buff. Much like the game Marco Polo that children today play in a swimming pool, the blindfolded child would say the first line—in this case, "*zav lazav*"—and the other children, or at least the child closest to the one who was "it," would have to respond "*zav lazav*" to reveal their location. The blindfolded child would call out the next line and then the next, all the while trying to tag one of the other children as they were responding in kind. The reason I believe Isaiah is mimicking is because he prefaces his remarks concerning the chant with this:

And these also reel with wine
and stagger from strong drink:
The priest and the prophet reel with strong drink,
They are confused by wine,
they stagger from strong drink;
They reel while having visions,
They totter {when rendering} judgment.
For all the tables are full of filthy vomit,
without a {single clean} place.
(Isaiah 28:7–8)

Isaiah is describing actual conditions that existed in his day among the religious leaders of Israel. He plainly tells us they had become alcoholics, but he only briefly alludes to the fact that their condition was the result of their frequent practice of the *zonah* ritual, a ritual which involved the drinking of mandragora wine. [Editor: See "Seen Any Angels Lately?" *The Voice of Elijah*® *Update*, December 1994.] For the benefit of those who have never heard of mandragora wine, I should explain it is the combination of a strong narcotic mixed with wine. The narcotic comes from the root of the mandrake plant, hence the term *mandragora*.

If your readers don't know much about the controlled substance that morons make from the mandrake root, they should take a good look at the paintings of Vincent van Gogh. He painted them before governments took it upon themselves to control such things. Some folks say the vivid colors that Van Gogh used are

attributable to the fact that he was addicted to absinthe, an alcoholic drink made from that foul root. Some even think he cut off his ear and ended up in a mental institution as a result of his addiction to that concoction. But that bit of art history, even as interesting as it is, is not entirely relevant to our discussion here. Isaiah is merely telling us the deadly combination of the alcohol in fermented wine and the narcotic that comes from mandrake roots can easily induce hallucinations—visions—as well as the haunted look of a heavy absinthe drinker like Van Gogh. Alcohol alone can induce the vomiting he mentions.

Face the facts: The priests and false prophets who led the sons of Israel in Isaiah's day were drunks. Isaiah plainly says so. But later on, he comes back to the same topic and, speaking *parabolically*, likens drunkenness to blindness. Isaiah says this concerning the Truth God had hidden from the priests, false prophets, and other leaders of Israel:

Be delayed and wait.
Blind yourselves and be blind.
They become drunk, but not with wine;
They stagger, but not with strong drink.
For the LORD has poured over you a spirit of deep sleep,
He has shut your eyes, the prophets;
And He has covered your heads, the seers.
And the entire vision shall be to you like the words of
a sealed book, which when they give it to the one who
is literate, saying, "Please read this," he will say, "I
cannot, for it is sealed." Then the book will be given
to the one who is illiterate, saying, "Please read this."
And he will say, "I cannot read."
Then the Lord said,
"Because this people draw near with their words
And honor Me with their lip service,
But they remove their hearts far from Me,
And their reverence for Me
consists of tradition learned {by rote,}
Therefore behold, I will once again deal marvelously
with this people, wondrously marvelous;
And the wisdom of their wise men shall perish,
And the discernment of their discerning men
shall be concealed."
(Isaiah 29:9–14)

That is where I got the notion that the chant in Isaiah 28:10 and 28:13 probably sounds like one used in

a game of tag in which a child was blindfolded. Isaiah is using the drunken stupor of the priests and false prophets as a *parabolic image* to tell us what their inability to understand the Truth of *The Teaching of Moses* IS LIKE. It is as if God has given them a cup of the same narcotic drink that they were drinking during the *zonah* ritual. Isaiah then goes on to tell us what God's provision of that *parabolic* mandragora wine has brought about: The leaders of Israel *find it impossible* to understand the Truth. But Isaiah leaves it to the other Prophets to explain *why* they all used mandragora wine as a *parabolic image* to depict false teaching. Since I've already explained those things in The Next Step program, I won't bother to mention them again here.

The purpose of the *parabolic image* of mandragora wine is to tell us the leaders of Israel could not understand the Truth because *they already firmly believed a lie*. That same circumstance exists not only in the minds of the leaders of the Church today but also in the minds of most "Christians." So you can see that, *parabolically* speaking, those folks have already drunk deep from the cup of mandragora wine that God has mixed in His wrath. That is what John is *talking about* in Revelation 14:9–10. Paul is also *talking about* the same thing when he describes the delusion that God is going to send on those who have no interest in the Truth:

And for this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they might believe what is false, in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.
(2 Thessalonians 2:11–12)

In Isaiah 29:9–14, Isaiah is *talking about* the fact that the Hebrew Scriptures have been sealed. But the antiphonal chant in 28:13 tells us *how* God sealed up the Truth in the Scriptures. He did it in such a way that anyone who goes looking for the Truth hidden there without being called to the task IS LIKE a person who cannot read. LIKE the blindfolded child in the game I described, the best he can do is call out "*zav lazav*" and wait for the Word of God to respond "*zav lazav*." Then, as he moves in that direction and calls out "*qav laqav*," the Word of God responds from a another direction. Isaiah's point is this: Anyone who does not understand the *meaning* and *significance* of specific statements found in various places throughout the Scriptures will never accurately comprehend the Truth God has hidden there because:

*"A commandment refers to a commandment,
A commandment refers to a commandment,
An indicator refers to an indicator,
An indicator refers to an indicator,
A little bit is here,
A little bit is here."
(Isaiah 28:10b, 13b)—my interim translation*

The *parabolic image* of the sealed scroll that Isaiah uses in 29:9–14 is also instructive. If you want to do a bit of Bible study on your own, take a look at how the Hebrew word translated "sealed" in Isaiah 29:11 is used in the Scriptures. I won't spoil your fun by telling you what you might find, but I will tell you this: The sole reason why documents were sealed in the ancient world was to *verify authenticity*. That explains how Jezebel was able to conduct business in Ahab's name. [Editor: See 1 Kin. 21:8.] That's also one of the points made in Jeremiah's *parabolic pantomime* of the sealing of the Hebrew Scriptures in Jeremiah 32. Another point made by that particular pantomime lies hidden in the fact that Jeremiah had two copies of the scroll made. One was sealed, the other was left open. That's what it IS LIKE with the Hebrew Scriptures. You can read the open copy as often as you care to, yet it will be impossible to *verify its authenticity* until the seven seals have been taken off the sealed copy.

In Jezebel's case, the royal seal did double duty. The stamp of King Ahab *verified* that the scroll she sent had originated with the king; the fact that the scroll was sealed *verified* that its contents were exactly the same as when it was sealed. That particular *parabolic image* is a matter of no small import. The *significance* of the things one reads in the Book of Esther revolves around the fundamental role that seals and sealing played in the ancient world. It would seem, therefore, that God considered the image of a sealed scroll to be tremendously important. And it is. Without it, one cannot even begin to understand what He has planned for the Elect in these Last Days.

The Prophet Daniel tells us that the Truth the Prophets hid in the Hebrew Scriptures is going to be unsealed shortly before the End. But he also, like Isaiah (Is. 8:16), tells us that God ordered him to seal up the things he wrote. He says this:

"Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands {guard} over the sons of your people, will arise. And

there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace {and} everlasting contempt. And those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever. **But as for you, Daniel, conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time; many will go back and forth, and knowledge will increase.**"

(Daniel 12:1–4)

You can see from what Daniel says that the Book of Daniel will remain sealed, as the New American Standard Bible puts it, "until the end of time." The Hebrew text doesn't actually say "the end of time"; it says "the time of the end." The translator himself gives us a bit more accurate translation in verse 9, where he translates the same phrase "the end time." There is quite obviously a significant difference in the meaning of the two translations he gives, and it is an extremely important one at that. I only mention it because Satan has managed to build a fairly substantial edifice on the lie that time will one day come to an end. Other than that, the translation is irrelevant. My point is, Daniel clearly wants us to understand that his prophecy would remain sealed until some future time, a time which he describes as "the time of the end." But he also goes on to describe what will happen when his prophecy is unsealed at "the time of the end." He says this:

Then I, Daniel, looked and behold, two others were standing, one on this bank of the river, and the other on that bank of the river. And one said to the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, "How long {will it be} until the end of {these} wonders?" And I heard the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, as he raised his right hand and his left toward heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever that it would be for a time, times, and half {a time;} and as soon as they finish shattering the power of the holy people, all these {events} will be completed. As for me, I heard but could not understand; so I said, "My lord, what {will be} the outcome of these {events?}" And he said, "Go {your way,} Daniel, for {these} words are concealed and sealed up until the end time. Many

will be purged, purified and refined; but the wicked will act wickedly, and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand."

(Daniel 12:5–10)

There are a lot of things that could be said about that passage, but let me key on just one thing for now. The word translated "wonders" in verse 6 would better be translated as "incomprehensible things." Since signs and wonders—that is, miracles—are incomprehensible to all but the most skeptical (who are too dumb to know that they don't know), the word Daniel uses is generally taken in that sense. It shouldn't be. It refers to anything that cannot be understood, that is, mentally comprehended. That's why Isaiah used it repeatedly in Isaiah 29:14, at the conclusion of what he said concerning the Prophets' sealing of the Hebrew Scriptures:

The Master has declared: "Because this people has approached Me with his mouth and has glorified Me with his lips, yet his heart is far from Me, and their fear of Me has become the memorized commandment of men; therefore, I am going to again cause this people total incomprehension. The wisdom of his wise men will vanish. The understanding of his intelligent ones will be in hiding."

(Isaiah 29:13–14) —my interim translation

It is not surprising that, when Jesus assailed the Pharisees for preaching the lying doctrines of Satan, He quoted what Isaiah says in verse 13. Listen to this:

Then some Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem, saying, "Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread." And He answered and said to them, "And why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? For God said, 'HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER,' and, 'HE WHO SPEAKS EVIL OF FATHER OR MOTHER, LET HIM BE PUT TO DEATH.' But you say, 'Whoever shall say to {his} father or mother, "Anything of mine you might have been helped by has been given {to God,}" he is not to honor his father or his mother.' And {thus} you invalidated the word of God for the sake of your tradition. You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying,

'THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME.

*BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME,
TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN.”*
(Matthew 15:1–9)

Jesus is obviously pointing to what Isaiah said. And if you understand the context in which Jesus made that statement, you can tell that He knows what Isaiah was *talking about*, which was the same thing Isaiah had been *talking about* all along: God said He was going to completely conceal the Truth of *The Teaching of Moses* from the leaders of the sons of Israel because they refused to listen when they had the chance.

My point concerning Isaiah’s use of the Hebrew word translated “wonders” in Daniel 12:6 is this: Isaiah is *talking about* the same thing the two men described there are *talking about*—God’s concealment of the Truth. And the one who asks the question “How long {will it be} until the end of {these} wonders?” uses exactly the same word that Isaiah used when he referred to it. In Daniel’s case, the word translated “wonders” is referring to things concerning the End that God has hidden in the Hebrew Scriptures. In response, the man dressed in linen says, intentionally speaking enigmatically, it will be for “a time, times, and half a time,” whatever that *means*.

When Daniel didn’t understand what had been said, he asked for an explanation. That’s when he was given a brief summary of End-Time events and told to go on about his business and not worry about it:

And he said, “Go {your way,} Daniel, for {these} words are concealed and sealed up until the end time. Many will be purged, purified and refined; but the wicked will act wickedly, and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand.”
(Daniel 12:9–10)

That is a succinct description of what is going to happen when the seals finally come off the Hebrew Scriptures and knowledge of the “incomprehensible things” hidden there becomes readily available to anyone who wants to know the Truth. At that time, the Truth that God has hidden will “purge, purify, and refine” a select group of people whom the ancient Essenes called “The Many.” Yet “the Wicked”—even those who hear the Truth that God has hidden—will not have a clue as to what God is accomplishing through the power of His Word at “the time of the

end.” In that way, the circumstances following the restoration of *The Apostolic Teaching* are going to be precisely the same as they were when Paul wrote this:

*For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written,
“I WILL DESTROY THE WISDOM OF THE WISE,
AND THE CLEVERNESS OF THE CLEVER I WILL SET ASIDE.”*
Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not {come to} know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.
(1 Corinthians 1:18–21)

Did you notice that Paul quoted Isaiah 29:14? That is because he is *talking about* the same thing that Isaiah was *talking about*, which is the same thing that Jesus *talked about* when He confronted the Pharisees, and the same thing the two beings were *talking about* in Daniel 12. Paul knew that God had hidden the Truth of *The Teaching of Moses* in the Hebrew Scriptures. So when he says “the word of the cross,” he has in mind a whole lot more than the simple Gospel message that is preached by Evangelists today. There is a tremendous amount of information in the Hebrew Scriptures that explains the *significance* of the *parabolic image* of the “tree” on which Christ died. That is what the Apostle Paul had in mind when he said this about the “wisdom” that God hid in the Hebrew Scriptures:

*Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away; but we speak God’s wisdom in a mystery, the hidden {wisdom,} which God predestined before the ages to our glory; {the wisdom} which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; but just as it is written,
“THINGS WHICH EYE HAS NOT SEEN AND EAR HAS NOT HEARD,
AND {which} HAVE NOT ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN,
ALL THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM.”*
For to us God revealed {them} through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. For who among men knows the {thoughts} of a man except the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so the {thoughts}

of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual {thoughts} with spiritual {words.} **But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.** But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no man. For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE SHOULD INSTRUCT HIM? But we have the mind of Christ. (1 Corinthians 2:6–16)

In that passage, Paul is describing exactly the same set of circumstances that the messenger of the Lord in Daniel 12 said would exist when the seals are finally removed from the Hebrew Scriptures. That is, Believers in Paul's day could understand what the Apostles taught because they were righteous. But the Wicked could not understand. The same will be true at "the time of the end." However, it is important to remember that the Apostles got their understanding of the Truth that Moses and the Prophets concealed in the Scriptures directly from Christ through revelation. The Scriptures themselves remained sealed, awaiting "the time of the end" when they will at long last be opened so that anyone who wants to will be able to read them with understanding. That time is now. And the Apostle John provides us a *parabolic* description of what will happen as the seven seals are taken off the Hebrew Scriptures one by one. Listen to this:

And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a book written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?" And no one in heaven, or on the earth, or under the earth, was able to open the book, or to look into it. And I {began} to weep greatly, because no one was found worthy to open the book, or to look into it; and one of the elders said to me, "Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals." And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the

seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth. And He came, and He took {it} out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.
(Revelation 5:1–7)

That is a *parabolic* description of an event that must have occurred at least twenty-five years ago. At that time, Jesus Christ Himself (*parabolically*) took hold of the Hebrew Scriptures and began to remove the seven seals that the Prophets had placed on them for the purpose of *verifying the authenticity* of the message they contain. But John goes on to describe—again *parabolically*—what will happen as Christ removes each one of the seven seals from the text of the Hebrew Scriptures. I won't bother to quote his description here; it is much too lengthy. But you can read it for yourself, beginning in Revelation 6:1.

Since I have already explained the *parabolic significance* of the seven seals with which the Scriptures were sealed, I won't get into that here either. [Editor: See "Did Jesus Leave a Will?" *The Voice of Elijah*®, July 1991.] But I will tell you that those seven seals serve as an incredibly powerful *authentication* of the seven messages the Prophets hid in the Hebrew Scriptures. They *verify* that those seven messages came directly from the mind of God—to anyone who is willing to believe the Truth. I know most folks won't believe that. But in their case, one sad fact related to the Truth will always remain just as true as it was when Jesus stated it:

The Jews therefore were marveling, saying, "How has this man become learned, having never been educated?" Jesus therefore answered them, and said, "My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me. If any man is willing to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or {whether} I speak from Myself."
(John 7:15–17)

It is unfortunate that so few in our time will be willing to "do His will." But, in the eyes of God at least, those few are going to be "The Many" mentioned in Daniel 12. They will believe the Truth. I've already given you my understanding of what happened when the first three seals were removed. I believe my conclusions are generally accurate, but I'm willing to admit I may be wrong. For reasons I cannot explain here, I am not at liberty to discuss the *meaning* of what is said regarding the removal of the other four seals, but I can

tell you this: The most significant events of our time will never be observed by the public at large because they pertain to individuals understanding the Truth God has hidden in the Hebrew Scriptures.

Editor: In the "Questions & Answers" section of the last issue, you said some things about women that probably won't win you too many friends in feminist circles. Since I know your only concern is to speak the Truth, even if that means being politically incorrect, I was hoping you might expand on some of the things you said there. For instance, you said that God placed a curse directly on Eve because she sinned first and enticed Adam to sin. What more can you tell us about this curse? Also, you stated, or implied, that Peter's comment about women being a "weaker vessel" (1 Pet. 3:7) was a reference to them being psychologically and emotionally weaker because of the curse, rather than physically weaker, as most assume. You also stated that the trigger mechanism that sets off this psychological and emotional weakness is sexual union, or a "one-flesh" relationship, with a man. Can you expand on this further?

Elijah: Here is a basic bit of wisdom I have gained over the years: When you get into hot water, don't move. That way, the pain is not quite so unbearable. Actually, I'm just being flippant, giving cause to all those who seek some reason—as if they needed any—not to believe. The Truth is, the only reason I said what I said about the curse on the woman was to pique curiosity and arouse interest in those who are still seeking Truth. I evidently succeeded with you.

What I said is obviously true. Anyone with half a brain has to admit that the text plainly says God placed a curse directly on the woman and none on the man. That in itself indicates His anger was focused more on her than on the man. As to the *meaning* of the enigmatic statement God made when He cursed the woman, I have nothing more to say. There are nearly three chapters of biblical text that precede Moses' account of what God said when He cursed the woman, and there is no way anyone can understand what God said in that regard until they have a complete understanding of all the things Moses explained in those three chapters.

As you well know from the things I have taught in The Next Step program, Satan has completely distorted what Moses said in just the first chapter of Genesis. He has done the same thing with Moses'

statements in the second and third chapters. Therefore, we are going to keep right on plodding along in The Next Step program until we come to the passage where God cursed the woman. Then you will understand *why* I said *what* I said in the last issue.

[Editor: The Next Step is a program sponsored jointly by *The Voice of Elijah*® and The Elijah Project whereby monthly teaching tapes are made available to True Believers who wish to learn more about what is published in *The Voice of Elijah*® and *The Voice of Elijah*® *Update*. Please refer to the Order Form in *The Update* for information on joining The Next Step program.]

Editor: Since we're already on the subject of men and women, I'd also like for you to discuss something else you mentioned in the last issue. You said that most men and women who get married are not "in love" but "in lust." With divorce and fractured marriages being so commonplace today, it's obvious that we don't know much about the meaning of true love. Would you define love from a biblical perspective and also explain what Paul is talking about in his discourse on love in 1 Corinthians 13?

Elijah: Sure. The Apostle John says Jesus described the epitome of love this way:

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.
(John 3:16)

Laying aside for now the fact that Jesus is speaking *parabolically* in terms of the *parabolic imagery* related to the Hebrew idiom "give a seed," and also ignoring the fact that most folks completely distort the obvious *meaning* of that verse, let's look only at how God expressed His love for "the world." He loved; therefore, He gave. That is the essence of love in a nutshell. Now, at this point, most philosophical egghead armchair exegetes will want to *show what they know* about the three different kinds of love that could be expressed in the Greek language in which the New Testament was written. That bit of goofiness is, contrary to what Satan would have us all believe, beside the point.

The English language also uses three *entirely different* words to refer to the same three *entirely different* concepts that those three *entirely different* Greek terms

refer to. Since we are not *talking about the meaning* of those other two words, let's key on the word *love*. In English, as in ancient Hebrew, love is love. So it doesn't matter whether it is love expressed toward a dog, cat, hamster, close friend, baby brother, rebellious teenager, or devoted spouse. According to the Bible, the one who loves, gives. Not a whole lot of people know that because, unlike the Scriptures, they use the term *love* as a substitute for *lust* or *physical attraction*.

Most people suppose that love for a member of the opposite sex is the heady feeling that comes from being around them, that it is something people suddenly "fall into." That isn't love. It is nothing more than sex hormones giving them a kick in the head, which is, if the Truth be known, nothing more than "lust." Nevertheless, a lot of folks will go through several relationships and maybe a couple of marriages before their hormone levels subside and they give up on "falling in love." Others will end up bitter and frustrated in a marriage they would just as soon be out of. Why? Because they live in a hormone-induced fantasy where love is something they can consume. That is, they see love as all about taking and nothing about giving.

The Truth is, every man and woman who joins themselves to another through sexual union falls prey to the curse God placed on the woman. Unfortunately, that curse introduces adversarial overtones into even the best of marriages. And, in the wisdom of God, the only way a man and woman united as one flesh can mitigate the effects of God's curse is through love—true love—not the fictitious, hormone-induced fantasy world that Satan has foisted off on us. I will explain why that is when we look at what Moses said about the consequences of Adam and Eve's sin.

Most folks will immediately reject the notion that a major part of giving in marriage has to do with sexual intercourse. That's the way Satan likes it. He knows that a whole lot of nonverbal communication goes on during that particular activity and everything that is said relates to openness, honesty, trust, commitment, and *love*. But before anyone can understand why that is, a man must be willing to see, and a woman must be willing to admit, something that Satan has desperately strived to hide from us all: Both men and women have sex hormones coursing through their veins; hence, both have sexual *wants* and *needs*. That is, after all, the reason why the Apostle Paul said this about the way God views the matter:

Now concerning the things about which you wrote, it is good for a man not to touch a woman. But because of immoralities, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. Let the husband fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband {does;} and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife {does.} Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again lest Satan tempt you because of your lack of self-control. But this I say by way of concession, not of command. Yet I wish that all men were even as I myself am. However, each man has his own gift from God, one in this manner, and another in that.
(1 Corinthians 7:1-7)

Paul's statement about who has authority over what always amazes me. The implications are so obvious, yet very few "Christians" are willing to admit the Truth. He implies that any man who loves his wife will make sure that her sexual needs are met. Yet, because Satan has lied to us, few men are even aware that women have such needs, and fewer still know how to meet them. Consequently, "Christian" women have difficulty even admitting that they desire and enjoy sexual intercourse because they are afraid their spouses will consider them less than "Christian." That is why all too often women deny the truth and view sex as something that only the man wants or needs and something she has to endure. That's exactly the way Satan likes it. He can subject people to extreme cruelty when they believe his lies.

Satan has deliberately created a situation in which he can easily entice men and women into using sexual desire as a weapon. So, when either the man or the woman takes an argument to bed with them and lets it destroy the intimacy and giving of themselves in *love* to their spouse, Satan immediately takes control of their relationship. Paul knew that such folks are in for an extremely rocky ride. That's *why* he said *what* he said about who has authority over what and concluded by saying it is better not to marry.

You also asked about 1 Corinthians 13, so let me briefly explain what Paul has said there. First, let's put that chapter in its larger context. In 1 Corinthians 13, Paul is continuing to make a point he succinctly stated in Chapter 8:

Now concerning things sacrificed to idols, we know that we all have knowledge. **Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies.**

(1 Corinthians 8:1)

If you track Paul's argument from that point on, you will find that his central point is actually quite simple. He first tells us that just because Believers know something is not a sin does not *mean* they should act in accordance with the freedom their knowledge provides. If they also know that their actions will be detrimental to other Believers who lack an understanding of the Truth that they understand, their love for their "weaker" brothers should constrain them to impose limits on themselves. Then, in Chapter 9, he mentions how he has refrained from availing himself of rights that were legitimately his as an Apostle in order to win others to the Truth of the Gospel. Then, after warning the Corinthians as to the consequences of their actions should they not heed his admonishment, he says this:

All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but not all things edify. Let no one seek his own {good,} but that of his neighbor.

(1 Corinthians 10:23-24)

In the first verse of Chapter 11, Paul commends the Corinthians for having held firmly to the things he had taught them. Therefore, it is clear that they still understood the Truth of *The Apostolic Teaching*. That is the "knowledge" he earlier admonished them to temper with love. After his brief commendation, however, Paul begins to discuss problems that exist in the way the Corinthians conducted their church meetings. He first explains why he requires women to cover their heads while praying. Then he provides guidelines for observing the Lord's Supper before he launches into an explanation of how they should view the spiritual gifts. In the middle of that explanation, he sandwiches his statements concerning love. He begins his comments on love with this:

But earnestly desire the greater gifts.

And I show you a still more excellent way.

(1 Corinthians 12:31)

He concludes his discourse by returning to that same subject:

Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual {gifts,} but especially that you may prophesy.

(1 Corinthians 14:1)

You can see from those two statements that the context in which Paul *talks about* love is one in which he is exhorting Believers to seek all of the spiritual gifts, but especially the gift of prophecy. Pentecostals will readily admit that and add it to the arsenal of apologetic weaponry they use to defend their doctrine of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Non-Pentecostals may have a bit of difficulty even seeing that it is true. Be that as it may, both camps are completely unaware of the purpose for which God gave the gifts. That is why Pentecostals most often advocate seeking the gift of tongues instead of the gift of prophecy and non-Pentecostals urge folks not to seek any gift at all.

Some completely deluded folks, under the direct influence of Dispensationalism, even deny that the supernatural manifestation of the Spirit continued beyond the Apostolic Church. Those possessions of Satan have only to open their mouths to reveal their complete ignorance of Church history. No less a witness than the great hero of the Protestant reformers, St. Augustine himself, knew of Prophets who were still ministering in his own day. He, along with Jerome, Palladius, and Cassian, confirms that one of them, St. John of Egypt, frequently manifested the gift of prophecy (Augustine, *Care for the Dead*, Chap. 17). That Prophet died at the age of ninety in A.D. 394, so the dispensationalists' goofy restriction of the gifts to the Apostolic Age holds about as much water as a sieve.

The Truth is, the spiritual gifts Paul mentions are all manifestations of the *spoken* Word of God. In spite of the fact that most people don't want to believe it, the Word of God the Early Church believed had a *definite content* and manifested His power and glory to Believers through the ministry of the *spoken* Word. That is why Paul mentions prophecy, tongues, interpretation of tongues, the word of wisdom, and the word of knowledge as gifts of the Spirit. Those gifts obviously involve the conveyance of a *definite content* through the *spoken* Word.

Likewise, the gifts of faith and distinguishing of spirits must also have involved the conveyance of a *definite content* through the *spoken* Word, unless one wants to illogically assume that the person with such a gift kept his supernatural knowledge to himself. That

leaves only the gifts of healing and miracles, which the more contentious will quickly deny had anything at all to do with the *spoken* Word. In so doing, they merely demonstrate their vapidty. They have obviously not gotten the point of the *parabolic pantomimes* in which Jesus healed the sick and cast out demons through the power of the *spoken* Word. Nor have they grasped the *significance* of the *parabolic pantomimes* in which He accomplished tremendous miracles by that same means. I trust you can see, therefore, that all the gifts were focused on ministry through the *spoken* Word. My point is, they all involved a *knowledge* of some kind—with tongues and the interpretation of tongues being a combined gift. That “knowledge” reminded Paul of what he had said earlier concerning knowledge:

Now concerning things sacrificed to idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies.
(1 Corinthians 8:1)

With his earlier statements concerning the need for Believers to set self-imposed limits out of love for weaker brothers still fresh in his mind, Paul said this concerning love:

If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have {the gift of} prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. And if I give all my possessions to feed {the poor,} and if I deliver my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing. Love is patient, love is kind, {and} is not jealous; love does not brag {and} is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong {suffered,} does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails; but if {there are gifts of} prophecy, they will be done away; if {there are} tongues, they will cease; if {there is} knowledge, it will be done away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away. When I was a child, I used to speak as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then

I shall know fully just as I also have been fully known. But now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.
(1 Corinthians 13:1–13)

Paul’s point is, the Believer must temper knowledge of the Truth with love for others. But that sword has a double edge to it. On the one hand, it is not possible to have the love that Paul describes without first attaining a complete knowledge of the Truth of *The Apostolic Teaching* that he taught. On the other, it is entirely possible to have a complete knowledge of that Truth and still not attain the ultimate goal for which that knowledge was given—which is love for others. Paul is merely reminding the Corinthians that the purpose of the gifts of the Spirit is not to assist them in attaining knowledge for the sake of knowledge. It is to ensure that they manifest their knowledge through love. That’s why he says what he says concerning growing up and putting away childish things.

Paul has in mind the *parabolic imagery* related to “the mature man” that he mentions in Ephesians 4:13. He is *talking about* attaining the full stature of Christ. I only know that, however, because of the well-known statement in 1 Corinthians 13:12 that has been translated “we see in a mirror dimly.” That is not actually what the text says. It says, “we see *through* a mirror in a riddle.” Paul is *talking about* the same *parabolic* mirror that James mentions in James 1:23, and he has in mind one of the *parabolic* riddles of *The Teaching of Moses* that Solomon mentions in Proverbs 1:6. That riddle explains that we should look at the Resurrection of Jesus Christ as though it were a reflection in a mirror. Our knowledge of the things we see in that *parabolic* mirror is intended to bring us to full maturity in Christ. But Paul’s point is, knowledge of the Truth won’t do anything at all for the person who does not allow it to produce love.

Editor: *In the July 1996 issue of the newsletter, you presented the first in a series of articles that, when completed, would provide much greater insight into the Hebrew idioms “build/make a house,” “raise up a seed,” and “raise up/make a name.” I know you have gotten sidetracked writing articles that answer some of my questions, but when do you think you might get back to this series?*

Elijah: In this issue. ■