



# THE VOICE of ELIJAH

## Manichæism: Simplified Absurdity

So in these matters also, whilst in nobelty of opinion each endeabours to show himself first and superior, they brought this philosophy, which is simple, almost to a nullity. Such was he whom they call Manichæus, a Persian by race, my instructor in whose doctrine was one Pappus by name, and after him Thomas, and some others followed them. They say that the man lived when Valerian was emperor, and that he served under Sapor, the king of the Persians, and having offended him in some way, was put to death. Some such report of his character and reputation has come to me from those who were intimately acquainted with him.

He laid down two principles, God and Matter. God he called good, and matter he affirmed to be evil. But God excelled more in good than matter in evil. But he calls matter not that which Plato calls it, which becomes everything when it has received quality and figure, whence he terms it all-embracing—the mother and nurse of all things; nor what Aristotle calls an element, with which form and privation have to do, but something beside these. For the motion which in individual things is incomposite, this he calls matter. On the side of God are ranged powers, like handmaids, all good; and likewise, on the side of matter are ranged other powers, all evil. Moreover, the bright shining, the light, and the superior, all these are with God; while the obscure, and the darkness, and the inferior are with matter. God, too, has desires, but they are all good; and matter, likewise, which are all evil. It came to pass on a time that matter conceived a desire to attain to the superior region; and when it had arrived there, it admired the brightness and the light which was with God. And, indeed, it wished to seize on for itself the place of pre-eminence, and to remove God from His position. God, moreover, deliberated how to abenge Himself upon matter, but was destitute of the evil necessary to do so, for evil does not exist in the house and abode of God. He sent,

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therefore, the power which we call the soul into matter, to permeate it entirely. For it will be the death of matter, when at length hereafter this power is separated from it.

So, therefore, by the providence of God, the soul was commingled with matter, an unlike thing with an unlike. Now by this commingling the soul has contracted evil, and labours under the same infirmity as matter. For, just as in a corrupted vessel, the contents are oftentimes vitiated in quality, so, also the soul that is in matter suffers some such change, and is deteriorated from its own nature so as to participate in the evil of matter. But God had compassion upon the soul, and sent forth another power, which we call *Demurge* that is, the Creator of all things; and when this power had arrived, and taken in hand the creation of the world, it separated from matter as much power as from the commingling had contracted no vice and stain, and hence the sun and moon were first formed; but that which had contracted some slight and moderate stain, this became the stars and the expanse of heaven.

Of the matter from which the sun and the moon was separated, part was cast entirely out of the world, and is that fire in which, indeed, there is the power of burning, although in itself it is dark and void of light, being closely similar to night. But in the rest of the elements, both animal and vegetable, in those the divine power is unequally mingled. And therefore the world was made, and in it the sun and moon who preside over the birth and death of things, by separating the divine virtue from matter, and transmitting it to God.

Alexander, Bishop of Lycopolis, "Of the Manichæans," Chaps. ii-iii, in Roberts and Donaldson (Eds.), *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (1886) Vol. 6, pp. 241-242.

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## *A Note From the Editor*

It has been two years since I began this series on how to be a better student of the Scriptures. The basic premise I have presented during this time is very simple: Serious study of the Scriptures demands that you pay close attention to the facts and details contained therein. This means that students of the Scriptures should not be reading the Bible as though they are trying to win a speed-reading contest. They should be reading it in a slow, contemplative manner so as not to overlook important information contained in the text.

I have often stated that the student of the Scriptures needs to be like a detective. I like this analogy because it brings to mind the image of an investigator—someone who gathers evidence and then tries to logically piece together facts based on that evidence. This is what students of the Scriptures should be doing. They should logically evaluate the evidence presented in the Scriptures in an attempt to arrive at the Truth.

Unfortunately, however, even with a detective-like approach, arriving at the Truth is not always a simple task. That's because the Bible is a complex book that contains a vast amount of evidence that has to be carefully and thoughtfully evaluated before one can be certain they know the Truth. That's why in the final analysis, every student of the Scriptures still needs to be taught by a Teacher. God instituted the role of Teacher in the Church for this very purpose.

The only problem with putting yourself under the tutelage of a Teacher is that there are far more false teachers in the Church these days than there are true Teachers. That's why True Believers need to do all they can to ascertain whether the things they hear taught by others are true. This is especially important in light of the fact that teachers, i.e., parents, pastors, Sunday School teachers, and so on, influence our beliefs about the Bible more than the Bible itself. Think about it. How many of your current beliefs about God did you actually come up with on your own based strictly on your study of the Scriptures? Probably very few, if any. You may have been following along in your Bible while some teacher explained the meaning of the text he was reading, and you may have even given your approval to what that teacher said, but that doesn't mean you arrived at your understanding all by yourself.

The Truth is, we are all greatly influenced by the words of teachers. It doesn't matter whether those words come from a parent, a Little League coach, a college professor, or a pastor. Every teacher has a tremendous capacity to influence our beliefs for good or for bad. That's why the Scriptures are so important to True Believers. They allow True Believers to scrutinize the things they hear taught in the same way the Berean Christians scrutinized The Teaching of the Apostle Paul (Acts 17:11). Sadly, most True Believers today are such poor students of the Bible that

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they don't realize they are being fed lies and half-truths by those who claim to be teaching God's Word.

I know this is true from personal experience. For more than ten years after my new birth, I was taught things in the Church that I readily accepted as true. However, as I became a better student of the Scriptures—a better biblical detective—I began to see things that troubled me. I could see evidence in the Scriptures that suggested things were not quite as simple as everyone was telling me they were. Yet in all honesty, I didn't know what to make of all the things I was beginning to see. Consequently, I continued to hold on to most of what I had been taught. This seemed like the best thing to do since I didn't have much confidence in my own ability to interpret the Scriptures.

That's when I began to realize that uncovering facts in the Bible is not the same as uncovering Truth. Facts need to be put together properly in order to arrive at the Truth. If they aren't, all you end up with is a bunch of distorted facts which are nothing more than half-truths and lies. Extracting facts and details from the Bible is not an end in itself. Without the ability to piece everything together into a coherent belief system that makes sense, you have nothing. I could see that I needed a Teacher to help me see how all the pieces fit together.

By the grace of God, I eventually found the Teacher I was looking for. That Teacher is The Teaching contained in the information made available by *The Voice of Elijah*®. I can say without equivocation that I would never have come to understand the things I now understand in the Scriptures if not for this information. And I am firmly convinced that every True Believer who seeks to know the Truth of God's Word needs to honestly evaluate The Teaching found in the materials distributed by *The Voice of Elijah*®. Furthermore, I say to every True Believer that the Scriptures will begin to make sense to you like never before once you believe and submit yourself to The Teaching. That's because the Scriptures themselves will ultimately validate the Truth you read and hear in those materials.

This is why I have continually stressed the importance of paying close attention to facts and details when reading the Scriptures. Even though certain things may not make sense to you initially (as was the case with me), an amazing thing happens once a legitimate Teacher begins explaining how all the various facts and details fit together—the Scriptures start making perfect sense. The reason is because the Bible and the Holy Spirit both testify (witness) to the fact that you have heard the Truth. The Holy Spirit testifies internally (in True Believers) and the Bible testifies externally (through the written Word). Therefore, the more knowledge you have of what is stated in the Scriptures, the more powerful the testimony of the Bible and the Holy Spirit will be. This is why paying close attention to details is so important—they help you confirm the Truth.

### *Repeated Words and Phrases*

For two years, I have stressed the importance of looking for specific things as you read the Scriptures. Many of you can probably repeat my list off the top of your head. But for the sake of those who have only been with us for a short while, here are the things I have repeatedly said to look for:

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

To this point, we have looked at the first six items on the list. In each case, I mentioned key words and phrases to watch for and told you that these often indicate that one or more of these six things are being denoted. That won't be the case as we look at the seventh item on the list—*repeated words and phrases*. There are no key words or phrases that I can give you in advance in this case. But that doesn't mean you don't need to be on the lookout



for key words and phrases. It only means you will have to identify them on your own. The way to identify them is through recurring words and phrases that appear in close proximity to each other.

The importance of repeated words and phrases is that they generally indicate that something is being emphasized or that something is the central theme of a particular passage, chapter, or set of chapters. Repeated words and phrases can help us see when the author or speaker is tying certain thoughts together that relate to one another, even though these thoughts may appear to be totally unrelated. Here's a good example:

*At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" And He called a child to Himself and set him before them, and said, "Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me; but whoever causes one of **these little ones** who believe in Me to stumble, it is better for him that a heavy millstone be hung around his neck, and that he be drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe to the world because of {its} stumbling blocks! For it is inevitable that stumbling blocks come; but woe to that man through whom the stumbling block comes! And if your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; it is better for you to enter life crippled or lame, than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the eternal fire. And if your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out, and throw it from you. It is better for you to enter life with one eye, than having two eyes, to be cast into the fiery hell. See that you do not despise one of **these little ones**, for I say to you, that their angels in heaven continually behold the face of My Father who is in heaven. [For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost.] What do you think? If any man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go and search for the one that is straying? And if it turns out that he finds it, truly I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine which have not gone astray. Thus it is not {the} will*

*of your Father who is in heaven that one of **these little ones** perish."*

*(Matthew 18:1-14)*

Jesus begins by comparing True Believers to little children. His use of the word *like* in verse 3 lets us know this is what He is doing. Therefore, it should not surprise us that He goes on to parabolically explain how True Believers are like little children. What most people don't realize, however, is that everything Jesus says in this passage is tied to this parabolic image. Contrary to what many think, Jesus has not thrown together a bunch of disjointed thoughts that have no connection to one another. Everything He says is interrelated and all part of one continuous thought. We know this because Jesus never stops talking about little children throughout His entire discourse. The fact that He keeps referring back to "these little ones" tells us they are still the focus of His discussion. Of course, we need to remember that He is not really referring to children. He has in mind True Believers who are parabolically like children.

So what exactly is Jesus saying in this passage? That's not for me to say. But I can tell you that you will eventually learn the meaning and significance of everything Jesus said here, and most everywhere else for that matter, if you stick with *The Voice of Elijah*®. For now, all I want you to see is how the repeated use of one phrase—"these little ones"—links this entire passage together and makes us aware that everything Jesus said here is somehow related.

In the next example, the repeated use of one word identifies the central theme of two chapters of the Bible, Revelation 2 and 3, which contain the seven letters written to the seven churches. To save space, I have only referred to those verses that reveal the central theme. However, I recommend you read the entirety of the two chapters on your own:

*"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. **To him who overcomes**, I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God."*

*(Revelation 2:7)*

*“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. **He who overcomes** shall not be hurt by the second death.”*

*(Revelation 2:11)*

*“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. **To him who overcomes**, to him I will give {some} of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it.”*

*(Revelation 2:17)*

*“And **he who overcomes**, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, **TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS.**”*

*(Revelation 2:26)*

*“**He who overcomes** shall thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels.”*

*(Revelation 3:5)*

*“**He who overcomes**, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name.”*

*(Revelation 3:12)*

*“**He who overcomes**, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.”*

*(Revelation 3:21)*

I’m continually amazed by the number of “experts” who espouse all kinds of theories regarding the significance of these seven letters, yet fail to see that the central theme of each one is that True Believers must overcome in order to be saved. The fact that this refrain is repeated in each of the seven letters should make it abundantly clear that this is the emphasis. But you sure wouldn’t know it from reading what the “experts” have to say on the matter

nor from listening to the message preached in most churches.

It’s no wonder that God is angry with today’s churches when they don’t even preach His basic message to True Believers: Hold fast to the Truth and overcome sin—even as Christ did (Rev. 3:21)—or face the eternal consequences. If you don’t think that is Christ’s message to His Church, you must not have an ear to hear what the Spirit is saying, because His message is coming through loud and clear to those who do.

Another example where the central theme of a passage is indicated by the repeated use of one word is Matthew 24:1–25. The passage below is the first part of Christ’s Olivet Discourse, where He discloses to His disciples some of the things that will happen at the End of the Age. Again, to save space, I have included only those verses that allow us to see His foremost concern for End-Time Believers. See if you can figure out what it is based on in these verses. I’ll make it easy by bolding a few statements:

*And as He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things be, and what {will be} the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?” And Jesus answered and said to them, “**See to it that no one misleads you. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will mislead many.**”*  
*(Matthew 24:3–5)*

*“And at that time **many will fall away and will deliver up one another and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise, and will mislead many.** And because lawlessness is increased, most people’s love will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end, he shall be saved.”*  
*(Matthew 24:10–13)*

*“Then if anyone says to you, ‘Behold, here is the Christ,’ or ‘There {He is,} do not believe {him.} **For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect.** Behold, I have told you in advance.”*  
*(Matthew 24:23–25)*

Do you see what Christ is emphasizing here? His emphasis is on the fact that True Believers—“the Elect”—who are alive in the Last Days are going to encounter a multitude of false leaders who will attempt to mislead them in a multitude of ways. Although it is true that Matthew 24:1–25 has a lot to say about world events that will occur at the Time of the End, these things are secondary to Christ’s main point. His main point is this: True Believers need to be wise and discerning in the Last Days or they will certainly be misled and fall prey to Satan’s grand delusion. We know this to be Christ’s main point because He repeatedly warns us of Satan’s ultimate objective in the End—to mislead the Elect.

Now let’s look at one final passage of Scripture where the central theme is once again tied to something that is repeatedly mentioned in the passage:

*Jesus answered them and said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves, and were filled. Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man shall give to you, for on Him the Father, {even} God, has set His seal.” They said therefore to Him, “What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?” Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent.” They said therefore to Him, “What then do You do for a sign, that we may see, and believe You? What work do You perform? Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘HE GAVE THEM BREAD OUT OF HEAVEN TO EAT.’” Jesus therefore said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, it is not Moses who has given you the **bread** out of heaven, but it is My Father who gives you the true **bread** out of heaven. For the **bread** of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world.” They said therefore to Him, “Lord, evermore give us this **bread**.” Jesus said to them, “I am the **bread** of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. But I said to you, that you have seen Me, and yet do not believe. All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him*

*who sent Me. And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him, may have eternal life; and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.” The Jews therefore were grumbling about Him, because He said, “I am the **bread** that came down out of heaven.” And they were saying, “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does He now say, ‘I have come down out of heaven’?” Jesus answered and said to them, “Do not grumble among yourselves. No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day. It is written in the prophets, ‘AND THEY SHALL ALL BE TAUGHT OF GOD.’ Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me. Not that any man has seen the Father, except the One who is from God; He has seen the Father. Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life. I am the **bread** of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the **bread** which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living **bread** that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this **bread**, he shall live forever; and the **bread** also which I shall give for the life of the world is My flesh.” The Jews therefore {began} to argue with one another, saying, “How can this man give us {His} flesh to eat?” Jesus therefore said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me. This is the **bread** which came down out of heaven; not as the fathers ate, and died, he who eats this **bread** shall live forever.”*  
(John 6:26–58)

Jesus has parabolically conveyed a lot of information in this passage. Although you may not understand what He has said, it should be obvious

that everything Jesus says in this passage is somehow tied to the parabolic image of bread. This is made clear by the fact that the word *bread* occurs fourteen times. If we can understand what the image of bread parabolically represents, we have a good chance of understanding what Jesus is talking about in this passage.

So what does the bread of life represent? I won't tell you outright, but I'll give you a hint: This passage is found only in the Gospel of John, which is the same Gospel account where we are told that Jesus Christ is the Word of God Who came down from Heaven and became flesh (John 1:1–14). If that's not enough of a hint for you, here is another clue: Remember what Christ once said: "MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD" (Matt. 4:4). Do you see now what the bread of life must be? If not, I suggest you find someone who can tell you what it is, because unless you "eat" the "bread" that was sent down from Heaven, you have no hope of inheriting eternal life. I didn't say that; Jesus did.

Let me close with a few final thoughts. I hope you see the benefit in looking for repeated words and phrases as you read the Scriptures. I wish I could show you an easy way to find these words and phrases, but I can't. The only way for you to find them is to carefully read the Scriptures and pay close attention to what is being said. Naturally, you will find it easier to spot repeated words and phrases when they are used in close proximity to each other. But serious students of the Bible will not stop there. They will be on the lookout for frequently used terminology in the Scriptures, wherever it is found.

Since the Bible—Old and New Testaments together—is actually one book, you will ultimately find it necessary to track words and phrases that are used repeatedly throughout the entire Bible. However, I will tell you bluntly that you won't be able to understand everything you need to on your own. That's why you will need a good Teacher to show you what you would never be able to see otherwise. And as I have already told you, if you are a True Believer, your Teacher needs to be The Teaching you will find only in *The Voice of Elijah*®.

As a final thought, you may find it useful to highlight repeated words and phrases in your Bible. I do that in my own Bible because it makes it easier for me to track the flow of the author's or speaker's thoughts as I study what is said. Do this as a little experiment. Go back and reread John 6:26–58 from the previous page. But this time, use a highlighter to highlight every use of the word *bread* as you read. While you're at it, also highlight the phrases *out of heaven, comes/came down from heaven, and eat(s) My flesh* (or any reference similar to these). Try using a different color for each related word or phrase to distinguish them from each other. For instance, I used green to highlight all references to *bread*, yellow for *out of/down from heaven*, and blue for *eating My flesh*.

After you have highlighted these words and phrases, go back and read the entire passage again and see if the highlighted portions make it easier for you to follow Jesus' train of thought. You may still have questions about what He is saying, but it should be easier for you to see the central theme at the heart of His discourse. And after you have heard more of The Teaching, I'm confident the highlighted portions of the text will allow you to follow Christ's progression of thought even better.

If you decide to try this in your Bible, be careful not to use markers that bleed through the thin pages. Colored pencils and grease pencils work best for highlighting. They don't bleed through and can be erased (with a little effort) if you make a mistake. You can generally find these items wherever Bibles are sold.

*Allen Friend*



# If You Plan to Reap What You Sow, You Had Better Watch What You Plant

**I**n the “Questions & Answers” section of the January 1998 issue of *The Voice of Elijah*®, I was asked to explain what Jesus was *talking about* in the Parable of the Talents (Matt. 25:14–30). I did that at that time. Then, in the “Questions & Answers” section of this issue, I was asked to explain the *meaning* of the Parable of the Sower. I will do that as well. However, I am going to begin a series of articles in which I will explain the *meaning* of all of Jesus’ parables rather than continuing to explain individual parables. The reason for that is, the parables of Jesus do not stand alone as individual units. Each one of them is part of an ongoing discourse in which Jesus was explaining some particular facet of *The Teaching* to His disciples.

Notice that I said I would “explain the *meaning*” of Jesus’ parables. I did not say I would explain their *meaning* and *significance*, even though every parable has both. That is because, although I am now free to openly explain the *meaning* of Jesus’ parables, I cannot as yet explain their *significance* openly. Therefore, if you desire that additional information in the near term, you will have to seek it elsewhere.

The fool will accept my explanation of the parables of Jesus and think he understands all that he needs to know about them. Don’t tell him he doesn’t. Let him find out the hard way. Without an understanding of the *significance* of a particular parable, knowledge of its *meaning* is more or less worthless. That is because the *significance* of each and every parable that Jesus told tells you precisely how it fits in with the parables of Moses and the Prophets. I trust you will keep that in mind should you feel the idiotic urge to “show what you know” after reading what I write. If the only thing God ever intended us to do with our knowledge of the

Truth was use it to impress others, He wouldn’t have made it the sole requirement for salvation.

## *The Key to Understanding Parables*

If you ever intend to understand the parables of Jesus and the Prophets, you must first understand that every parable contains at least one *parabolic image* whose *meaning* and *significance* is concealed in and revealed by the *meaning* and *significance* of its corresponding Hebrew idiom. In the Parable of the Sower, the central *parabolic image* is obviously the *Seed* the sower sows. The Hebrew idiom that corresponds to that image is not quite as obvious. So I will tell you outright it is the idiom “raise up a seed.” I am currently in the process of explaining the *meaning* and *significance* of that idiom and two other related idioms—“build a house” and “make a name”—in another series of articles I am writing for *The Voice of Elijah*®. When I have finished that series, you will be better able to understand the *meaning* and *significance* of the Parable of the Sower. You can believe that if you care to, or you can disbelieve it if you dare to. It doesn’t matter much to me one way or the other. I’m not the one still seeking to understand the parables of Jesus. If you aren’t, then why are you reading this article?

Enough ridiculing fools. Let’s take a closer look at the context in which Jesus told the Parable of the Sower. Matthew begins by telling us this:

*While He was still speaking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and brothers were standing outside, seeking to speak to Him. And someone said to Him, “Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You.” But He answered the one who was telling*

Him and said, "Who is My mother and who are My brothers?" And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, "Behold, My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother."  
(Matthew 12:46–50)

As I told you several years ago, the point of Jesus' statements concerning His family in this passage has to do with a *parabolic pantomime* in which He was making an oral testament that would be valid under both Roman and Jewish law. (See "Did Jesus Leave a Will?" *The Voice of Elijah*®, July 1991.) Roman law required that a testator disinherit his legal heirs before designating any additional heirs. According to Jewish law, the legal heirs of Jesus included His mother and brothers. Therefore, Jesus disinherited the members of His immediate family so that they might later be reinstated and share His estate with all others who *inherit the promise* under the terms stipulated in His will—that is, by doing "the will of My Father who is in heaven."

I have also told you what "the will of My Father" is. In an article I wrote a year ago, I explained His will is that people believe the Truth rather than believing Satan's lies. (See "Thy Kingdom Come. Thy Will Be Done, on Earth," *The Voice of Elijah*®, April 1997.) Knowing that, you can see that the point of Jesus' *parabolic pantomime* is that only those who believe the Truth of *The Teaching* are *heirs of the promise*. My point concerning Jesus' *parabolic pantomime* in this regard, however, is merely that Matthew wants his reader to understand that *the inheritance of the promise* was on Jesus' mind when He told the Parable of the Sower. He makes that clear by telling us what Jesus said to His disciples immediately after He told them the Parable of the Sower. Listen to this:

*And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?" And He answered and said to them, "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted. For whoever has, to him shall {more} be given, and he shall have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him. Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. And in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says,*

*'YOU WILL KEEP ON HEARING, BUT WILL NOT UNDERSTAND; AND YOU WILL KEEP ON SEEING, BUT WILL NOT PERCEIVE; FOR THE HEART OF THIS PEOPLE HAS BECOME DULL, AND WITH THEIR EARS THEY SCARCELY HEAR, AND THEY HAVE CLOSED THEIR EYES LEST THEY SHOULD SEE WITH THEIR EYES, AND HEAR WITH THEIR EARS, AND UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART AND RETURN, AND I SHOULD HEAL THEM.'*

*But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear. For truly I say to you, that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see {it;} and to hear what you hear, and did not hear {it}.'*

(Matthew 13:10–17)

The point that Matthew wants his reader to gain from Jesus' statements on this occasion is obvious to anyone who is aware that God had His Prophets speak in parables so as to seal up the Truth of *The Teaching* in the Hebrew Scriptures. It is the same point that Jesus made in the *parabolic pantomime* in which He made an oral testament that would legally convey *the promise* to His *heirs* after His death. The Apostle is making sure we understand that, on this occasion, Jesus was using parables to explain to His disciples what God requires of those who seek to *inherit the promise*. That is made even more obvious by His quotation of the Prophet Isaiah. Isaiah had already explained why God insisted that he and all the other Prophets speak in parables. It was because most people have no interest at all in understanding the Truth. Yet belief in the Truth is the only requirement that God has ever placed on individual *inheritance of the promise*. (*Corporate inheritance of the promise* is another matter entirely.)

Knowing the context in which Jesus told the Parable of the Sower, we can now take a closer look at the parable itself:

*On that day Jesus went out of the house, and was sitting by the sea. And great multitudes gathered to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat down, and the whole multitude was standing on the beach. And He spoke many things to them in parables, saying, "Behold, the sower went out to sow; and as he sowed, some {seeds} fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate them up. And others fell upon the rocky places, where they did not have much soil; and immediately they sprang up, because they had no depth of*

soil. But when the sun had risen, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And others fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked them out. And others fell on the good soil, and yielded a crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty. He who has ears, let him hear.”

(Matthew 13:1–9)

Before we go any further, let's consider the *parabolic imagery* that Jesus used in this parable. In and of itself, the *Seed* image would tell us extremely little. It only begins to speak when it is set in the context of a somewhat more complex *parabolic image*. In this case, that *parabolic image* is one in which a sower is scattering the *Seed* on various types of ground. But contrary to popular opinion, the central focus of the Parable of the Sower is not the type of ground on which the *Seed* falls, it is what happens to the *Seed* after it has been sown. Therefore, we not only have to consider the images of the *Seed*, the sower, and the type of ground in which the *Seed* is sown, we should also take into account the additional images of the sun, the birds, and the thorns that prevent the *Seed* from sprouting, growing, and/or bearing fruit.

In His explanation of the Parable of the Sower, Jesus has already explained the *meaning* of the parable in terms that are clear enough for anyone to understand, provided they have ears to hear and are able to understand. The only problem with that is, as Jesus pointed out to His disciples immediately after He told the parable, not everyone has ears to hear or a mind that is capable of understanding. But, for the benefit of all who can hear and understand, I'll state the matter plainly. The *parabolic image* of the *Seed* represents the Truth of *The Teaching*—not just in the Parable of the Sower but throughout the Scriptures. Depending on the context in which you find this particular *parabolic image* used, however, it could represent *The Teaching of Moses*, *The Teaching of the Prophets*, *The Teaching of Jesus*, or *The Teaching of the Apostles*—*The Apostolic Teaching*.

Since all of these *Teachings* have essentially the same content and differ mainly in their historical perspective on the Truth, we can refer to each one of them as *The Teaching*. You should keep in mind, however, that *The Teaching of Moses* is the most concise and cryptically stated formulation of the Truth, while *The Apostolic Teaching* is the most detailed and openly explained. Nonetheless, these two *Teachings* explain exactly the

same thing: How mortal man—a *seed*—can be transformed into an immortal creature—a *plant*—by and through no greater agency than belief in *The Teaching*—a *Seed*—which replicates itself in the Believer (the ground in the Parable of the Sower)—as a *plant*.

As you can see, the *parabolic imagery* that stands behind the Parable of the Sower points to two entirely different *seeds* and two entirely different *plants*. However, since *everyone is what they believe*, you should also be able to see that both *seeds* and both *plants* can sometimes be one and the same. So how can we maintain any kind of separation between them? That is where the Hebrew idiom “raise up a seed” comes into play. It provides insight into the *mythological imagery* on which Moses and the Prophets based their statements concerning the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. That insight is absolutely essential to an understanding of what the Prophets and Apostles wrote. If you do not understand the *meaning* and *significance* of that idiom, you can easily be misled by the way they use the *parabolic images* of the *Seed* and the *plant*.

Now that I've told you what the Parable of the Sower is *meant* to explain, let's see if that agrees with Jesus' Own explanation of what it *means*:

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

There are two other things you need to know about the Parable of the Sower that Jesus does not mention in His explanation. The first is what “the word of the kingdom” is, and the second is what He *means* by



“the heart.” To the Greeks, like all the other ancient peoples, the “heart” was the mind, and the “word of the kingdom” is nothing more than *The Teaching*. The point of this parable is, the information contained in *The Teaching* is all that anyone needs to know to ensure a spot in the Resurrection of the Righteous. But if I were to tell you how I know that, I would also have explained the *significance* of the parable.

In the parables where Jesus uses the *Seed* image, we find a variety of *parabolic images* other than those that He included in the Parable of the Sower. In some, the *Seed of The Teaching* has already been planted and has sprouted, and the produce of the resulting plants is ready to be harvested. That introduces the image of workers engaged in the process of cutting wheat, threshing the sheaves, winnowing the grain, and storing the *Seed* in granaries. In other parables, the *Seed* image is somewhat hidden behind the fact that it has already been planted, harvested, threshed, winnowed, ground into flour, and made into dough or bread. In still others, *The Teaching* is represented as an entirely different kind of *Seed* that, after being planted, has grown into a tree. Nonetheless, the one who understands the *meaning* and *significance* of the *Seed* image can easily see that all these parables convey exactly the same *parabolic meaning* and *significance* as the Hebrew idiom “raise up a seed.” That is, they all explain how mortal man can attain immortality through resurrection from the dead.

For example, Jesus told this parable concerning the effect that the Truth of *The Teaching* has on the already milled *Seed* of God:

*He spoke another parable to them, “The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three pecks of meal, until it was all leavened.”*

*(Matthew 13:33)*

The word translated “meal” in that verse actually means “wheat flour.” Matthew says Jesus told this parable at the same time as He told the Parable of the Sower and several other parables that focus on the *Seed* image. That tells us the emphasis of this particular parable is not on the flour, it is on the *Seed* from which the flour came. That clues the alert reader in to the fact that when Jesus told His disciples the Parable of the Sower, He was showing them the various ways the *Seed* image had been used by Moses and the Prophets.

It is not obvious to the average reader that the Prophets use bits and pieces of the *parabolic imagery* related to the *Seed* image all the time to make statements that one cannot possibly understand unless one is thinking in terms of the Hebrew idiom “raise up a seed.” Here’s one from the Prophet Jeremiah:

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

*“Behold, I have put My words in your mouth.*

*See, I have appointed you this day over the nations*

*and over the kingdoms,*

*To pluck up and to break down,*

*To destroy and to overthrow,*

*To build and to plant.”*

*(Jeremiah 1:9–10)*

The Hebrew verbs translated “pluck up” and “plant” in that passage are *meant* to evoke the *parabolic imagery* related to the Hebrew idiom “raise up a seed” in the mind of the reader. The Hebrew verbs translated “overthrow” and “build” emphasize exactly the same thing—death and resurrection from the dead—by pointing to the idiom “build a house.” Moreover, what the Lord said to Jeremiah concerning his calling is absolutely essential to an understanding of what Jeremiah wrote. Jeremiah’s message was one in which he prophesied concerning two seemingly contradictory themes. On the one hand, he described the complete and total destruction of “*The House*” of Israel. On the other, he *promised* absolute redemption to a *remnant* of that *House*. One cannot adequately reconcile those two disparate *promises* of God without knowing what the Lord said to Jeremiah about the pivotal role he was to play in “building *The House*” of Israel:

*Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, “Thus says the LORD God of Israel, ‘Like these good figs, so I will regard as good the captives of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place {into} the land of the Chaldeans. For I will set My eyes on them for good, and I will bring them again to this land; and I will build them up and not overthrow them, and I will plant them and not pluck {them} up. And I will give them a heart to know Me, for I am the LORD; and they will be My people, and I will be their God, for they will return to Me with their whole heart.’”*

*(Jeremiah 24:4–7)*



The casual reader has no idea at all what the Prophet is *talking about* in that passage, but it should be clear to anyone who knows what Moses wrote. In case you are not familiar with Moses, perhaps I should tell you that Jeremiah is quoting him here. Did you see what “the word of the Lord” said to Jeremiah? He said He was going to “plant them” and “give them a heart to know Me.” That last phrase tells you what He *meant* by what He said. I’ll explain how that is some other time. For now, all you need to know is the fact that the Word of the Lord is *talking about* the same thing that He explains to Moses in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 30.

On several occasions, the Prophets restate the point of what the Lord said to Jeremiah, as well as what He said to Moses, in terms of the same *parabolic imagery* we have been discussing here: At Israel’s darkest hour, the plan of God was to “raise up a seed” for both Jacob and David by “building a house” where one had never stood before.

You cannot even begin to understand what I just said unless you are thinking in terms of the *meaning* of the two Hebrew idioms “build a house” and “raise up a seed” and understand their *significance* in regard to what Moses and the Prophets said concerning Jesus Christ. Over the next several years, I will not only show you *what* the Prophets said about the *Living Word* of God but also *why*. For now, let me show you where Jeremiah ties the *parabolic imagery* in which *The Teaching* is a *Seed* sown by a sower together with a *promise* concerning the New Covenant that God said He planned to establish with Israel when His Firstborn Son existed solely in the Person of Jesus Christ:

*“Behold, days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man and with the seed of beast. And it will come about that as I have watched over them to pluck up, to break down, to overthrow, to destroy, and to bring disaster, so I will watch over them to build and to plant,” declares the LORD.*

*“In those days they will not say again,*

*‘The fathers have eaten sour grapes,*

*And the children’s teeth are set on edge.’*

*But everyone will die for his own iniquity; each man who eats the sour grapes, his teeth will be set on edge. Behold, days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their*

*fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them,” declares the LORD. “But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the LORD, “I will put My law within them, and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. And they shall not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,” declares the LORD, “for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”*

*(Jeremiah 31:27–34)*

You probably noticed what the Lord said about “sowing” “*The House*” of Israel and “*The House*” of Judah, and what He said about *The Teaching* in that passage, but did you see what He did with Leviticus 26:12? I’m sure you did if you know what Moses wrote. But for the benefit of those who haven’t spent the time they should have reading Moses, the Master Prophet, let me tell you what the Lord did. He modified the words He spoke to Moses ever so slightly so that when you read Ezekiel 18, which is where He directs you by mentioning the sour grapes proverb, you would understand that the New Covenant has the same terms as the Old Covenant except in one particular. Under the terms of the New Covenant, *corporate* responsibility for sin has been replaced by individual responsibility for sin. In other words, if you sin under the terms of the New Covenant, you will die, but nobody else in Israel will be required to suffer for your sin. That was not so under the terms of the Old Covenant. If you didn’t know that, you obviously missed the point of Jeremiah’s account of Achan’s sin (Josh. 7:1–15).

In this passage, the Lord is explaining to Jeremiah how the New Covenant relates to the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. We know that, however, only because Jeremiah recorded this:

*“Behold, days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man and with the seed of beast.”*

*(Jeremiah 31:27)*

When you read that, I’m sure you immediately recognized it as a *parabolic statement*. But just in case you

didn't, let me be the first to tell you—it is. And it clearly identifies the *parabolic Seed* that the Prophets tell us God would one day “raise up” for Jacob and David. He will be both “*The House*” of Israel and “*The House*” of Judah. The point of what Jeremiah records here is, God plans to “sow” “*The House*” of Judah and “*The House*” of Israel with the “seed of man” and the “seed of beast.” And He did that, just as He said He would—not once, but twice. Once as the *Seed* of the Word of God Who came down from above to dwell among men and a second time as the *Seed* of Jacob and David Who had been born in the likeness of sinful man. But the one who understands the *meaning* and *significance* of the idiom “raise up a seed” can see that the Lord has in mind only the second time that He “sowed” His Son in this particular passage.

The Lord is *parabolically* describing the death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ to Jeremiah in terms of a sower sowing *Seed*, which is exactly the same *parabolic imagery* that Jesus had in mind when He told the Parable of the Sower. However, in the Parable of the Sower, Jesus carries the *parabolic image* of the *Seed* to the time beyond the grave when God has finally “raised up” the Son of David as the *Seed* of God that He was before He came down to Earth. At that time, He once again became the *Living Word* of God, the *Seed* Whom God has used His Evangelists to sow in the Earth for the past two thousand years. It was God's plan that, after that *Seed* had been planted, His Prophets, Apostles, and Teachers would water the plants that sprouted from that *Seed* until the time came for Him to harvest the increase. That is what the Apostle Paul is describing when he makes this *parabolic statement*:

*What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave {opportunity} to each one. I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth. Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building.*  
(1 Corinthians 3:5–9)

Paul then goes on to speak in terms of the *parabolic imagery* associated with the Hebrew idiom “build a house” and he restates exactly the same thing he had just explained: God intended to use the offices He

established in the Church to tend His plants until the time came for them to be harvested. And God's plan worked just fine until Origen and his ilk came along planting their nonsense in and among God's *Seed*. That is when God resorted to His contingency plan, which Jesus describes in the Parable of the Tares immediately following the Parable of the Sower.

If you didn't understand what I just explained, don't worry about it. It wasn't *meant* for your benefit. But for those of you who have ears to hear, take a look at the Parable of the Tares that Jesus told right after He explained the *meaning* of the Parable of the Sower to His disciples. In it, He uses the same *parabolic imagery* that I explained above:

*He presented another parable to them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares also among the wheat, and went away. But when the wheat sprang up and bore grain, then the tares became evident also. And the slaves of the landowner came and said to him, ‘Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?’ And he said to them, ‘An enemy has done this!’ And the slaves said to him, ‘Do you want us, then, to go and gather them up?’ But he said, ‘No; lest while you are gathering up the tares, you may root up the wheat with them. 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 13:24–30)

In this parable, Jesus adds to the *parabolic imagery* that He used in the Parable of the Sower. We already know what the *Seed* is because He defined it for us. It is “the word of the kingdom,” which is, I have told you, *The Teaching* that He taught. We can be certain that same *parabolic imagery* holds true for this parable as well. But we don't have to speculate about it; here is what Jesus said to His disciples when they asked Him to explain what He *meant* by what He said:

*Then He left the multitudes, and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field.” And He answered and said, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man, and the field is the world; and {as for} the good*

*seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil {one;} and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the end of the age; and the reapers are angels. Therefore just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then THE RIGHTEOUS WILL SHINE FORTH AS THE SUN in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.*"  
(Matthew 13:36–43)

To understand the point of this parable, you must keep in mind the fact that the *Seed* the Son of Man sowed in the field is the Truth of *The Teaching*. The plants who sprout from that *Seed* are the True Believers who believed it and thereby—*because we are what we believe*—parabolically became plants that sprouted from the *Seed* of God. If you care to read an account of how Jesus Christ planted the *Seed* of *The Teaching* in the world, read the Gospels. If you want to read an account of how some of the *Seed* He sowed sprouted, read this:

*Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things."*  
(Luke 24:44–48)

Luke is describing how Christ supernaturally enabled His disciples to understand the Truth of *The Teaching* after He was resurrected from the dead. As Jesus had already explained in the Parable of the Sower, when that *Seed* of Truth enters the heart—that is, the mind—of the one who has been enabled to hear, it sprouts and that person becomes a new plant. In the case of the Parable of the Tares, he becomes a plant in God's field which is, as Jesus explains, the world. However, the focus of the Parable of the Tares has to do with the fact that Satan contaminated *The Teaching*—the

*Seed* the Son of Man had sowed—by sowing tares among the plants that sprouted from God's *Seed*.

In the Parable of the Tares, Jesus was *parabolically* explaining to His disciples that Satan was going to sow false teaching as a *seed* that would sprout and grow in the Pretenders who believed it. And as Jesus clearly states, that apparent fiasco will eventually be remedied according to God's divine plan. Jesus tells us that, at "the end of the age," when the time comes for God to finally harvest His *Seed*, He will winnow out Pretenders from among those who actually understand *and believe* the Truth of *The Teaching* that Jesus Christ sowed in His disciples. You need to remember that God has, to serve His unique purpose, allowed Pretenders to remain in the Church and plant the *seed* of false teaching among True Believers in whom the Truth of *The Teaching* has already sprouted. So if you honestly believe these are the Last Days, you had best make sure you are God's plant and not some other.

Since I have already mentioned the Parable of the Tares on several other occasions, I won't say much more here about how God plans to winnow His harvest or gather His *Seed* into His barns. I will merely remind you what Jesus said about His Second Coming:

*"And at that time many will fall away and will deliver up one another and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise, and will mislead many. And because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end, he shall be saved."*  
(Matthew 24:10–13)

If you intend to be one "who endures to the end," I highly recommend that you carefully examine everything that you believe. If you believe the same Truth of *The Teaching* that the Apostles *received* from Jesus Christ immediately after His Resurrection, you will be able to endure. If you don't, you are destined to be nothing more than chaff that God is going to separate from His *Seed* through the agency of a hot, dry desert wind and consign to burn forever in the fires of Hell. I can tell you that with complete confidence because I know that *we all act in accordance with what we believe*. In case you were wondering, I was *parabolically* describing the Antichrist as a "wind," using a part of the *parabolic imagery* that John the Baptist used when he scathingly denounced the Pretenders of his day:



*But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bring forth fruit in keeping with repentance; and do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father'; for I say to you, that God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. And the axe is already laid at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 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 3:7–12)

For the benefit of all you city folks, I should tell you it is impossible to winnow grain with a winnowing fork unless a stiff breeze is blowing. And I can tell you for a fact that after that hot, dry desert wind has served his purpose in winnowing the chaff from God's *Seed*, he is going to turn on all those fools who failed to pay attention when attention was due. He will then become a burning, gale-force wind that will absolutely terrify those who have ignorantly believed his deception. That is the *parabolic imagery* the Prophet Jeremiah was using when he said this:

*Declare in Judah and proclaim in Jerusalem, and say,  
"Blow the trumpet in the land;  
Cry aloud and say,  
'Assemble yourselves, and let us go  
Into the fortified cities.'  
Lift up a standard toward Zion!  
Seek refuge, do not stand {still,}  
For I am bringing evil from the north,  
And great destruction.  
A lion has gone up from his thicket,  
And a destroyer of nations has set out;  
He has gone out from his place  
To make your land a waste.  
Your cities will be ruins  
Without inhabitant.  
For this, put on sackcloth,  
Lament and wail;  
For the fierce anger of the LORD*

*Has not turned back from us.  
And it shall come about in that day," declares the LORD,  
"that the heart of the king and the heart of the princes will fail; and the priests will be appalled, and the prophets will be astounded." Then I said, "Ah, Lord GOD! Surely Thou hast utterly deceived this people and Jerusalem, saying, 'You will have peace'; whereas a sword touches the throat." In that time it will be said to this people and to Jerusalem, "A scorching wind from the bare heights in the wilderness in the direction of the daughter of My people—not to winnow, and not to cleanse, a wind too strong for this—will come at My command; now I will also pronounce judgments against them.  
Behold, he goes up like clouds,  
And his chariots like the whirlwind;  
His horses are swifter than eagles.  
Woe to us, for we are ruined!"  
(Jeremiah 4:5–13)*

You cannot even begin to understand the *parabolic imagery* Jesus used in the Parable of the Sower until you are willing to accept the fact that *we are what we believe*. God has never planted or sowed any kind of *seed* in the Earth other than the *Seed* He sowed when Jesus Christ was buried in the tomb. That is the only kind of *Seed* He will ever harvest and the only kind of *Seed* He will ever store in His barns. As the Apostle John plainly stated in the introduction to his gospel, that *Seed* is, *parabolically* speaking, nothing other than the Word of God that Jesus Christ believed:

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.  
(John 1:1–5)*

I have explained on at least one other occasion what John had in mind when he wrote those words. He is referring to the fact that Jesus Christ believed the Truth of *The Teaching*. So that's Who He was. As John stated, *The Teaching* IS LIKE *Light*. It enables the person who believes it to see what is going on around him. That is, he is able to see how ridiculous we are, readily believing all kinds of lies and easily getting caught up



in the things of this world the way we do. The person who sees “*The Light*” can also see that he needs to have a whole lot more *Light* if he is ever going to be able to see things as they actually are instead of the way the prince of darkness wants him to think they are. That being the case, let me shed a bit more *Light* on the parables of Jesus so that those who have ears to hear may understand the Truth.

Matthew describes another occasion on which Jesus spoke *parabolically* in terms of the *Seed* image. Read this passage carefully and see if you can figure out how the *Seed* image applies to what He said:

*And Jesus was going about all the cities and the villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. And seeing the multitudes, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and downcast like sheep without a shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest.” And having summoned His twelve disciples, He gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.*  
(Matthew 9:35–10:1)

I was just being facetious, mocking all those proof-text parrots who take verses out of context. There is no way to understand *why* Jesus said *what* He said to His disciples that day by reading just that passage alone. You first have to know He is conducting a *parabolic pantomime*. Then you must read the entirety of Matthew 10 before you can understand the reality He is pantomiming. We don’t have time to go into that here. But I can tell you this: The point He was trying to get across to His disciples pertains to the fact that the full power of the Word of God—*The Teaching*—would one day be at their complete disposal. Therefore, they needed to learn how to use it and not abuse it while He was still with them in bodily form. That’s *why* He gave them authority over unclean spirits and the power to work miracles.

You won’t find much mention of the fact that the disciples continued to work miracles right alongside Jesus, but they did. On one occasion, however, they had a bit of difficulty casting out a demon. Listen to what Jesus said when He heard about their failure:

*And when they came to the multitude, a man came up to Him, falling on his knees before Him, and saying, “Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is a lunatic, and is very ill; for he often falls into the fire, and often into the water. And I brought him to Your disciples, and they could not cure him.” And Jesus answered and said, “O unbelieving and perverted generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him here to Me.” And Jesus rebuked him, and the demon came out of him, and the boy was cured at once.*  
(Matthew 17:14–18)

Did you see what Jesus said about the “unbelieving and perverted generation” He had to deal with? He was not *talking about* the crowd. He was referring to His disciples and their inability to cast out the demon. We know that because immediately after He cast the demon out, His disciples asked Him why they had not been able to do so. He said this:

*Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, “Why could we not cast it out?” And He said to them, “Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it shall move; and nothing shall be impossible to you. [But this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.]”*  
(Matthew 17:19–21)

He was *talking about* their belief in the Truth of *The Teaching*, which is the same thing He was referring to when He told the Parable of the Sower. But you can’t fully understand how Jesus’ *parabolic statement* concerning the mustard seed on that occasion fits together with the Parable of the Sower without first knowing that He had been explaining the *parabolic imagery* associated with the *Seed* image ever since He gave His disciples authority over unclean spirits in Matthew 9. I’ve already explained some of the things you need to know about that in The Next Step program, so I won’t get into those things again here. They relate to the fact that He had earlier conducted two *parabolic pantomimes* in which He fed thousands of people with just a few loaves of bread. In doing that, He was trying to get across the point that *The Teaching* is just *LIKE* the *seed* that was used to make the loaves of unleavened bread with which He conducted those *parabolic pantomimes*. All they had to do was distribute *The Teaching* and, *LIKE* the bread, it would

remain just as much as it was before. It also does not hurt to know that Jesus said this about Himself after He conducted the first, and before He conducted the second, of those *parabolic pantomimes*:

*“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread also which I shall give for the life of the world is My flesh.”*

(John 6:47–51)

According to Matthew, Jesus had been explaining various *parabolic images* that are associated with the *Seed* image for quite some time before He obliquely referred to Himself as a mustard seed and chided His disciples for not having the same faith in the Word of God that He had. You probably thought He was referring to a literal mustard seed when He said that. That’s only because His statement in that context has been tied—correctly enough—to what He said about Himself in this passage:

*He presented another parable to them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field; and this is smaller than all {other} seeds; but when it is full grown, it is larger than the garden plants, and becomes a tree, so that THE BIRDS OF THE AIR come and NEST IN ITS BRANCHES.”*

(Matthew 13:31–32)

In that parable, Jesus is alluding to something that Ezekiel said about Him as the One Who would be, in Himself, “*The House*” of Israel, the One Who is and always will be the *Kingdom of God*. Ezekiel was merely contributing his small share to what Moses and the other Prophets said about Christ as “*The Remnant*” of Israel. But you need to go back and check the context in which Jesus made that *parabolic statement*. You will find that He made it immediately after He told the Parable of the Tares, which follows hard on the heels of the Parable of the Sower.

Now do you begin to get the big picture? Can you see the *parabolic imagery* that Jesus was trying to explain to His disciples? He is the Kingdom of Heaven.

He is the mustard seed. He is the bread. Yet the one thing to which all of these various *parabolic images* point is the fact that Jesus Christ is *The Teaching* that He firmly believed, which is, as John tells us, the Word of God we must also believe if we desire to *inherit the promise*. That being the case, you can see why the Truth embodied in *The Teaching* holds an incredible value for the one who has ears to hear and understand it. As Jesus went on to explain to His disciples:

*“The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has, and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea, and gathering {fish} of every kind; and when it was filled, they drew it up on the beach; and they sat down, and gathered the good {fish} into containers, but the bad they threw away. So it will be at the end of the age; the angels shall come forth, and take out the wicked from among the righteous, and will cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”*

(Matthew 13:44–50)

In the last of those three short parables, Jesus is superimposing the *parabolic imagery* He used in the Parable of the Tares on top of the *parabolic image* in which He is the *Kingdom of God*. Before you can understand *why* He did that, you need to know that Matthew has omitted a couple of the parables that Jesus told His disciples on that occasion. First, Mark tells us Jesus said this to His disciples immediately after He explained the *meaning* of the Parable of the Sower:

*And He was saying to them, “A lamp is not brought to be put under a peck-measure, is it, or under a bed? Is it not {brought} to be put on the lampstand? For nothing is hidden, except to be revealed; nor has {anything} been secret, but that it should come to light. If any man has ears to hear, let him hear.” And He was saying to them, “Take care what you listen to. By your standard of measure it shall be measured to you; and more shall be given you besides. For whoever has, to him shall {more} be given; and whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him.”*

(Mark 4:21–25)

His point is this: *The Teaching* IS LIKE a *Light* which, although it has long been hidden in the Scriptures, will eventually be seen by everyone—by most after it is too late for it to do them any good. Therefore, He admonished His disciples to be careful to listen to the *Seed* that He, the Son of Man, was sowing and let it sprout in their heart—mind—while they still had opportunity. You should heed that admonition. If you comprehend even a little bit of *The Teaching*, that little bit will enable you to understand still more. However, as Jesus warned His disciples, if you don't understand any of it at all, you will eventually lose what you mistakenly think you have. Then, after He said that, He said this:

*And He was saying, "The kingdom of God is like a man who casts seed upon the soil; and goes to bed at night and gets up by day, and the seed sprouts up and grows—how, he himself does not know. The soil produces crops by itself; first the blade, then the head, then the mature grain in the head. But when the crop permits, he immediately puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come."*  
(Mark 4:26–29)

After that brief parable in which He said He—the *Kingdom of God*—was LIKE a sower, Jesus went on to tell the Parable of the Tares in which He plainly identified Himself as the Sower. His purpose in telling the Parable of the Tares was to warn His disciples that, when it comes time to *make a distinction between True Believers* who understand and believe the Truth that He taught and the Pretenders who have believed nothing more than Satan's lies, a lot of folks are going to wish they had never been born. He then asked them this:

*"Have you understood all these things?" They said to Him, "Yes." And He said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like a head of a household, who brings forth out of his treasure things new and old."*  
(Matthew 13:51–52)

Let me help you understand what Jesus meant by what He said. I'll just paraphrase it a bit by expanding on the *parabolic imagery* He used:

*Therefore, every scribe who has become My disciple is like a man who is responsible for teaching his children. On the basis of his knowledge of The Teaching, he brings forth*

*things his children have heard and things they haven't heard.*

I have already told you Jesus uses the *parabolic image* of treasure to represent a knowledge of *The Teaching*. In this context, He has linked that treasure—*The Teaching*—directly to what people teach. It is important to realize, however, that most people don't stop to think about whether the things they say are false or misleading. Fools not only teach what they have heard other people say, they also make offhand statements based on what they think or believe. Unfortunately, that casual attitude toward the Truth is detrimental to the long-term health and well-being of their souls. Let me show you what Jesus said to His disciples right before He conducted the *parabolic pantomime* in which He made an oral testament. As you read, keep in mind the fact that He is assailing the Pharisees because they blasphemed the Holy Spirit by saying He must be possessed by a demon. It also wouldn't hurt to remember what I told you earlier: In the Scriptures, the "heart" is the mind. Jesus said this:

*"You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. The good man out of {his} good treasure brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of {his} evil treasure brings forth what is evil. And I say to you, that every careless word that men shall speak, they shall render account for it in the day of judgment. For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned."*  
(Matthew 12:34–37)

At this point, I could veer off and pursue the *parabolic imagery* that Jesus used in His parables down a variety of different trails. We will choose one of those paths and pursue it next time. When we do, don't expect any big surprises. In one way or another, every *parabolic image* in the parables of Christ points to the fact that He is the Word of God—*The Teaching* that one must believe in order to *inherit the promise*. The most interesting thing about His parables is not what He says in that regard but how neatly He has *parabolically* summed up the intricately detailed portrait that Moses and the Prophets painted of Him as "*The House*" of Israel Who became "*The House*" of God. In one way or another, He managed to hit all the high points. ■





**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:* In the “Questions & Answers” section of the January 1998 issue, you made a passing comment about the “historic Christian doctrine of original sin.” Your comment reminded me that someone recently asked me what The Voice of Elijah®’s position is with regard to original sin. This person said he had heard or read that Charles Finney was not an advocate of that doctrine. He said he was surprised by Finney’s view and wanted to know what we believe. So would you, please, explain the doctrine of original sin and tell us whether it is a valid biblical doctrine?

*Elijah:* The doctrine of original sin is certainly a valid biblical doctrine. It is based in part on what the Apostle Paul wrote to the church at Rome (Rom. 5:12–18) and seeks to answer this question, Why, if only Adam sinned, do all men stand under the judgment of God? The answer, according to the historic doctrine of original sin, is that mankind stands under the judgment of God because we are guilty, and we are guilty because we are totally depraved—that is, we inherited a sinful nature from Adam. That sounds like a simple enough answer, yet it doesn’t address all the relevant issues.

The difficulty with the doctrine of original sin is the same one that exists in connection with various other Christian doctrines: It is based on a very specific interpretation of certain biblical passages. The problem

with that is, if one does not know what Paul is *talking about* in those passages, one can come to a far different understanding than what the Apostle *meant* by what he said. Also, if one does not pay extremely close attention to the *context* in which Paul made those statements, it is impossible to comprehend the *significance* of what he wrote. With that in mind, let me briefly explain how the doctrine of original sin evolved. The Apostle Paul wrote this:

*Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—for until the Law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many. And the gift is not like {that which came} through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment {arose} from one {transgression} resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift {arose} from many transgressions resulting in justification. For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men.*

(Romans 5:12–18)

Paul also wrote this to the church at Corinth:

*For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive.*

(1 Corinthians 15:22)

The two Early Church Fathers who mention what the Apostle Paul said in these two passages—Irenæus (*Against Heresies*, Book III, Chap. XXIII) and Tertullian (*Against Marcion*, Book V, Chap. XIV)—do so in the context of discussing the sinful condition of man, but they don’t explain how or why the descendants of Adam should stand under condemnation because of his sin.



That is, they apparently assumed their readers already understood how the consequences of Adam's sin are transmitted from generation to generation. Therefore, an explanation was not recorded for posterity until the late fourth and early fifth centuries, when the theologian Augustine stated his belief that it is by means of the sexual act of procreation and the lustful passion that accompanies it, since he evidently believed sexual intercourse is inherently sinful. In other words, Augustine believed we are completely depraved and worthy of the judgment of God from birth because we are the product of human sexuality.

One should certainly take into account the fact that all this talk about the sinfulness of the act of procreation came from a man—Augustine—who was never completely able to come to terms with his own sexuality. However, only a fool would, for that reason, dismiss his argument outright. Augustine was much closer in time to the source of the Truth than we are. And anyone who understands *The Teaching* can see that he had this particular fact more or less straight: The sinfulness of mankind is, indeed, tied directly to the fact that we are all the product of human sexual passion. But not in any way that you might suppose.

Now I realize some simpleton is going to exhibit his ignorance of what Moses wrote by making more of what I just said than he should, so let me incite him a bit more. We did not inherit a sinful *nature*—that is, a tendency toward sexual lust—from Adam so much as we inherited a sinful *state of being*—that is, our own human sexuality. There, that should do it. Now let the lamebrain contribute his two cents and demonstrate his lack of understanding of what Moses said in regard to Adam and Eve.

The Truth concerning original sin is, we are all the product of the *fallen* Adam. That is, we are born in the image and likeness of a sinful creature, not in the image and likeness of the sinless creature who existed before the Fall. Consequently, we stand under the wrath of God not so much because we inherited Adam's sinful *nature*, but because we inherited the *state of being* that God imposed on him because of his sin, a *state of being* which, it just so happens, includes a distinct proclivity to all kinds of sin.

Augustine's explanation of the ins and outs of the doctrine of original sin was accepted by the Roman Catholic Church in his day and later provided the basis for orthodox Protestant doctrine at the time of the

Reformation. However, Augustine's view of the matter was disputed by a man named Pelagius, who sought to preserve belief in the free will of man by contending that the sinful condition of mankind is perpetuated by force of habit rather than by the inheritance of a sinful *nature*. Anyone who knows the Truth concerning the Fall can see that fool should have stopped fishing long enough to cut bait. Mankind may well have retained free will, but that does him no good at all when his sinful *state of being* allows him no choice.

Fortunately, or unfortunately—depending on the perspective from which you look at it—Pelagius eventually won a fairly large following. Medieval Roman Catholicism combined his view with Augustine's to form a hybrid theology in which the sin of Adam resulted only in the loss of righteousness and the blemishing of mankind's natural endowment. It did not produce a complete loss of rationality and moral freedom. That sop of mandragora wine suited the Roman Catholic leadership just fine, but Protestant Reformers would have none of it. They opted for Augustine's view regarding the total depravity of man. That is why, according to Calvin, mankind is no longer a rational being capable of perceiving the Truth without assistance from God. As I stated in "The Natural Man Is an Idiot (When It Comes to the Truth)," (*The Voice of Elijah*®, October 1993), I agree with John Calvin's view in its essential outlines. But let me hasten to explain why I say "essential outlines."

You mentioned the fact that you had occasion to discuss the doctrine of original sin with someone who was evidently a Calvinist. It is important to remember in that regard that very few people today—erudite Christian theologians included—actually understand what Augustine and the Protestant Reformers were seeking to defend by way of the doctrine of original sin. That is because, as I explained in "Satan's Fools Are Satan's Tools," (*The Voice of Elijah*®, April 1994), Søren Kierkegaard proposed a new definition of the word *faith* just over a century and a half ago. So, having accepted Kierkegaard's loony tune definition of that term, folks in the Church today *talk about* hope as though it were faith.

The Truth is, faith is nothing but belief, and *belief must always have a content*. John Calvin knew that. However, for the majority of Calvinists today, the content of their faith is nothing more than the perfectly parroted tenets of their particular brand of Calvinism.

It is a sad fact indeed that most of them have no idea what John Calvin and the other Reformers were trying to defend. They believe that they believe just because they believe that they believe what John Calvin believed. That's why talking to a Calvinist is a lot like stacking marbles: One can do a whole lot of stacking without accomplishing anything.

I have already explained the role that Origen played in the loss of *The Apostolic Teaching*. [Editor: See "The Origen of Folly," *The Voice of Elijah*®, January 1993.] So let me briefly outline Augustine's contribution to that fiasco. As I stated in that article, Origen's dumbness was almost single-handedly responsible for turning the Church away from an understanding of *The Apostolic Teaching* in which the Scriptures had been *understood parabolically* for over a century and a half. He did that by asserting that they should be *interpreted allegorically*.

You should pay close attention to the contrast I made between the two phrases *understood parabolically* and *interpreted allegorically*. Prior to the time of Origen (ca. A.D. 185–254), interpretation of the Scriptures was nowhere near the universal practice it has become since he propagated his lie. Those in the Early Church who understood *and believed* the Truth of *The Apostolic Teaching* had no reason to interpret the Scriptures. It was only after the Church lost *The Apostolic Teaching* that people began interpreting the Scriptures for themselves.

Another important thing to note in regard to Origen's goofiness, however, is the fact that he appealed to other Church leaders on the basis of a theory of interpretation that his mentor, Clement of Alexandria, borrowed from Philo of Alexandria, which he, in turn, had derived from Greek Stoic philosophy. Consequently, after Origen, Christian theology based its categories of thought not on the Bible but on philosophy. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to see the danger in that promiscuous practice: What if the categories of thought in Greek philosophy do not precisely correspond with the categories of thought in the Scriptures? What do you do then? Nonetheless, the die was cast, and Christian theology has ever since maintained an ongoing symbiotic tie to Greek philosophy.

For more than a century and a half after Origen died, the Church drifted from one Council to the next, with Church leaders all the while trying to find a cogent way to harmonize statements made in the

Scriptures with the philosophical categories of thought they found in the dominant Greek philosophy known as Neoplatonism. To varying degrees, they succeeded. Their success can be seen in the formulated creeds of the Church. However, just when Satan needed a powerful leader to speak for the Church while his stooge Constantine forged a church-state union, onto the stage walked the most influential theologian the Church has ever known—St. Augustine. Which philosophical categories of thought should he vigorously propound but those of Neoplatonism? It shouldn't take a blind man long to see he had to be Satan's man.

Augustine's theology was the catalyst that finally broke the link between the old way of thinking found in *The Apostolic Teaching* and the new way of thinking embodied in Neoplatonic categories of thought. After Augustine, Church leaders no longer felt as greatly beholden to the *parabolic imagery* of *The Apostolic Teaching* as they had before. Therefore, they felt no urgent need to harmonize the categories of thought they found in the Bible with those of philosophy. They merely read the Bible within the framework of philosophical categories of thought and formulated their theology accordingly. That was because Augustine and Constantine gave the Church an entirely new way of looking at itself and the world around it. That perspective endured for well over a millennium.

At the time of the Protestant Reformation, however, Protestant Reformers found fault with the leaders of the Roman Catholic church-state because they were both unwilling and unable to *make a hard and fast distinction between* the Church and the world—between Believers and unbelievers. Protestant Reformers sought to make that distinction—at least on paper. In so doing, they unwittingly threw themselves headlong into a pitched battle with the Frankenstein monster that Constantine stitched together and Augustine brought to life with his Neoplatonic theology. By and large, that freak of nature prevented the Reformers from *making* their written *distinction between* Believer and unbeliever a reality. History itself testifies that Roman Catholic states merely became Protestant states, with Henry VIII being the prime example of an unbelieving Catholic who converted to Protestantism.

It is, indeed, a wry fact of history that Protestant Reformers appealed to the writings of Augustine—a theologian who contributed so much to Constantine's church-state. We should at least ask ourselves what

they saw in what he wrote that made them consider him a kindred spirit. The answer turns out to be his insistence that mankind is completely and morally depraved—that is, his argument that the historic Christian doctrine of original sin is right on target. Behind that seemingly orthodox facade, however, lurked a pompous, pious Pretender who had an ear to hear what Satan wanted to say to the Church as well as the eloquence necessary to make sure others listened. To understand what Augustine said to his generation, however, you must understand his mind-set.

Augustine was for nine years associated with the Manichæans, a gnostic Christian sect which insisted it was the only true Christianity. In actuality, its sole link to Christianity was the fact that, like all other Christian gnostic groups, its teachings were nothing more than a remythologization of the *mythological imagery* that Moses and the Prophets mocked when they *talked about The Teaching*. Therefore, in the Manichæan system, the world is the product of a conflict between mythological forces of light and darkness. The souls of men are particles of light trapped in the darkness of matter, and Christ is a Redeemer Who enables these captive particles of light to escape the darkness of the flesh and return to the light of the spirit. For this reason the Manichæans believed sexual propagation of the flesh was a service to the realm of darkness. Consequently, those who attained to the highest order of the Manichæan “elect” were celibate. You can see from this where Augustine may have derived his aversion to sexual passion.

Augustine joined the Manichæans as a member of the lower order of “hearers,” who were permitted to marry out of deference to human weakness. And for quite some time after that, he apparently believed he had found the Truth in their ridiculous teachings. But when Manichæan leaders could not answer his increasingly more difficult questions, he became disillusioned with their goofiness and moved on. After hearing St. Ambrose, the bishop of Milan, preach, he briefly considered Christianity as an option, only to reject it in favor of Neoplatonism. In the Neoplatonic writings, he once again was certain he had found the Truth.

According to Plotinus, the greatest exponent of Neoplatonism, the universe is a series of degradations from absolute unity. Self-conscious mind (spirit) arises from the transcendent One (God), Who is both the real

and the good. From mind comes soul (life), and the soul functions as the intermediary between spirit and sense. Since the One (God) is both the real and the good, and matter is the lowest product of the supreme unity, the greatest potential of evil is identified with unformed matter, which is the greatest deviation from the One. In contrast to the One, Who is, we must remember, the real and the good, evil is the least real, being nothing more than an absence of all good. Therefore, to attain to the good, we must “return into ourselves,” where our spirit links us to the ultimate reality—the One Who is the real and the good.

As you can see, Neoplatonism is nothing more than high-minded philosophical tripe—the coalesced ruminations of darkened minds *subjectively* searching for someone or something to replace the God Who is *objectively*—not *subjectively*—revealed in the Scriptures. Nevertheless, Augustine readily succumbed to their silliness, just as he had fallen for the distorted view of reality propounded by the Manichæans. And in this way, Satan prepared his man mentally for the critical mission of charting a new course for the Church. The only thing that remained for Satan to accomplish at that point was to somehow convince Augustine he had finally met God. Not surprisingly, Satan orchestrated that most meaningful mystical moment for Augustine before the fool even converted to Christianity.

In the seventh book of his *Confessions*, Augustine describes how, during an intense time of Neoplatonic spiritual introspection, he suddenly found God within himself. There is no mention of him having heard the Gospel preached, no recognition of the fact that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of Christ (Rom. 10:17). There is only the abysmal pronouncement of an abject idiot who suddenly and *subjectively* decided he had met God—the “Changeless Light” (Can you hear the Manichæan in him talking?) Who is (he had been told) the Source within us all from which we derive an intuitive recognition of all truth and goodness (there’s the Neoplatonist squawking). In other words, the Manichæan-influenced Neoplatonic philosopher Augustine wasn’t about to surrender his will to the angry God of Israel revealed in the Scriptures. He fully intended to find some other god within himself who would allow him the final say as to what was and was not true.

As you can see from the “Changeless Light” nonsense, Augustine never completely relinquished the

Christian gnostic concepts he learned from the Manichæans. He merely blended them together with things he learned by reading the Neoplatonic writers. Having prepared his man in this way, Satan then directed Augustine to the Church, where he finally allowed him immediate relief from an apparently incessant sexual urge.

Once inside the Church, Augustine set out to formulate his own distinct brand of Christian theology and impress it on the Church. In that theology, matter is not identified with evil, as it is in Manichæism and Neoplatonism. It is instead good because God created it in an act of creative love. The universe is indeed an ordered system, but not one in which there are various degrees of good and evil. There are only degrees of being. Those things which have lesser value on the scale of being were intended by God to subordinate themselves to those with higher value. Therefore, the body should submit to the spirit, and the spirit should submit to God. Since love is the highest good and is the motive that impels us to properly value all things, we attain Christian perfection by subordinating the body to the spirit.

Now we come to the part of Augustine's theology where Satan's viewpoint is most clearly visible. In Augustine's view, knowledge of the Truth is not something that comes to an individual from any outside source. It comes from within one's self. Since everyone must find the Truth within himself, a human teacher can do nothing more than help a student see what he already knows without being aware of it. A person is able to see the Truth of Christianity, however, only because Christ is the revealing Word of God, an "inward Teacher" Who will enable anyone to see the Truth if they will only listen to Him. In other words, since Satan's man had never heard the *objective Truth* of the Gospel preached and had never believed that Truth himself, he wants us to ignore what the Apostle Paul wrote about the crucial role the Evangelist plays in the salvation process:

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

*confess with your mouth Jesus {as} Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. For the Scripture says, "WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED." For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same {Lord} is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call upon Him; for "Whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved." How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? **And how shall they preach unless they are sent?** Just as it is written, "HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GLAD TIDINGS OF GOOD THINGS!"*  
(Romans 10:6–15)

It should be obvious to every True Believer that Augustine knew nothing about the *objective* Word of God that comes to a person only when he hears the Gospel preached. Nevertheless, the Protestant Reformers appealed to his writings in defense of the authority of the Scriptures. Why? In part because they did not understand his Neoplatonist mind-set or what he *meant* by his references to Christ as the Word of God. But they did so primarily because they desperately needed any kind of ammunition they could find in their battle against the Roman Catholic claim concerning papal authority. They knew Augustine had fought vociferously against the Pelagian contradiction of the historic doctrine of original sin and, since they knew that doctrine was true, they *assumed* he stood with them on other points as well. He didn't, but I haven't the time to show that here. I can only tell you where Augustine and Calvin agree in regard to the doctrine of original sin.

As I have already stated, St. Augustine was a Neoplatonist. Neoplatonists were concerned with a knowledge of truth—all truth, any kind of truth—which they believed came solely from introspection. Therefore, for Augustine the Neoplatonist, knowledge of the Truth of Christianity could only come from within as one listened to the voice of Christ, the resident Word of God, speaking from within. John Calvin, on the other hand, was a Protestant Reformer. The Reformers were concerned with a knowledge of the Truth of the Scriptures. For Calvin, knowledge of that Truth could



only come from the Scriptures as one listened to the voice of Christ, the resident Word of God, speaking from the Scriptures.

As you can see, the Neoplatonic philosopher Augustine and the Protestant Reformer John Calvin do agree, but only on one thing: You have no hope of ever coming to a knowledge of the Truth unless you hear Christ, the Word of God, speak and you believe. And that, in a nutshell, is also the crux of the doctrine of original sin as far as the Apostle Paul is concerned. Man is lost, standing squarely under the wrath of God, and he can do nothing to save himself. Only by hearing and believing the Word of Christ—as it is preached by someone who has been sent to preach that Word—can he be born again. Even then the Spirit of Christ must enable him to hear and believe because his sinful condition prevents him from doing so on his own.

The point I want to make is this: The concern of both Augustine and Calvin in defending the doctrine of original sin is not how one can be saved, it is how one can attain a knowledge of the Truth *so as to be saved*. Both agree that can only happen through the divine agency of Jesus Christ, the resident Word of God. But they disagree on where that Word resides. While I agree in the main with John Calvin’s view of how one attains a knowledge of the Truth, I disagree completely with St. Augustine—on just about everything. But that is only because I disagree with his Neoplatonist mind-set. I have somewhat more confidence that John Calvin actually understood what he was *talking about*. That is, I have reason to believe he had been born again.

In the years since the Protestant Reformation, the doctrine of original sin has been twisted and distorted beyond all reason. As you are probably already aware, it has become inextricably intertwined with the issue of predestination. Yet it should be nothing more than an explanation of why, since Adam was the one who sinned, the rest of us have been made to suffer. If you want to understand why that is, you must take another look at what the Apostle Paul wrote:

*Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—for until the Law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to*

*come. But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many. And the gift is not like {that which came} through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment {arose} from one {transgression} resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift {arose} from many transgressions resulting in justification. For if by the transgression of the one, **death reigned through the one**, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men.*

*(Romans 5:12–18)*

Did you notice that Paul is not *talking about* the sinfulness of mankind? Instead, the focus of what he says is on *death reigning* over us because all men have been condemned to death. However, if you don’t understand his mind-set in regard to death, you have no idea at all as to what he *meant* by what he said. If you have any doubt that death is the focus of his statements, all you have to do is keep right on reading:

*For as through the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous. And the Law came in that the transgression might increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, that, as **sin reigned in death**, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

*(Romans 5:19–21)*

That seems fairly clear, doesn’t it? Adam sinned, and the rest of us “were made sinners.” After that, “sin reigned in death.” His point is, sin somehow controls us through the power that death holds over us. But he hasn’t yet told us enough about his view of death for us to understand what he is *talking about*. Don’t worry; he will. He goes on to explain how Believers have been freed from the power of death:

*Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism*

into *death*, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with {Him} in the likeness of His *death*, certainly we shall be also {in the likeness} of His resurrection.  
(Romans 6:3–5)

By now it should be obvious to all but the most dense among us that Paul is speaking in terms of some extremely specific *parabolic imagery*. He is reminding the Christians at Rome that because they have been *parabolically* joined to Christ in His death, they can now *parabolically* experience new life through that union. It may not be obvious to all, but his point is, death no longer reigns over the one who has believed the Truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. But, having told Believers how they can escape the bonds of death, he goes on:

... knowing this, that our old self was crucified with {Him,} that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin, once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.  
(Romans 6:6–10)

Let me say this for the benefit of those who have not read all that I have written or stated elsewhere: In this passage, Paul is speaking in terms of the *parabolic imagery* that Moses and the Prophets used to describe the death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. His point is, sin maintains its control over a person through death. Therefore, the easiest way to be free from sin is to do away with death. He tells us that is possible only through a *parabolic* union with Christ—not in His life, but in His death. That is because death no longer holds the power of sin over the One Who has died and risen again. Paul still hasn't told us what he *means* by his *parabolic* use of the term *death*, but He gives us a rather good clue in this next passage:

Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone {as} slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of *sin resulting in death*, or

of *obedience resulting in righteousness*? But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, **you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed**, and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.  
(Romans 6:16–18)

Did you see it? Did you catch just a brief glimpse of Paul's mind-set—what he *means* by death? I doubt you did. You are most likely still too caught up in your own modern Western mind-set. So let me spell it out for you. In this passage, Paul is *talking about* obedience. That much is obvious. He says that if you obey "that form of teaching to which you were committed," you become "slaves of righteousness." He's referring to *The Apostolic Teaching* that he and the other Apostles taught—in total agreement. That part of the obedience equation is easy enough to understand. But what do you obey if you don't obey *The Teaching*?

Most folks would say you obey sin because Paul says we are slaves of sin. But you need to look a bit more closely at what the Apostle said here if you want to understand why he says that. He has clarified the issue for you somewhat by closely identifying sin and death in his earlier statements. However, he has done that because, as he already told you, sin holds power over you through death. The Truth is, the Apostle is using the word *sin* in this passage as a synonym for *disobedience*.

Can you see how the phrases "of sin resulting in death" and "of obedience resulting in righteousness" are parallel? If you change the word *sin* to *disobedience*, they become exact opposites: "of disobedience resulting in death" and "of obedience resulting in righteousness." Now you can see his point more clearly: Death is the opposite of righteousness. I've already told you more times than I can count that righteousness comes only by belief in the Truth. Therefore, Paul's point is, the one who believes *The Apostolic Teaching* becomes obedient to it and, as a result, a slave of righteousness. The one who does not believe *The Apostolic Teaching* remains disobedient to it and, therefore, a slave of sin, obeying death. But what is he referring to when he uses the term *death*? He spells that out for you a bit later:

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. For

*what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God {did:} sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and {as an offering} for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able {to do so;} and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. (Romans 8:1–8)*

I tried to make it easy for you to see the Truth by bolding the only part of that passage that you actually need to read in order to understand what death is. Death is “the mind set on the flesh.” Paul is giving us a *parabolic* definition of death, and he expects us to use it. Therefore, I will. Knowledge of and belief in *The Apostolic Teaching* is the only way anyone can ever have a mind completely set on the Spirit. Ignorance of that *Teaching* or belief in anything that contradicts it is the quickest way there is to maintain a “mind set on the flesh.” Knowing that, you should be able to understand what Paul has in mind when he uses the term *death*. He is referring to an inherited *state of being* in which people are *parabolically* blind, that is, they do not understand and/or believe the Truth of *The Apostolic Teaching*. Their miserable circumstance could be because they have not yet heard the Truth preached or it may be because they have heard it preached and rejected it. Either way, sin reigns in death over them because death—the mind set on the flesh—retains its power over anyone who does not understand and believe the Truth of *The Teaching*.

I said earlier that “we stand under the wrath of God not so much because we inherited Adam’s sin nature, but because we inherited the *state of being* God imposed on him because of his sin.” Perhaps now you can better understand what I *meant* by that. If not, remind me to explain it to you sometime. After all, I understand your mind-set because I’ve been there: Ignorance of the Truth is a *state of being* into which all the offspring of Adam are born. Yet if salvation can be attained only by hearing and believing the Truth, you can see why most folks are headed for Hell. The *state of being* they inherited will never change, not because

change is not possible for them, but because they will not allow Jesus Christ, the *Living Word* of God, to effect that most phenomenal change in their inherited *state of being*. Lacking that change, they will remain, as John Calvin accurately insisted, completely devoid of the rational ability to understand the Truth.

*Editor: Would you please explain the meaning of the Parable of the Sower (Matt. 13:3–9, 18–23)? I know a lot of people think they already understand this parable because it’s one of the few parables where Jesus’ explanation is included in the Bible. Yet it’s obvious that most Christians really don’t understand Christ’s explanation or they wouldn’t still believe in “once saved, always saved.” So would you please explain this parable in greater detail to our readers?*

*Elijah:* Sure. But since I can’t adequately explain that parable in isolation from several other *seed* parables, I’ll do it in an article.

*Editor: I have heard you say that the Truth of God’s Word is not the only form of truth under assault these days. While it is obvious that Satan has a lot to gain by destroying or distorting the Truth of God’s Word, what does he gain by distorting the truth in so many other areas that have no connection to God’s Word? Is he trying to create such a state of total confusion in regard to everything that people just give up on trying to find the truth to anything? Or is he simply laying the groundwork for his final, great delusion?*

*Elijah:* I don’t recall making that statement, but I’ll take your word for it since I’ve thought a lot about it over the years. But to ask why Satan feels he has to lie to us about anything and everything is a lot like asking why a baby cries. Who knows? Sometimes he’s sick, sometimes he’s wet, sometimes he’s hungry, sometimes (especially back before landfills became the babies’ bathroom) he has just been poked by a pin. But he always cries because that is what babies do. They communicate their discomfort by crying. Satan and his lying are just like a baby crying. He lies to us for various reasons, and his reasons are not always clearly discernable. But he always lies because that is how he communicates his hatred for mankind.

It is easy to see why Satan has lied to us about the Truth of the Gospel and *The Apostolic Teaching*. Those



things are “*The Way*” by which we mortals can put on immortality. And it is just as easy to see why he has lied to us concerning the ubiquitous Pretender. He has put Pretenders in the Church to snare any and all Believers who can be enticed away from the Truth they believed when they were born again. But Satan has not restricted his lies to things that will rob men of all hope of salvation. By no means. He has always used lies to make the lives of as many as possible as miserable as possible. That is evidently why one of the areas of knowledge in which he is most actively propagating his lies today is in the field of medicine. I’ll tell you what he has done and is doing in that regard, knowing full well that to most folks, especially medical doctors, I’ll come across as a raving lunatic.

As you know, I recently broke free from a chronic illness to which Satan had me bound in ignorance for over fourteen years. I had been diagnosed by medical specialists several years ago and told there was absolutely nothing they could do for me. In fact, my own physician told me that again in January of this year—six weeks after I “accidentally” stumbled on to the Truth concerning what was causing my illness. But I have to admit, I asked her about my condition just to make sure that the knowledge of medical doctors had not advanced beyond the level at which it was when I was first diagnosed. It hadn’t. But mine had. By that time, I knew exactly what causes fibromyalgia, that is, chronic fatigue, muscle weakness, and mental fog, to name just a few symptoms, and I also knew what I could do to get rid of it. I did, and I have. If you need evidence of that, I can provide it. I could barely lift 220 pounds before last December; now I regularly lift 400. But I started gaining strength only because I took the advice of a doctor practicing medicine outside the American Medical Association.

Unfortunately, most folks living in the United States today have no idea they are suffering needlessly because leaders of the American Medical Association fell for one of Satan’s most ingenious ruses during the last half of the nineteenth century and the first few decades of the twentieth. And they wouldn’t believe you even if you told them. Nevertheless, I’ll explain his deception for the benefit of all who will.

To see how Satan has lied to us concerning the secret of how to get well and stay healthy, all you have to do is watch the medical segment of the daily news. It comes to us compliments of the American Medical

Association and the giant pharmaceutical companies. First, they tell us that we need to eat right, get plenty of exercise, and take time for rest and relaxation. The only problem with that is, nearly everyone over the age of twenty-five is already in a state of diminished health because they failed to do those things when they were younger. So that advice isn’t going to make things right for all that many people. In my case, I could have slept (and did) twelve hours a night and still not have felt rested. I could have eaten all the right foods and continued to feel terrible. That’s why Satan makes sure the second half of the medical segment of the news promotes the big lie: That some new drug is just what you need to whip you back into shape. If you buy into that scam, the older you get, the more likely you are to succumb to polypharmacy rather than to die of old age.

The Truth is, the healing philosophy of the American Medical Association is based in large part on the work of Louis Pasteur, a phenomenal individual who developed vaccines for animals with rabies, anthrax, and cholera, as well as the pastuerization process used to kill germs in raw milk. Pasteur’s view of the practice of medicine was one in which synthetic drugs could provide a first line of defense against external threats to the health and well-being of all living creatures, including mankind. Consequently, the American Medical Association today is married to the giant pharmaceutical companies and their search for the next magic potion they can squeeze into a pill.

Pasteur’s philosophy with regard to the practice of medicine was not the only one propounded during the late nineteenth century. During his lifetime, Pasteur engaged in a lively ongoing scientific debate with Claude Bernard, a fellow French scientist who also made significant contributions to the field of medicine. Bernard disputed Pasteur’s belief that drugs are the best line of defense against disease. In Bernard’s view, the body can easily protect itself against external threats unless its own internal defenses have somehow been compromised. Therefore, he argued it would be better for doctors to bolster the body’s own immune system—by changing it’s “internal environment”—than to wait until we get sick and then rely on some artificial means of protection.

To prove Bernard’s point, the adherents of his philosophy conducted some extremely crazy experiments on themselves—in at least one case drinking water contaminated with millions of cholera bacteria—



without suffering any ill effects. They made their point, but by that time nobody in the American Medical Association was listening. So today we have medical doctors pushing pills for drug companies instead of focusing on the primary cause of illness—a compromised immune system. Should you care to dispute the fact that medical doctors today are little more than drug pushers, try to recall the last time you went to your doctor complaining of some illness and came away without a prescription.

Don't get me wrong. Medical doctors today do a tremendous amount of good—in some cases. In others, they unintentionally do more harm than good. That's because their flaw is not in what they *do* right, it is in what they *believe* wrong. Like everybody else, doctors *act in accordance with what they believe*. And what they believe concerning the best way to heal the body is fatally flawed.

The medical philosophy of most members of the American Medical Association is not something they have ever thought all that much about. And the average member of the AMA is not in a position to consider anything beyond the limited philosophy of healing that Satan made sure he learned in medical school. Furthermore, he is too busy practicing medicine now to entertain the possibility that his philosophy might come up short. He was educated in a school sanctioned by the American Medical Association, and his ongoing education is, for the most part, controlled by the giant pharmaceutical companies and medical journals like *The New England Journal of Medicine*. In other words, most medical doctors are ignorant of the Truth and will remain that way until they die. There are a few, however, like Dean Ornish, who have seen a better way.

In trying to determine the best way to treat my own condition without access to the antifungal drugs they keep locked up in the pharmacy, I came across the following caustic criticism of the members of the American Medical Association—by one of their own. It was extremely enlightening to me to discover that Satan's lie has long been driven by the profit motive—man's age-old love affair with money:

*Immunologist Alan S. Levin, M.D., of San Francisco, a member of the American Medical Association, the California Medical Association, and the San Francisco Medical Society, is a maverick even when it comes to accumulating credentials within the modern medical*

*Establishment. He has gathered many more than is usual. Having served in Vietnam as a flight surgeon with the U.S. Marine Corps, Dr. Levin is presently a member of the Medical Quality Assurance Review Committee of the State of California and an Adjunct Associate Professor of Immunology in the Department of Dermatology at the University of California School of Medicine in San Francisco. He is a Certified Diplomate of both the Board of Allergy and Immunology and a Certified Diplomate of both the Board of Pathology and the Board of Clinical Pathology, a Fellow of the American College of Pathologists, a Fellow of the American Society of Clinical Pathologists, a Fellow of the American Academy of Allergy and Immunology, a Fellow of the American Association of Clinical Chemists, a Fellow of the American College of Emergency Physicians, and a Fellow of the American Academy of Environmental Medicine. He is also a recipient of the American Cancer Society Faculty Research Award. You might correctly conclude from these credentials and honors that Dr. Levin is no wild-eyed kook with "off-the-wall" ideas about current medical practices.*

*At the 1983 Yeast-Human Interaction Symposium in Birmingham, and again at the 1985 symposium in San Francisco, Dr. Levin repeatedly referred to the "bible" of medical practice, The New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM). He showed slides to illustrate that it is the main medical source to which members of the American electronic and press media turn for dramatic headline news. To be published in the NEJM's pages is even more prestigious for research physicians than in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA).*

*Dr. Levin emphasized that this "is a peer-reviewed journal, publishing very august material, which sets the standard of practice in the United States." Then he described his content study on the September 8, 1983, issue of the NEJM: it contained fifty-one pages of scientific editorial matter and ninety-nine pages of pharmaceutical advertising. By weight three-fifths and by volume two-thirds of the NEJM was filled with drug ads.*

*"What's happening in the United States today is that the drug industry is setting the standard of medical practice. Drug companies have invaded the academic institutions. As much as two-thirds of the research funding in most major institutions comes directly or indirectly from drug industry interests; therefore, chemotherapy is dominant," declared Dr. Levin. "Immunotherapy is secondary. The market for immunotherapy in the U.S. is in the range of \$50 million. In contrast, the market for just one drug,*

antihistamines, is about \$2 billion. The sale of drugs is more profitable than any other industrial product. There's little wonder why health industrialists have taken over the practice of medicine....

The NEJM helps to create and sustain an environment in which our medical science is dictated by the interests of the drug industry that is promoting its financial welfare. We see this with its published articles advocating cancer chemotherapy, Inderal® [a drug that lowers blood pressure by decreasing heart output, manufactured by Ayerst Laboratories, New York City] for delaying second heart attacks, and other items," said the acclaimed immunologist. His point is simple: Since treatment of the Candida syndrome requires fewer drugs but more immune system buildup and better nutritional support, prestigious journals such as the NEJM would not have much interest in the condition as a disease entity. You aren't likely to see articles on polysystemic chronic candidiasis published in its pages. The ordinary physician who depends on journals like the NEJM will, most likely, miss the Candida connection.

(J. Trowbridge, M.D. and M. Walker, D.P.M., *The Yeast Syndrome* [New York: Bantam Books, 1986], pp. 72–74.)

If Dr. Levin was chagrined at the amount of advertising he found in *The New England Journal of Medicine* in 1983, I wonder how he must feel about *Time* magazine today. In a recent issue of eighty-eight pages, I counted nine pages of drug ads. That's over one-tenth by weight and volume. And every bit of it is aimed not at medical doctors but at you and me—rank laymen—trying to convince us that we need to *tell our doctor* what we want him to prescribe for us. I don't know about you, but if I were practicing medicine today and some wag came in with a drug company ad in his hand, I would tend to feel that my greatest asset was a license to write prescriptions rather than any great knowledge I possessed as to the best way to diagnose and treat legitimate medical conditions. But enough sarcasm; I must get on with my tirade.

As you may have guessed from reading the last paragraph of the quotation above, the cause of my fibromyalgia—chronic fatigue and muscle weakness—was nothing more than an overgrowth of Candida yeast in my intestinal tract. I learned from personal experience how easy it is to get rid of that blight. I discovered from reading about it, however, that very few

medical doctors are able to diagnose and treat the condition. So, unless I miss my guess, millions (perhaps tens of millions) of people in the United States today are—to one degree or another—suffering the effects of exactly the same chronic illness that I had for over fourteen years. I say that because we live in the age of antibiotics, and the use of antibiotics is one of the most common ways that people get yeast infections. If you are a woman, I assume you already knew that. But maybe you didn't know this: The same little buggers that cause *that* kind of yeast infection can also cause a yeast infection in your intestine. So if you sometimes feel a discomfort in your belly, it just might be your intestines itching.

The thing that I find absolutely astounding about Satan's deception of the medical community is the fact that it is driven by the greed of men who are more interested in making money than in helping people get well and stay well. I'm not talking about medical doctors; I'm talking about drug manufacturers. Medical doctors have been duped by drug makers in the same way the rest of us have been duped. So they don't know any better way to treat illness than to push pills. Yet Claude Bernard pointed out a better way more than a century ago: If the immune system of the body is not compromised in some way, it is perfectly capable of protecting the body from any outside (or inside) threat. Therefore, the best way to gain and maintain good health is to strengthen the immune system. Most medical doctors have no idea as to how to go about that because they weren't taught it in medical school. I didn't either six months ago. But since then, I have discovered that medical doctors in Europe and Asia do, and I intend to find out from them.

The one thing that makes the thought of medical doctors pushing drugs to the exclusion of nearly everything else so totally insidious is the well-known fact that every FDA-approved drug is a toxic chemical of some sort or another. Think about it: Why do you think they lock those little goodies up in a pharmacy and make us pay a doctor to bail them out? All right, I'll admit that one of the reasons they do that is to give incompetent doctors some reason to show up for work, but doctors who actually care about their patients are afraid we might do ourselves in with prescription drugs. They really shouldn't worry. Their incompetent counterparts are already doing an extremely good job of that.

If you think I'm being too hard on medical doctors, you obviously haven't been listening to the news lately: The American Medical Association recently admitted that prescription drugs are the fifth leading cause of death here in the United States. That is absolutely astounding! It seems to me that somebody should be asking the members of the AMA some hard-ball questions, like: Why is it that the people who are supposed to be helping us heal are instead killing us off more quickly than all but four diseases? Could it be they are ignorantly being used as Satan's pawns in one of his more elaborate deceptions?

Do you know how FDA-approved drugs kill? By smothering the immune system. Every drug is toxic in one way or another. And the immune system reacts to every toxin in exactly the same way: It tries to remove it from the body as quickly as possible. The three organs most responsible for that removal are the liver and two kidneys. Therefore, if your immune system is already compromised—as mine was for over fourteen years by a Candida yeast infection—your liver and kidneys may not be quite up to par. Therefore, those potent little pills that your doctor prescribes can easily become the source of an even greater problem than the illness they are supposed to cure. They can completely overwhelm the ability of the liver and kidneys to remove their toxin from your body, and you can end up six feet under—in short order.

I stated earlier that the leaders of the American Medical Association created the circumstances which led to the current situation in which medical doctors are pushing pills for major pharmaceutical companies rather than focusing on the general health and well-being of their patients. They did that about a century ago by ensuring that most states would refuse to grant a license to practice medicine to graduates of any medical school not sanctioned by their most august organization. As a result, there are over 650,000 M.D.s affiliated with the AMA practicing medicine in the United States today. By contrast, there are a mere 1500 N.D.s (homeopathic doctors) practicing medicine. In other words, the AMA managed to gain for its members a virtual monopoly on the practice of medicine here in the United States. And they did it at a time when the U.S. government was intent on breaking up every other monopoly it could find. If you can't see the imprint of Satan's hand on that one, it's only because you like the sound of his voice.

Did you hear what I said? I said the members of the AMA have a *monopoly* on the practice of medicine here in the United States—the very thing that the United States government supposedly despises. Yet Congress has done nothing to break up that monopoly even though it had a hand in creating it. Congress has instead left it to the individual states to grant licenses to practice medicine. So the AMA controls the practice of medicine here in the United States indirectly through the influence its individual state chapters exert on state governments. That is a terribly unfortunate circumstance. It was an N.D. who told me how I could easily get rid of fibromyalgia—with products readily available in any health food store. Every M.D. I talked to over the past fourteen years said there was nothing he could do for me. Doesn't that strike you as strange?

In reading about my illness in "alternative medicine" books, I also discovered that the history of the American Medical Association is not nearly as sterling as its members would have us all believe. Prior to the AMA taking over the practice of medicine here in the United States, there were no less than four different indigenous schools of thought regarding the craft. The orthodox allopaths—"regulars"—favored bloodletting. They went on to become members of the AMA. The Thomsonians rejected the methods of the regulars and used only herbal preparations. But they gradually died off during the nineteenth century. (I trust that was not from taking their own preparations.) Homeopathic doctors practiced—and still do—homeopathy using an extremely dilute form of herbal medicine invented in Germany. And finally, eclectics, ever true to their name, used whatever method seemed to work. The eclectics were eventually discredited by the regulars and forced out of medicine. But if history could be rewritten, we might be better off today had the eclectics won out. Maybe then we would have access to a whole host of reliable medical remedies rather than just synthetic drugs from which some giant pharmaceutical company can reap a lucrative seventeen-year patent right. And maybe medical doctors would have a better philosophy regarding the practice of medicine.

One would hope that the only completely unwarranted bonehead maneuver in which the AMA has ever been involved is the one that concerns the natural remedy echinacea. If it isn't, the organization certainly must have an even more checkered history than I have been able to uncover. Let me enlighten you



concerning the tawdry facts. They concern a botanical preparation made from echinacea, a plant native to the North American continent. The root of that plant has long been used as a natural remedy. But it was first introduced to the medical community in the United States by an eclectic doctor practicing medicine in Pawnee City, Nebraska. In 1885, he sent a root of the plant—along with a preparation he had made from it—to the Lloyd Brothers pharmaceutical company in Cincinnati, Ohio.

The principals of the Lloyd Brothers pharmacy conducted clinical trials on the preparation the good doctor had made and found that it actually worked as well as he said it would. Keep in mind these men were legitimate pharmacists, supplying all kinds of pharmaceuticals to medical doctors of all persuasions throughout the United States. So they were surprised that the preparation had any value at all, since they were living in the era of patent medicine and snake oil salesmen at a time when medical quackery and exaggerated claims concerning cure-alls were commonplace. Nonetheless, because the doctor's echinacea preparation worked, they added it to their catalogue. Other doctors ordered it, their patients used it, and everybody found that it worked. All was going well—so far.

Within fourteen years, echinacea headed the list of the most popular natural medical treatments used by doctors here in the United States. Nearly twenty-five years later it was still outselling every other botanical preparation by a margin of at least two to one. Why? Because the doctors who prescribed it and the people who used it knew that it worked—for some things.

But the regulars who controlled the AMA had already arbitrarily decided they didn't like natural preparations. So they arranged for the government to conduct clinical trials which were biased against echinacea. They used it to treat guinea pigs suffering from tetanus, septicemia, anthrax, botulism, and tuberculosis—in other words, things for which echinacea was not being used by most doctors. Not surprisingly, echinacea failed to effect a cure for any of these deadly conditions. Consequently, the regulars who controlled the AMA rejected it on the grounds that there was insufficient evidence that it had any therapeutic efficacy. If that line doesn't sound familiar to you, it should. It is the official position of the AMA regarding anything other than the patented synthetic prescription drugs supplied by the for-profit (make that a large profit) pharmaceutical

companies. But there is still more to the story of how Satan managed to lock us in to far-less-than-the-best medical treatment.

During the early part of this century, eclectic physicians were fighting to maintain the right to practice medicine alongside the regulars. They lost out, and one of the reasons why was because they advocated the use of echinacea as a medicine. They were discredited on the basis of the clinical trials the AMA had obviously biased in favor of their own position. The outcome of those trials became a significant part of the criteria Congress used in granting a charter to the regulars of the AMA but not to the eclectics. (In case you wonder why homeopathic doctors were allowed to continue to practice medicine, it was only because they asserted their rights under a grandfather clause.)

By 1937, the monopoly of the AMA was complete. That is also the last year you will find echinacea mentioned in any of the medical literature published here in the United States. It had performed its service for the regulars of the AMA and they quickly forgot about it. Fortunately for us, German doctors didn't. They had heard about the wonder drug that American doctors were using and ordered some echinacea seed from the Lloyd Brothers. Consequently, medical doctors in Germany spent the next sixty years doing the *legitimate* clinical trials on echinacea that should have been done here in the United States. That is why echinacea found its way back onto health food store shelves during the 1970s. Some folks proved it worked—for some things.

In case you didn't know it, German (and Asian) doctors are more like the eclectic doctors we used to have here in the United States than they are like the regulars of the AMA that we have now. Since German doctors have no ingrained bias against natural preparations, they conduct *honest* clinical trials to determine efficacy. Then they use whatever works. In the case of echinacea—as well as some two hundred other preparations made from the leaves, roots, and seeds of plants—they know it works. They know generally how it works. They know what to use it for. The same can be said for saw palmetto and St. John's wort. Have you heard of those two natural remedies? You should have. They are just a couple of the many botanical preparations that German doctors use because they know they work—for some things. And you can buy them in any health food store.



Medical doctors affiliated with the AMA prescribe Prozac or some other synthetic drug to treat mild depression here in the United States. Eighty percent of German doctors prescribe a natural preparation made from St. John's wort. Why? Because they conducted clinical trials and they know it works. Prozac can have serious side effects; St. John's wort has none to speak of. So why are American doctors still prescribing Prozac? Because that is what they have been taught to do—push pills for the pharmaceutical companies.

I can tell you from personal experience that saw palmetto works. I've been taking it for three years, and it works just as well, if not better than, the synthetic drug that my doctor prescribed. Not only that, it's cheaper. But I started taking it only because I had heard about it on television or read about it in a magazine, and the drug my doctor prescribed made me feel, well, sort of drugged. I didn't realize at the time that saw palmetto was being touted here in the United States because German doctors know a whole lot more than my doctor knows about how to treat some things.

It should be obvious I have no great respect for medical doctors who toe the official party line of the AMA. That's because I have no respect for anyone who is unwilling to diligently search out and accept the Truth. As far as I can tell, Satan has made sure the AMA is not about the business of seeking the Truth concerning the *best* way to prevent and cure disease. Its major concern seems to be maintaining its monopolistic control over the mind-set of those who practice medicine here in the United States. And it is a sad but true fact that it has been more than willing to use its close ties to the major drug manufacturers to maintain that control.

I will tell you I see a glimmer of hope that the practice of medicine here in the United States is going to change. The efforts to control medical costs on the part of the government, insurance companies, and managed healthcare plans are diametrically opposed to the AMA's bias in favor of the pharmaceutical companies and their zeal for ever-increasing profits. Natural preparations cost only a quarter to a third of what synthetic drugs cost, and many times they work just as well if not better. As more and more doctors become aware of the Truth in that regard, it can only drive a wedge into the cozy relationship that drug companies now have with the AMA. That may explain why they have started targeting their ads at you and me. They want us on their side.

Those who are trying to control medical costs haven't yet been able to see the fallacy in funding the drug companies' insane search for the next magic pill when cheaper and more effective alternatives are already readily available, but they may be getting the message. If and when they do, one would hope that Medicaid, Medicare, insurance companies, and HMOs would agree to pay only for the \$7500 cost of a diet regimen like the Ornish plan and not for the \$50,000 cost of an invasive and dangerous heart bypass operation. Maybe then the movement away from some of the crude methods employed by AMA doctors today and toward the better way of immunotherapy will actually begin in earnest. I am not overly optimistic in that regard, however, because most medical doctors firmly believe that writing prescriptions is central to the practice of medicine. It shouldn't be, but unfortunately, it is for them because they are unaware of the fact that there is a better way.

Now that I've mentioned reducing medical costs, let me give you an example that illustrates how the goals of the giant pharmaceutical companies run completely counter to common sense and good medicine. A whole host of studies has shown that beta-blockers and diuretics work just as well for hypertension as the calcium-channel blockers and ACE inhibitors now being peddled by drug company representatives and prescribed by the doctors they call on. Not only that, but beta-blockers and diuretics pose far less risks—the risk of heart attack and suicide being but two—and are cheaper. Therefore, a panel of cardiologists assembled by the National Institutes of Health has, for three years running, recommended that the less expensive drugs be used. Nevertheless, medical doctors continue to prescribe the more expensive (and for the drug companies, more profitable) calcium-channel blockers and ACE inhibitors over beta-blockers and diuretics by a ratio of nearly three to one. Why? Because they are firmly in thrall to the drug industry and obediently do what industry representatives tell them to do, either directly or indirectly: "Excuse me doc—I seen this here ad in *Time* magazine, and I was jest wunderun' ..."

The pharmaceutical companies have medical doctors and the American public in a headlock. If you don't believe that, you should cut back on the glue you've been sniffing. All you have to do is watch the news. Where do you think the hype concerning the latest miracle drug is coming from? It comes directly from the

drug companies. And they are getting bolder in their pursuit of higher profits. They are increasingly ignoring medical doctors *and* the American Medical Association in taking their message directly to you and me—folks who don't know a triglyceride from a tricycle.

We already know that legal drugs kill more of us every year than illegal drugs ever will. Yet once the FDA approves a drug, it's open season for any doctor who believes the drug companies' "magic bullet" propaganda. In case you weren't aware of it, a drug approved for one use can be prescribed by *any* doctor for *any* use. That goofy practice is called "prescribing off-label." It happens all the time, and the drug companies absolutely love it. As a matter of fact, they encourage it because it broadens the market for their drugs. They spend millions of dollars each and every year "educating" doctors in the fine art of prescribing drugs off-label. They do that by sending them a copy of any study that shows how an approved drug can be used for an unapproved purpose. Remember fen-phen? Lots of people who only wanted to lose weight wish they had never heard of it. Yet that dumbness never should have occurred. It was the direct result of incompetent doctors stupidly following a drug company's self-serving advice and prescribing off-label rather than following more reasonable guidelines.

Now I ask you, if you were a medical doctor here in the United States today: How much indignity would *you* endure for the sake of a dollar? It would seem to me that, at some point, a medical doctor with anything at all going on upstairs would conclude that something in what he has been taught doesn't add up. He would be right. European and Asian doctors may not be on the right track in all respects, but you can be sure that medical doctors in this country were derailed the early part of this century by shady political maneuvering.

We already know most medical doctors don't write legibly, yet the drug companies have—at Satan's behest—told them their highest and best value resides in their ability to write a prescription on a prescription pad. And the sad but true reality is, they continue to go along with Satan's charade because to do otherwise would not inure them to the ignorant people who walk through their door expecting to walk right back out with—what else but?—a prescription.

Increasingly, deluded people expect to get from a doctor a prescription for a lifestyle drug that serves no real medical purpose. And some doctors will write a

prescription for one of those drugs after nothing more than a brief phone conversation. They won't conduct a lab test to determine if a serious medical condition exists. All they do is take a credit card number and write a prescription. Under those circumstances, why keep up the pretense? Why not let the drug companies sell prescription drugs over the counter and be done with it? They are already doing that when prescription drugs lose their seventeen-year patent protection. So why not do away with doctors altogether and let ignorant folks follow their own ignorant instincts? They can't do much worse than incompetent doctors.

*Editor: In 2 Peter 3:14–16, Peter makes an interesting comment on the writings of the Apostle Paul. In verse 16, he says that many of the things Paul wrote in his letters were being distorted by individuals who were also guilty of distorting "the rest of the Scriptures." Unless I'm reading this wrong, Peter's statement implies he already viewed the letters of Paul as sacred writings on a par with the Hebrew Scriptures, which he refers to as "the rest of the Scriptures." This leads me to believe that Peter and Paul must have known that their writings were going to be of historic importance to the Church. I would assume that many other authors of both the Old and New Testaments probably knew that their writings were going to be of historic importance as well. Since you claim that God has called you to restore The Apostolic Teaching so that True Believers can return to the Lord in these Last Days, this makes your writings and your work of great importance as well. How does it make you feel to know that your work in these Last Days has a level of importance that parallels the work of Israel's spiritual forefathers? Does the perseverance and faith these men exhibited under great duress encourage you when things aren't going well?*

*Elijah: I suppose I should feel flattered to know that you feel that way, but I don't—not because you didn't mean it, but because the things you've said aren't true. The Truth is, the things I am doing are not of any great "historic importance," and they certainly do not have "a level of importance that parallels the work of Israel's spiritual forefathers." Moses, the Prophets, and the Apostles all wrote things that carefully explain—in cryptic detail—the Truth concerning God's plan for the salvation of mankind. What they said has, for the past eighteen hundred years, remained completely hidden*

in the *parabolic imagery* and Hebrew idioms whose *meaning* and *significance* they understood so well. My explanation of what they wrote is nothing at all in comparison to the revelation they *received*. All I'm doing is pointing out the when, where, why, and how of the things they said.

As far as "historic importance" is concerned, there isn't going to be time for my work to accrue any "historic" anything. If Jesus Christ doesn't return in my lifetime, the things I have written are going to be viewed as nothing more than the ramblings of a religious fanatic who went crazy at the turn of the millennium. I trust that I have already explained with sufficient emphasis that I am not founding any new church, not telling anybody what to do or how to do it, and not granting anyone authority to teach what I teach after I pass on—or while I'm still alive for that matter. All I am doing is explaining things that some folks need to know in order to be ready for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. So if someone takes it upon himself to perpetuate my beliefs by teaching them to others after I die, he will be doing so in direct contradiction of everything that I taught while I was still alive and kicking. I hope that tosses "historic importance" right out the window. The things that I teach are not intended for posterity. They will either be confirmed in this generation or they will go down as nothing more than a footnote to the turn of the millennium.

I realize that a lot of people find tremendous value in the work I have done to this point. Those folks should realize that I find tremendous value in their contribution to that work. Without them, I would still be trying to find a way—any way—to accomplish what God called me to do. They should also be aware that because of their willingness to help, a multitude of other folks will discover what they have already found. So, not only does my work not have any great "historic importance," if the Truth be known, it is not even "my work." It is "our work." And we fully intend to accomplish our work before Jesus Christ returns.

To answer the last part of your question, yes, the faith and perseverance of the men whom God used to accomplish His plan and purpose does encourage me. But the only one I can actually identify with is the Prophet Jonah. He and I have a whole lot more in common than I care to admit. I constantly find myself trying to go the other way even after it is obvious what God would have me do. And I have ended up in just as dire

a predicament as Jonah on several occasions as well. I'm convinced God allowed me to experience the debilitating effects of fibromyalgia up close and personal for the past fourteen years just to get His point across: Do what you know you are supposed to do and stop worrying about the outcome.

I have the utmost respect for Moses, and not just because he was the only man other than Adam that God ever talked to directly and explained *The Teaching*. I can't begin to imagine the tremendous joy that Moses must have felt as he stood in the Tabernacle and heard God explain the Truth concerning His purpose in Jesus Christ. Moses strikes me as a diffident man who was right at home herding sheep on the back side of the desert for forty years. Yet he never hesitated when God called him to put up with a stubborn bunch of crybabies, a pushy brother and sister, and a stubborn, pushy God for the last forty years of his life. I'm sure he would rather have celebrated his eightieth birthday by staying put and collecting a pension from his children. I would have. Instead, he did what God called him to do.

I also have a great deal of love and respect for the Apostle Paul. As I recall, I have mentioned somewhere in what I've written that I consider myself his disciple. If I haven't, I am now. Immediately after God called me, I spent six months memorizing one long passage after another from Paul's epistles. I learned what I needed to know about who God expected me to be by reading his letters to the churches. I see Paul as a stubborn, opinionated Jew to whom God revealed the Truth because He knew that He could count on him to remain just as stubborn, just as opinionated, and yes, just as Jewish as he had been before He called him. I like that about Paul. God didn't bother knocking the rough edges off of him, He just showed him the Truth He had hidden in the Hebrew Scriptures. That was all that the Pharisee in Paul needed. After that, he knew beyond a shadow of all doubt that he finally had the Truth he thought he had before God ever got hold of him.

I also feel an affinity for the Prophet Samuel, but I don't know exactly why. Perhaps it is because of the relationship he appears to have had with his mother Hannah—as shown by his willingness to fulfill her vow. I know I have always had a strong affection for my own mother and an intense desire to make her feel proud of me. But who knows why I feel the way I do about Samuel? I certainly don't. ■