



THE VOICE of ELIJAH

The Liar's Agent Putting His Spin on the Truth

But the interpretation is "spiritual," when one is able to show of what heavenly things the Jesus "according to the flesh" served as an example and a shadow, and of what future blessings the law contains a shadow. And, generally, we must investigate, according to the apostolic promise, "the wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world for the glory" of the just, which "none of the princes of this world knew."

And the same apostle says somewhere, after referring to certain events mentioned as occurring in Exodus and Numbers, "that these things happened to them figuratively, but that they were written on our account, on whom the ends of the world are come." And he gives an opportunity for ascertaining of what things these were patterns, when he says: "For they drank of the spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ."

And in another Epistle, when sketching the various matters relating to the tabernacle, he used the words: "Thou shalt make everything according to the pattern showed thee in the mount." Moreover, in the Epistle to the Galatians, as if upbraiding those who think that they read the law, and yet do not understand it, judging that those do not understand it who do not reflect that allegories are contained under what is written, he says: "Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? For it is written, Abraham had two sons; the one by the bond-maid, the other by the free woman. But he who was by the bond-maid was born according to the flesh; but he of the free woman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants," and so on.

Now we must carefully observe each word employed by him. He says: "Ye who desire to be under the law," not "Ye that are under the law;" and, "Do ye not hear the law?"—"hearing" being understood to mean

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“comprehending” and “knowing.” And in the Epistle to the Colossians, briefly abridging the meaning of the whole legislation, he says: “Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a festival, or of a new moon, or of Sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come.”

Moreover, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, discoursing of those who belong to the circumcision, he writes: “who serve for an ensample and shadow of heavenly things.” Now it is probable that, from these illustrations, those will entertain no doubt with respect to the five books of Moses, who have once given in their adhesion to the apostle, as divinely inspired; but do you wish to know, with regard to the rest of the history, if it also happened as a pattern?

We must note, then, the expression in the Epistle to the Romans, “I have left to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to Baal,” quoted from the third book of Kings, which Paul has understood as equivalent (in meaning) to those who are Israelites according to election, because not only were the Gentiles benefited by the advent of Christ, but also certain of the race of God. This being the state of the case, we have to sketch what seem to us to be the marks of the (true) understanding of Scriptures. And, in the first place, this must be pointed out, that the object of the Spirit, which by the providence of God, through the Word who was in the beginning with God, illuminated the ministers of truth, the prophets and apostles, was especially (the communication) of ineffable mysteries regarding the affairs of men.

Origen, “De Principiis,” Book iv, Chap. i, in Roberts and Donaldson (Eds.), *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (1885), Vol. 4, pp. 361–362.

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A Note From the Editor

Although the main focus of this column over the past two years has centered on Bible study, I have never promoted personal Bible study as the sole means whereby True Believers can understand the Truth of the Scriptures. I have continually stressed the fact that every True Believer, regardless of how diligently they study the Bible, needs to be taught the Truth by a legitimate Teacher called of God. The Early Church instituted the teacher/disciple relationship at God's behest because they knew that the complexities of God's Word—The Teaching—could not be understood by True Believers by merely reading the Scriptures.

Those who have been taught some of the more intricate details of The Teaching (the Monthly and Next Step Contributors) know very well that this is true. They will admit (if they are honest) that they have been taught things they would have never figured out on their own from reading the Scriptures. In many cases, they would not have even considered certain things to be true if they had not heard them explained by a legitimate Teacher. I can personally attest to this fact. Prior to my association with *The Voice of Elijah*®, I spent nearly a decade trying to understand many of the ambiguous statements of the Scriptures only to be frustrated time and time again by how little I could actually understand. My only consolation was that I was not alone in my ignorance. It soon became apparent to me that even those who claimed to understand the Scriptures were often as ignorant as I was. The difference between us, however, was that I recognized my ignorance, while most of them didn't.

So what about you? Do you recognize your own ignorance when it comes to understanding the meaning and significance of the things stated in the Scriptures? If you are honest and have spent any time at all seriously studying the Bible, you probably do. If you are intellectually dishonest and tend to skim through the text because you think you already understand what it says, you probably don't. One of the reasons I have stressed the importance of Bible study over the past two years is because I know that serious study of the Scriptures goes a long way toward convincing honest individuals of how little they understand and how much they need to be taught.

If you doubt this is true, I challenge you to read Leviticus, Job, the Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Zechariah, or any other book of the Old Testament and then honestly tell me that you understand the meaning and significance of everything stated in these books. I have no doubt that you cannot do so because I know how difficult it is to comprehend the relevance of the things stated in the Hebrew Scriptures. I can easily recall my own futile attempt years ago at trying to understand the Book of Isaiah. I remember thinking that if I just put enough time and effort into my study and applied my mind to it, I could understand this book. While I will admit that time, effort, and mental exertion did help me uncover a

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few nuggets of Truth, in the end I knew that the overall meaning and significance of what I read in Isaiah escaped me. Try as I might, I just couldn't make sense of the enigmatic statements I found in this book. That's why I eventually abandoned my study and told God that if He expected me to understand the message of Isaiah and the other Prophets, I needed help. It was sometime shortly thereafter that I received a mailer from *The Voice of Elijah*[®]; and the rest, as they say, is history.

During my study of Isaiah, I began to realize how little those who claim to understand the Truth of the Scriptures actually understand. This became apparent to me from the various commentaries I used to assist me in my study. It seemed that every time I turned to one of them for help they were unable to offer much insight beyond what I could already see. Other than providing some historical information (which I admit was helpful at times), seldom, if ever, did they adequately address (to my satisfaction) the underlying questions that an inquisitive person would naturally ask. Questions such as: *What* does this statement or passage mean? *Why* is it significant? *Why* did the author include this information in the text? *How* does it relate to everything else he has said? *What* message is he trying to get across to his readers/listeners? And finally, how does all of this apply to me as a Christian, if at all?

It soon became apparent that the "scholarly" commentators to whom I was looking for guidance (via their commentaries) didn't understand much more than I did—they only thought they did. Their lack of insight was exceeded only by their arrogance in thinking they were qualified to write a commentary in the first place. Sadly, this kind of arrogance is on constant display in the Church these days. If you doubt that, go to your local "Christian" bookstore sometime and count the number of "Christian" authors who think they are qualified to write a book (or books) on one subject or another. Based on the many books I have read, I can tell you that most of these authors have little, if anything, of value to teach True Believers—they only think they do.

My point is that I have learned a lot over the years about idiocy, arrogance, and those who think they know more than they do. Sadly, I have seen these qualities exhibited more than a few times in others as well as in myself. So when someone tries to tell me that they have little difficulty understanding the message of the Old Testament, I can't help but laugh to myself. I know the Truth is exactly the opposite. I have come to see that even True Believers are incapable of discerning the meaning and significance of what they read in the Old Testament on their own. I know they need a legitimate Teacher who can provide them insight into the mystery of the Scriptures before they can even begin to understand the *message* of the Scriptures. And I also know that the vast majority of "teachers" in the Church today lack the insight necessary to explain the mystery of the Scriptures because God never called them to teach.

That may sound like a brutal statement, but it's true. The reason I know it's true is because I have learned to scrutinize the words of those who claim to be Teachers by holding their teaching up to the Scriptures to see if it makes sense in light of the evidence presented therein. And what I have found is that the teaching of most "teachers" in the Church today either lacks substance or doesn't make sense in light of what the Scriptures actually say. That's why I have encouraged you to be diligent in Bible study. It's the only way you can verify whether the oral tradition (teaching) you hear taught is true.

You see, I now know that the Scriptures were not written in order to teach True Believers the Truth of The Teaching. They were written to provide True Believers enough objective evidence to allow them to confirm the accuracy, or inaccuracy, of whatever teaching (oral tradition) they hear taught. (See "The Holy Bible: What Is It? What Does It Mean? Who Wrote It? When and Why?" *The Voice of Elijah*[®], April 1997.) In case you hadn't noticed, that's exactly how the Berean Christians used the Hebrew Scriptures—to confirm the oral tradition (teaching) they heard taught by the Apostle Paul (Acts 17:11). Here's the account:

And the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea; and when they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, {to see} whether these things were so. Many of them therefore believed, along with a number of prominent Greek women and men.

(Acts 17:10–12)

This passage tells us three important things: (1) The Bereans used the Scriptures to confirm “the word” they heard taught by Paul; (2) many of them subsequently believed “the word” they heard because the Scriptures apparently confirmed it; and (3) “the word” that Paul proclaimed, i.e., the Word of God, was distinct and separate from the Scriptures. Did you catch that last point? Let me state it this way: The Word of God and the Scriptures are not one in the same. They are two separate and distinct entities. If you doubt that, go back and reread the passage above. It clearly makes a distinction between the Word of God that Paul preached and the Scriptures. It does not tell us these two are one and the same. It tells us that one (the Scriptures) was used to verify the other (the Word of God).

Contrary to what the blind guides in the Church would have you believe, the Word of God has always existed apart from the Scriptures. Think about it. How else could the Word of God have existed in the very beginning (John 1:1 ff.) when the Scriptures didn’t? How else could a man like Enoch have “walked” with God for over three hundred years (Gen. 5:22) at a time when there were no Scriptures to teach him about God? How else could Noah have been a “preacher of righteousness” to his generation (2 Pet. 2:5) when there were no Scriptures to tell him the message he should preach?

The only logical answer to these questions is that the Word of God—The Teaching—must have existed prior to the Scriptures being written, which, in fact, it did. The Teaching has always existed as an oral tradition that could be handed down from generation to generation without need of the written

Scriptures. Consequently, the Scriptures are not needed to teach the Word of God; they are needed to confirm that one has been accurately taught the Word of God. If you doubt that, go read the epistles of Paul and pay special attention to those passages where he quotes the Old Testament. What you will find is that he consistently uses the Hebrew Scriptures to validate and confirm some aspect of his teaching. In other words, he quotes from what is “written” because he knows it provides evidence to his readers that his teaching—The Apostolic Teaching—is true.

But watch out. False teachers do the same thing. They quote “proof texts” all the time to “prove” the validity of their teaching. That’s why they are so dangerous to True Believers. Their teaching often seems true because they quote passages of Scripture that appear to validate their “word” (the key word being *appear*). In most cases, the Scriptures, when examined in detail and taken as a whole, do not validate their teaching at all. That’s why I have spent the past two years emphasizing the importance of reading the Scriptures with attention to detail. Those details play a key role in helping you, if you are a True Believer, discern whether the oral tradition you hear taught is true. So with that in mind, let’s continue where we left off.

Cause and Effect

As you know, the Bible study technique I have been advocating for the past two years involves two basic activities: (1) looking for specific types of information (who, what, why, how, etc.) as you read the Scriptures and (2) looking for key words and phrases that point to this specific information. Here is a review of the things I have told you to look for as you read the Scriptures. 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.*

As I have mentioned before, this is not an exhaustive list of things you should pay attention to when reading the Bible. I can think of several other things that I could add to this list, as I'm sure you can. When I put together my final summary of this series (hopefully in the January 1999 issue), I may throw in a couple of these additional items. That aside, the reason you need to pay attention to these kinds of facts and details is because they can be instrumental in helping you discern the truth or error of what you hear taught.

The key words and phrases I have presented in this series are nothing more than tools to help you spot some of this information. As I have said before, and say again now, key words and phrases will not help you find all, or even most, of the information listed above. Therefore, you need to develop the ability to spot this information on your own without the help of key terms. That's why it's important that you always pay attention to the context in which things are stated and not mindlessly read the Scriptures. Learn to read the Scriptures with a thinking mind, and don't let your presuppositions cause you to draw conclusions that are not warranted by the text. Let the Scriptures speak for themselves and learn to listen to what they say.

That having been said, let's look at a few key terms that often indicate cause and effect. They are the two words *if* and *then* (when used in conjunction) and most phrases containing the word *result*, e.g., *as a result*, *with the result*, *resulting in*, and so forth. Surprisingly, words like *cause*, *caused*, *causing*, *subsequently*, *consequently*, and *therefore* are seldom used in the New American Standard Bible to denote cause and effect, which is why I didn't include them in the list. I'm not saying they aren't used on occasion; they just aren't used all that often.

The fact that just a few key terms are consistently used in the Scriptures to denote cause and effect doesn't mean there is little cause and effect in the Scriptures. There is actually quite a lot, but you will need to find much of it on your own. What you are looking for is any kind of action, event, or

circumstance that directly or indirectly causes something else to happen (which would be the effect). Or you can reverse the process and look for any kind of action, event, or circumstance that is the result or consequence (the effect) of something else (the cause). It will undoubtedly help you if you think both ways.

Based on what I have just told you, you can probably see that there is sometimes a conditional aspect to cause and effect. That is, if one thing causes something else to happen, that not only defines cause and effect, it also defines, to some extent, a condition. That's because when conditions are met, they generally cause something else to happen, although not necessarily right away. That's why there is sometimes, but not always, a correlation between conditions and cause and effect. Since *if* is a key word associated with both, you can see why these two are sometimes interrelated.

The best examples of this can be found in the Pentateuch where Moses lays out a bunch of if-this-happens-then-do-this type of stipulations for the Israelites to follow. Although these stipulations basically set forth conditions under which certain things are to be done if certain other things occur first, they also denote cause and effect as well. That's because any time a particular action, event, or circumstance causes a subsequent action, event, or circumstance to result or take place, you have cause and effect. Here are some examples of what I'm talking about:

*And throughout all their journeys whenever the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the sons of Israel would set out; but **if** the cloud was not taken up, **then** they did not set out until the day when it was taken up.*
(Exodus 40:36–37)

*"But **if** the priest looks at it, and indeed, there is no white hair in the bright spot, and it is no deeper than the skin, but is dim, **then** the priest shall isolate him for seven days; and the priest shall look at him on the seventh day. **If** it spreads farther in the skin, **then** the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it is an infection of leprosy."*
(Leviticus 13:26–27)

*"If also after these things, you do not obey Me, **then** I will punish you seven times more for your sins."*
(Leviticus 26:18)

*"Further, you shall speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'If a man dies and has no son, **then** you shall transfer his inheritance to his daughter. And **if** he has no daughter, **then** you shall give his inheritance to his brothers. And **if** he has no brothers, **then** you shall give his inheritance to his father's brothers. And **if** his father has no brothers, **then** you shall give his inheritance to his nearest relative in his own family, and he shall possess it; and it shall be a statutory ordinance to the sons of Israel, just as the LORD commanded Moses.'"*

(Numbers 27:8–11)

There are literally hundreds of verses like these in the Old Testament where *if* and *then* are used in conjunction. I trust you see how each of these examples stipulate some kind of condition and at the same time indicate that one thing (directly or indirectly) is the cause or the effect (result or consequence) of something else. What I doubt you can see is the meaning and significance of these passages as they apply to True Believers. That is, I seriously doubt whether you understand the message Moses has cryptically concealed in these passages that still applies to Israel—the Body of Jesus Christ.

If it never occurred to you that God would hide His Word in the Scriptures, then you obviously have no idea what the Apostle Paul is talking about when he says that he was called as a minister to preach the hidden mystery of God's Word (Col. 1:25–26). So if you're being taught by a "minister" who doesn't realize that the mystery of God's Word—The Teaching—is hidden in the Scriptures, I wouldn't put much stock in what that individual has to say because he (or she) is obviously a blind guide. After all, if the Scriptures confirm anything at all, they confirm the fact that there is a mysterious element to the Scriptures. Anyone who is the least bit honest can easily see ample evidence of this fact by merely reading them.

Now that I have shown you some examples of how *if* and *then* are used in conjunction in the Old Testament, here are some examples from the New Testament. It should not be difficult for you to see the cause and effect as well as the condition in each of these verses:

*"But **if** you do not forgive men, **then** your Father will not forgive your transgressions."*
(Matthew 6:15)

*And **if** you belong to Christ, **then** you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.*
(Galatians 3:29)

*Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and **if** a son, **then** an heir through God.*
(Galatians 4:7)

Having looked at examples where cause and effect are directly connected to conditional statements, let's look at some examples where cause and effect are not linked to conditions. To do that, let's look at some verses containing the phrases *as a result*, *with the result*, and *resulting in*. The fact that the word *result* is present in each of these phrases lets us know that something is most likely going to be the result (the effect) of something else (the cause). See if you can find the cause and effect in the following verses:

*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?*
(Romans 6:16)

*But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, **resulting in** sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life.*
(Romans 6:22)

*And the rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, **with the result** that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy.*
(Galatians 2:13)

You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected.
(James 2:22)

I stated earlier that cause and effect is often denoted in the Bible apart from key words and phrases. Romans 6:22 is an example of what I'm talking about. If you look closely at this verse, you will see there is dual cause and effect stated here. First, we see that the result of being freed from sin and enslaved to God is sanctification, but second, we see that the result (i.e., the outcome) of sanctification is eternal life. Do you see how Paul subtly slipped that last bit of information into the text? There are numerous examples of cause and effect in the Bible that are stated in just as subtle a manner.

The best way to recognize cause and effect is to simply ask yourself whether one thing is the result or consequence of something else. If it is, then you have cause and effect. With that in mind, I'll conclude with a few verses of Scripture that contain cause and effect but no key terms. See if you can determine the cause and effect in each of these verses. To make it easier for you, I have bolded that which is the end result or consequence—the effect—so all you have to do is find the cause:

*“He who believes in the Son **has eternal life**; but he who does not obey the Son **shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.**”*
(John 3:36)

*For the wages of sin is **death**, but the free gift of God is **eternal life** in Christ Jesus our Lord.*
(Romans 6:23)

*But each one is **tempted** when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to **sin**; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth **death**.*
(James 1:14–15)

*For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is **disorder and every evil thing**.*
(James 3:16)

*What is the source of **quarrels and conflicts** among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members?*
(James 4:1)

*You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is **hostility toward God**? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself **an enemy of God**.*
(James 4:4)

*Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and **he will flee from you**.*
(James 4:7)

*Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and **He will exalt you**.*
(James 4:10)

*Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, **does not have God**; the one who abides in the teaching, **he has both the Father and the Son**.*
(2 John 1:9)

I like this last verse because the Apostle John has just summed up what we have been saying for the past eight years: The only way anyone can have the Father and the Son is to abide in The Teaching that Christ revealed to His Apostles. The Church today claims to be teaching what Christ taught. But are they? You know what we think. The question is, What do you think? One thing is certain: Your beliefs will dictate how you respond. How do I know? Because the relationship of belief to action is a classic example of cause and effect. It always has been, and it always will be.

Allen Fries

We Know the Law Is Holy. But What About the Commandment?

*This is the first in a series of articles explaining what the Apostle Paul meant when he talked about law. I have included my own translation of some of the biblical texts that are most relevant to this topic, not because I consider it to be completely accurate at this point, but because it makes it easier for me to explain my current understanding of the meaning of the original Greek text. I will, most likely, continue to make minor changes to my translation of the biblical text as more and more of the parabolic imagery of The Teaching of Moses comes into clearer focus. I plan to publish a complete translation of the epistles of Paul—eventually. In the articles in this series, more than in any of the other articles I have written for **The Voice of Elijah**®, I will mention things that are explained in The Next Step program. The reader should not take that as an encouragement to join that program since those things will eventually be published in book form.*

If you go by what you read in most translations of the Greek Scriptures (the New Testament), the Apostle Paul talks about “the Law” all the time. But the Truth is, he talks about “law” a whole lot more than “the Law.” The only problem with that is, the reader of the English translation cannot even tell when he says “law” and when he says “the Law” because translators have traditionally translated the indefinite “law” as “the Law,” thereby giving the impression that the definite article is present in the Greek text when it isn’t. The reason for that is actually quite easy to understand. The Liar likes it that way. He has worked for an extremely long time to inculcate in Christians the mind-set he desires, and he is not about to give up now.

Since the close of the second century, when the Early Church lost *The Apostolic Teaching*, few, if any, translators or commentators have accurately understood

the *parabolic imagery* Paul had in mind when he spoke concerning “law” in general and “the Law” in specific. Consequently, we are left with the misleading assumptions of translators and commentators who have done little more than confuse the issue.

Satan Is a Liar. So What’s New?

To understand what Paul said about “law” and “the Law,” you must first be willing to accept the fact that most of what you believe about the Scriptures is probably nothing more than a fiction. If the evidence I have presented over the past several years has demonstrated anything at all, it has clearly shown that Satan is still alive and well and up to his old tricks as far as the Truth God has revealed in the Scriptures is concerned. That being the case, the only way you will ever come to a knowledge of the Truth is to admit that Satan has lied to everyone—yourself included—just as Jesus said he would when He rejected the lies the Pharisees believed about the Scriptures:

“You are from your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. That one was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth because the truth is not in him. When he speaks the lie, he speaks from his own person because he is a liar and the father of him, {the liar}.”

(John 8:44) —my interim translation

Torah Is Torah Is Torah

The second thing that you need to know before you can understand what Paul says about “law” and “the Law” is the fact that the Jews, sometime around

250 B.C., made a Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures (the Septuagint) in which they translated the Hebrew term *torah* with the Greek term *nomos* (with very few exceptions). *Torah* is the Hebrew term that is normally translated “law” in the Old Testament. *Nomos* is the Greek word that is translated “law” (exclusively) in the New Testament. Those facts are important because the Apostle Paul was a well-educated Pharisee. He could read the Hebrew Scriptures as well as the Greek translation—the Septuagint. However, Paul was also the Apostle to the Gentiles, and the Gentiles could only read the Septuagint translation. Therefore, Paul taught Gentiles *The Apostolic Teaching* strictly on the basis of the Greek text; but his knowledge of the Truth that lies hidden in the Hebrew text can be seen lurking behind his every reference to the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures.

The Greek term *nomos* means “law,” which is the precise meaning Paul intends for us to understand when he uses the term without the article. When he says *nomos*, “law,” he is normally referring to all the statutes, judgments, and commandments that Moses established for the sons of Israel in the wilderness. However, Paul also knew that the Hebrew term *torah*, which had been inaccurately translated *nomos* in the Septuagint, actually means “teaching.” So when he says *o nomos*, “the Law,” he is using the Greek term *nomos* in the same way that Moses used the Hebrew term *torah* in the Pentateuch. Since I have explained how Moses used the Hebrew term *torah* in *The Mystery of Scripture, Volume 1*, I will only summarize here what I said there.

As I explained, prior to the Book of Deuteronomy, Moses used the Hebrew term *torah* to point exclusively to *The Teaching* that stands behind the symbolic rituals mandated by the statutes of the Mosaic Covenant. I even showed you that God wrote a summary of the Sabbath *torah*—*The Teaching* concerning the Sabbath statute—on the stone tablets along with the Ten Commandments. However, I also pointed out that Moses expanded the scope of *torah*—*The Teaching*—in the Book of Deuteronomy when he opened up the priesthood to all the Levites. At that time, *The Teaching* came to include an explanation not just of the statutes, but also of the judgments and commandments.

Finally, I explained that the Jews came to identify the entire Pentateuch as *torah* because Moses says he wrote *The Teaching* on a scroll and had the Levites place that scroll in the Tabernacle. Consequently, when the

Jews in the time of Christ referred to “the Law,” they most often had in mind the five books that Moses wrote—the Pentateuch. As you can see, Luke is clearly referring to the Pentateuch when he says this:

And after the reading of the Law and the Prophets the synagogue officials sent to them, saying, “Brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say it.”
(Acts 13:15)

Paul uses “the Law” in that sense as well as in the two other senses in which Moses used the term *torah*. Yet the only way to know which of the three he had in mind is to follow his discourse carefully. In every case, it is clear that Paul saw “the Law” of Moses as *The Teaching of Moses*. That is why he refers to *The Apostolic Teaching* as *o nomos*, “the Law,” in spite of the fact that the term *torah* itself has little to do with law. Its only association with law is derived from its unique role as the rubric Moses used to refer to *The Teaching* he taught the sons of Israel in the wilderness. But I have already explained how and why that is in the first volume of *The Mystery of Scripture* series. If you have not read and understood that information, what I say here may not make a whole lot of sense to you. So your time might be better spent reading something else.

Here is a brief aside for you who would rather straddle the fence—saying you don’t know what to believe: If, after reading the things I have written in *Not All Israel Is Israel, The Mystery of Scripture (Vol. 1)*, *The Voice of Elijah*® (newsletter), *The Voice of Elijah*® *Update*, and now in this series, you still think they have no particular relevance to each other, you are a whole lot more fixated on the lies of the Liar than you could ever imagine. I have been steadily assembling evidence in a case against you that is absolutely rock-solid and stone-cold perfect. By the time I have accomplished what God called me to do, I will have laid out all the evidence that supports the charges He has against you. Then, if you choose not to believe the facts supported by that evidence, it will only be because *you don’t want to believe the Truth*, which is, incidentally, the essence of the charges God has brought against you: You are ignorant of the Truth and don’t want it explained to you because you want to go on sinning. So if you tend to vehemently disagree with the things I am going to explain here, you might want to consider your position in terms of what Jesus said about Satan being the father of all liars.

God Is About to Break His Silence

If you missed the *significance* of what I just stated, I was merely speaking to fools in terms of the same *parabolic imagery* that Paul had in mind when he *talked about* “law” in general and “the Law” in specific. That *parabolic imagery* is the third thing you need to be aware of if you want to understand what Paul said concerning “law” and “the Law.” He was not speaking off the cuff when he *talked about* “law” in a general sense. He had a very specific mental image (*parabolic image*) in mind. That is, he knew all too well that every law—God’s included—carries a specified penalty for the one who breaks it. That is why the basic mental image (*parabolic image*) that Paul had in mind when he spoke about “law” and “the Law” was the judgment seat of God Himself.

The existence of God’s law implies a legal system is in place to prosecute all those unfortunates who find it necessary to rely on the mercy of His appointed Judge. Under those circumstances, it is not by accident that Paul begins his longest-running explanation of the things related to “law” and “the Law” (Rom. 1:28–8:17) with this statement:

And just as they did not {examine and} approve the {Living} God—to have {Him} in {their} consciousness—the {Living} God gave them up to a rejected mind, to do things that are not fitting, having been filled with everything that is opposite of what is right—evil intention, greed, hateful feelings. {They are} full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, meanness. {They are} gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, proud, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, lacking understanding, unfaithful, inhuman, ruthless, who, knowing the requirement of the {Living} God, that those who do such things are worthy of death, not only do these things, but also approve of those who do them. Therefore, every one of you who judges is without excuse! For in that which you judge the other you condemn yourself. For the one who judges does these {same} things. And we know that the judgment of God is—in accordance with Truth—{already} on those who do such things. But do you think this, you who judge those who do these things and do the same things {yourself}, that you will escape the judgment of the {Living} God? Or do you look down on the wealth of His goodness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of the {Living} God leads you to repentance? Instead, in accordance with your stubbornness and unrepentant heart,

you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the judgment—according to what is required—of the {Living} God, Who WILL REPAY EACH MAN IN ACCORDANCE WITH HIS WORKS; on the one hand, eternal life to those who through perseverance of good works seek glory, honor, and immortality, but on the other, wrath and anger to those who—because of selfishness and not believing the Truth—are persuaded by what is not right. Persecution and distress {are} on every soul of man who produces evil. {On the soul} of Jew first, but also of Greek. But glory and honor and peace {are} for each {soul} who does good. For Jew first, but also for Greek. For there is no favoritism with the {Living} God.

(Romans 1:28–2:11) —my interim translation

If you didn’t already know about the impending wrath of the God Who is, or if you choose not to believe what you just read about it, you probably don’t want to hear what I am going to say here. Therefore, your time might be much better spent reading *Alice in Wonderland* or *Grimm’s Fairy Tales*. But then again, since most folks will choose to believe that my views concerning the message of the Scriptures and the angry God of wrath Who has revealed Himself in their pages are nothing more than a fairy tale anyway, you might find what I say to be quite entertaining.

Consider Those Scripture-Quoting Fools

Now that our discussion has turned a bit more toward the ugly side, I can assure you that the fourth thing you need to know before you can even begin to understand what Paul said about “law” and “the Law” gets even uglier. I have stated on a variety of other occasions that God made sure Moses and the Prophets securely sealed up *The Teaching of Moses* in the Hebrew Scriptures. He did that for a variety of reasons. But one of His primary reasons for doing so was His intense hatred of hypocrites, that is, the animosity He holds toward all those folks out there who find it more convenient to talk a good life than to live one.

As I have stated elsewhere, God is currently in the process of removing the seven seals that have prevented us all from being able to read the Scriptures with complete understanding. There are a couple of *parabolic images* in the Scriptures that describe what He has done and is doing in that regard. The one image has to do with the opening and reading of a *testament* that

describes *the inheritance of the Believer*. (See “Did Jesus Leave a Will?” *The Voice of Elijah*®, July 1991.) The other has to do with opening a sealed document that details the legal case He has against all those who claim to be, but are not, His legitimate *heirs*. Or as the Apostle Paul would say, “those who are *from law*.” Moses initiated the production of that sealed document by telling the priests what he wanted done with the first installment:

And it came about, when Moses finished writing the words of this law in a book until they were complete, that Moses commanded the Levites who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying, “Take this book of the law and place it beside the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may remain there as a witness against you. For I know your rebellion and your stubbornness; behold, while I am still alive with you today, you have been rebellious against the LORD; how much more, then, after my death? Assemble to me all the elders of your tribes and your officers, that I may speak these words in their hearing and call the heavens and the earth to witness against them. For I know that after my death you will act corruptly and turn from the way which I have commanded you; and evil will befall you in the latter days, for you will do that which is evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking Him to anger with the work of your hands.”
(Deuteronomy 31:24–29)

As I have explained on *The Way, The Truth, The Life* seminar tapes and in *The Mystery of Scripture, Volume 1*, “The Way” that Moses mentions in verse 29 is *The Teaching*—the *oral tradition*—that ancient Israel and the Church (the new Israel) were supposed to *hand down* from one generation to the next so that you and I—the final generation—would have opportunity to hear the Truth. They failed to do that, yet they nonetheless go on piously pretending that they have done and are doing exactly what God asked them to do. They are, therefore, living in a fantasy world of their own creation. That is, the Liar already has them seriously deluded.

In the fury of God’s deep-seated rage at fools who think nothing of casually misrepresenting what He has said, the Almighty God takes immense pleasure in knowing that such imbeciles are, in their ignorance, religiously carrying around a book that clearly documents His case against them. Jews tote the Hebrew Scriptures. Christians expend a bit more energy in lugging around

a translation of both the Hebrew and the Greek Scriptures—but mostly only on Sundays. Such folks really should be more careful. That particular accoutrement is about to lash out and bite them.

Now Consider the Lowly Preposition

The fifth thing you need to know is every language uses prepositions in combination with both nouns and verbs to convey specifically nuanced *meanings* that lie hidden in the mental images those combinations evoke. That is why translating the Greek and Hebrew Scriptures is not just a matter of looking up words in a lexicon and writing them down on paper. To fully understand the biblical text, you must first understand the mind-set of the Greek- or Hebrew-speaking individual who wrote the words you are reading. That includes insight not only into the general mental imagery of his culture but also into the specific mental imagery he had at the time he was writing. The one—the general mental imagery of the culture—contributes the image that stands behind the various nouns, verbs, and adjectives of the language, while the other—the specific mental imagery (*parabolic imagery* in Paul’s case)—stands behind the morphological forms and prepositions he used to express his thoughts.

Only after one understands the general mental images evoked by the nouns, verbs, adverbs, and adjectives that Paul used can one begin to grasp the shaded nuances of *meaning* that he sought to convey through the various morphological forms and prepositions he used. That is why I will be explaining a few things you need to know about the *parabolic imagery* of *The Apostolic Teaching* that the Apostle Paul had in mind when he *talked about* things like “*in law*,” “*from law*,” “*from works of law*,” “*under law*,” and “*through law*.” But I’ll do that as we go along. Right now, I want to show you how prepositions can be used to evoke different mental images.

In every language, the *meaning* of a preposition sometimes has much more to do with the *meaning* of the verb with which it is used than it does with the *meaning* of the noun which is its object. For example, consider how the preposition is used in each of the following phrases to add a specific nuance to the English verb: *throw in the towel*, *throw out the riff-raff*, *throw on some clothes*, *throw off a cash flow*, *throw up your dinner*, *throw down the gauntlet*, *throw around a few numbers*. Did

you “see” the mental image each expression evoked in your mind? That image didn’t have a whole lot to do with the *literal meaning* of the verb-preposition combination, did it? That sort of mental imaging goes on all the time. Most of the time it is subconscious. But it is absolutely essential to the transfer of *meaning* from one person to another. Just imagine what you might think those phrases *meant* if you did not understand the nuance conveyed by the preposition.

Now take a look at how the mental imagery conveyed by a verb and preposition combination changes depending on the noun which is the object of the preposition: *running up a hill, running up a flag, running down a hill, running down a flag, running for an office, running into an office, running for an officer, running into an officer*. I intentionally included a few idiomatic statements in those two lists just to emphasize my point: The *meaning* and *significance* of a particular passage of Scripture is not always as obvious as some mindless simpletons would have us all believe. That is, one cannot just pick up a Bible—and certainly not a translation of the original text—and realistically expect to comprehend what the author *meant* by what he wrote.

To understand the *meaning* and *significance* of any text, one must first of all know what the author is *talking about*. But to fully understand what the author *meant*, it also takes a willingness to think in terms of the same concepts, the same mental images (*parabolic images*), the author of the text had in mind when he composed it. A good writer will provide the clues necessary for an attentive reader who is also fluent in the language to put together most, if not all, of that mental imagery. The Apostle Paul was certainly a good writer. The only problem with understanding what he wrote about “law” and “the Law” has been a serious dearth of attentive readers who are also fluent in the Greek language. Martin Luther may well have been the last. And he lived five centuries ago.

Judgment Day Is on “The Way”

As I mentioned above, the first mental image the Apostle Paul had in mind when he mentioned “law” or “the Law” was Judgment Day, the Great Day God has appointed in which He will use His “law” to determine the eternal fate of every individual. That day is swiftly approaching. That’s why I am here, laying out all the evidence God has against you. He wants to make sure

that you—the condemned—have had sufficient opportunity to seek a pardon. You can believe that if you care to, disbelieve it if you dare to. It makes no difference to me either way. You will answer the summons of that great court and appear in person whether you want to or not. If necessary, you will be dragged in kicking and screaming. But since it is your choice, not mine, as to whether or not you believe the Truth I present, I’ll get on with doing what God called me to do.

After Paul mentions the judgment seat of God in Romans 1:28–2:5, he immediately goes on to say this:

For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in law will be judged through law. For the hearers of law are not innocent before God, but the doers of law will be acquitted. For when Gentiles—those who have no law—naturally do the things of the Law, these {people}—having no law—are a law to themselves, which {will} show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience also providing evidence, and their thoughts—{as though arguing a legal case} among themselves—accusing or else defending them on a day when the God {Who is} will judge the secrets of men according to my Gospel through Jesus Christ.

(Romans 2:12–16) —my interim translation

As you should be able to see, Paul is still *talking about* the day when God will judge the actions of men according to His law. Since dullards may have difficulty reconciling my translation with the translation they find in their own Bible, I should explain a few things about my philosophy of translating the biblical text. First of all, I believe the responsibility of a translator is to make the *meaning* of the original text as *clear* as possible, not as *readable* as possible. That is, he needs to try to faithfully reproduce the *meaning* of the text while retaining the same emphasis the author of the text placed on certain words or phrases. That may sometimes require awkward English phrasing.

In my translation, you will find that I assiduously avoid using the word *faith*. Since Satan has successfully substituted the concept of hope for the original *meaning* of that term (see “Satan’s Fools Are Satan’s Tools,” *The Voice of Elijah*®, April 1994), I’ll do him one better and substitute a word that accurately reflects the original *meaning*. That word is *belief*. For much the same reason I will substitute more understandable terms for archaic

words like *righteousness, righteous, justification, justified,* and *grace*. Since Satan has worked hard to make sure these and other biblical terms remain vague and little understood, I will use more modern terms to convey the sense of the original language. Hopefully, these terms will make it easier for you to see that the original Greek terms are all part of the legal terminology the Apostles used to *parabolically* describe the judgment seat of God. That is why you will see in my translation things like *what is required* (by law), *innocent, acquittal, acquitted,* and *pardon* instead of the traditional terms to which you have become accustomed.

If you read my translation above carefully and critically, you probably noticed that I substituted the word *acquitted* for the more typical translation *justified*. You may not be aware of the fact that the English term *justify* still retains the meaning “to absolve of guilt.” Whether you knew that or not is immaterial; I’ve just made the Truth that stands behind that English term *and the Greek term it represents* more obvious for those who sincerely want to know the Truth. Actually, the *parabolic imagery* related to Judgment Day discloses that we are not just *talking about an acquittal*; we are also *talking about a pardon*. The difference between those two terms is, an *acquittal* derives from a careful examination of the facts of a case. A *pardon* derives from the arbitrary decision of a person with authority to exempt someone from the penalty of law—irrespective of guilt. But, since Paul *talks about* all that later on, I’ll let him explain it for you. For now, we need to look at what he says next:

But if you call yourself a Jew and rest on law and boast in God and know the will {of God} and {examine and} approve the things that are valuable, being instructed from the Law, having persuaded yourself that you are a guide of the blind, a light to those in darkness, an instructor of those who are foolish, a teacher of those who are immature, having the total content of knowledge and Truth in the Law, do you—the one who is teaching others—not teach yourself? Do you—the one preaching not to steal—steal? Do you—the one saying not to commit adultery—commit adultery? Do you—the one who detests idols—do sacrilegious things? Do you—the one who boasts in law—dishonor God through violation of the Law? For “THE NAME OF GOD IS BLASPHEMED AMONG THE GENTILES BECAUSE OF YOU,” just as it is written.

(Romans 2:17–24) —my interim translation

If you consider yourself a born-again Christian, I suggest you read that passage again—very carefully. Paul is addressing all those fools of Jewish descent in the Early Church who had heard just enough of *The Apostolic Teaching*—what he refers to as “the total content of knowledge and Truth”—to consider themselves qualified to teach others the things they *thought* they understood. That is *why* he says:

But if you call yourself a Jew and rely on law and boast in God and know the will {of God} and {examine and} approve the things that are valuable, being instructed from the Law, having persuaded yourself that you are a guide of the blind, a light to those in darkness, an instructor of those who are foolish, a teacher of those who are immature, having the total content of knowledge and Truth in the Law, do you—the one who is teaching others—not teach yourself?

(Romans 2:17–21a) —my interim translation

Paul certainly has not minced words in denouncing uninformed people who were ignorantly teaching others before they fully understood the Truth of *The Apostolic Teaching* themselves. He is going to let us know in just a bit that their error was in thinking Believers needed something more than a knowledge of the Truth, that they had to observe the rite of circumcision and (most likely) all the *symbolic rituals* that Moses established for the sons of Israel at Mt. Sinai. But did you notice that “the Law” Paul has in mind in that passage is something that instructs people? That one can find in it “the total content of knowledge and Truth”? “The Law” (*o nomos*) Paul is pointing to is obviously the complete *torah* (translated *nomos* in the Septuagint) that Moses taught the sons of Israel in the wilderness. It is *The Teaching of Moses*.

But notice what Paul does next. He does not mention the fact that it is no longer necessary for Jews to be circumcised. Instead, he starts going down the list of things prohibited by the Ten Commandments, thereby explicitly implying that those commandments must still be obeyed:

Do you—the one preaching not to steal—steal? Do you—the one saying not to commit adultery—commit adultery? Do you—the one who detests idols—do sacrilegious things?

(Romans 2:21b–22) —my interim translation

Paul has just told you what “law” God is going to use as the standard by which He will determine guilt on Judgment Day. But then he says this:

Do you—the one who boasts in law—dishonor God through violation of the Law?

(Romans 2:23)—my interim translation

Anyone who reads “violation of *the Law*” and assumes Paul is referring to all the *statutes, judgments, and commandments* that Moses established for the sons of Israel at Mt. Sinai obviously has not stopped to consider the context in which that statement occurs. “The Law” cannot be the same “law” Paul referred to earlier. He is either using the designation “the Law” to sum up and complete the remainder of the list of commandments to which he just pointed—that is, the Ten Commandments—or else he is pointing to some other item on that list. If you have read and understood what I wrote in the first volume of *The Mystery of Scripture*, you should already know what Paul has in mind. He is pointing to the *torah*—*The Teaching*—concerning the Sabbath that God included on the stone tablets.

As I explained in the first volume of *The Mystery of Scripture*, *The Teaching of Moses* related to the Sabbath, which is also a part of the fourth “commandment,” is an explanation of the *parabolic pantomime* in which the cyclical ritual of resting every seventh day illustrates what you need to know about the seventh “day” of Creation, the “day” of God’s rest. Indeed, that part of *The Teaching* emphasizes the importance of knowing everything else in *The Teaching*. That is *why* Paul takes a jab at the Jews in the Roman church who were teaching legalism by saying, “if you call yourself a Jew, and rest in law.” He knew they were not resting in “the Law.” They were instead still working in the flesh—and thereby in “violation of the Law” of the Sabbath. But he will get around to explaining about the works of the flesh later. So I really shouldn’t steal his thunder.

Before we move on, however, I must tell you that Paul has already alluded to the role *The Teaching* will play on that Great Day:

For when Gentiles—those who have no law—naturally do the things of the Law, these {people}—having no law—are a law to themselves, which {will} show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience also providing evidence, and their thoughts—as

though arguing a legal case} among themselves—accusing or else defending them on a day when the God {Who is} will judge the secrets of men according to my Gospel through Jesus Christ.

(Romans 2:14–16)—my interim translation

Notice Paul did not say “the Law” (*The Teaching of Moses*) is written on the hearts of Gentiles. He said “the work of the Law.” Big difference. Believers have “the Law” itself (*The Teaching of Moses*) written on their hearts. Gentiles have only “the work of the Law” written on theirs. I didn’t come up with that on my own. In what he said here, Paul told me about the Gentiles. The writer of the Book of Hebrews told me about Believers (Heb. 8:10; 10:16). The only insight I added was my knowledge that both men are *talking about The Teaching of Moses*. But if you feel a distinct desire to dispute the Truth of my conclusion, by all means, do so. It is far better that a blind man maintain the comfort of familiar surroundings than stumble around in uncharted territory where he can do nothing more than pose a danger to himself and others.

After letting us know he is *talking about The Teaching of Moses*, Paul then goes on to explain why it is no longer necessary for Believers to be circumcised:

For indeed circumcision does benefit—if you could do law. But should you be a violator of law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision. If therefore, the uncircumcised {person} were to guard the requirements of the Law, will not his uncircumcision be considered as circumcision? And the one who is physically uncircumcised yet fulfills the Law will judge you who, because of what is written and {because of} circumcision, violate law. For the Jew is not in the visible, neither {is} circumcision in the visible—in flesh. But the Jew is in the hidden—and circumcision of the heart is in the spirit, not {in} what is written—whose praise is not from men but from God.

(Romans 2:25–29)—my interim translation

That doesn’t make a whole lot of sense if you don’t understand the mental image Paul had in mind when he used the word that is translated “spirit.” Since I have explained all that in *The Next Step* program, I needn’t get into it further here. [Editor: If you are interested in applying for *The Next Step* program, your first step is to use the Order Form in this issue to become a Monthly Contributor. The requirements for applying

for The Next Step program are explained on the Order Form in every issue of *The Voice of Elijah*® Update that is sent to Monthly Contributors.] It should be obvious that Paul is saying that Jews according to the flesh are no longer Jews. True Believers are. He also appears to be alluding to the fact that Jesus Christ is Israel and only those *in Christ* are Jews. The Truth is, he is referring to the fact that the Truth of *The Apostolic Teaching* Believers have heard, believed, and hidden in their “heart,” is the only “Jew” that God recognizes. But he will get into that *parabolic imagery* later as well.

Two statements in the passage above clearly reveal that Paul is *talking about The Teaching of Moses* when he says “the Law.” In saying “guard the requirements of the Law,” he is pointing to the *parabolic imagery* related to the Levites guarding the sanctuary in which “the Law” regarding the Sabbath that God inscribed on two stone tablets was hidden behind a veil. He is alluding to things associated with that same *imagery* when he mentions “the hidden.” Likewise, when he mentions an uncircumcised person who “fulfills the Law,” he is pointing to *parabolic imagery* that describes the manner in which the Word of God will *complete* God’s Creation, just as God said it would. Since I am in the process of explaining all that *parabolic imagery* in The Next Step program, I will refer you to what I have said there and not say any more about it here. The New American Standard Bible tells us Paul goes on to say this about circumcision:

Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision? Great in every respect. First of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God. What then? If some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it? May it never be! Rather, let God be found true, though every man {be found} a liar, as it is written,

*“THAT THOU MIGHTEST BE JUSTIFIED IN THY WORDS,
AND MIGHTEST PREVAIL WHEN THOU ART JUDGED.”*

But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? The God who inflicts wrath is not unrighteous, is He? (I am speaking in human terms.) May it never be! For otherwise how will God judge the world? But if through my lie the truth of God abounded to His glory, why am I also still being judged as a sinner? And why not {say} (as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say), “Let us do evil that good may come”? Their condemnation is

just. What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; as it is written,

“THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE;

THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS,

THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD;

ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER

THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS;

THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD,

THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE.

THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN GRAVE,

WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY KEEP DECEIVING,

THE POISON OF ASPS IS UNDER THEIR LIPS;

WHOSE MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS;

THEIR FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD,

DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR PATHS,

AND THE PATH OF PEACE HAVE THEY NOT KNOWN.

THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES.”

(Romans 3:1–18)

I quoted that passage from the New American Standard Bible so that you could see two things that you need to know on the basis of a well-respected (and in my humble opinion, the best available) translation of the biblical text: First, you should be able to see that Paul is still *talking about* the need to believe the Truth of *The Teaching*. That is *what* he is referring to when he says the Jews “were entrusted with the oracles of God.” He has in mind *The Teaching of Moses* that the sons of Israel were supposed to, but did not, *hand down* from generation to generation. But Paul, being a Pharisee himself, also knew that because the Pharisees had taught the Jews lies instead of the Truth, most of the Jews living in the time of Christ found it impossible to believe the Truth concerning their own Messiah, Jesus Christ. That is *what* he is referring to when he says:

If some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it?

(Romans 3:3b)

In saying “some did not believe,” Paul is pointing out the fact that he and a lot of other Jews did, in fact, believe the Truth of *The Teaching* when they heard it.

Second, it should also be clear from reading *what* Paul said in that passage that he is still fixed on the *parabolic imagery* related to the judgment seat of God. That is evident from his query, “For otherwise how will God

judge the world?" That mind-set also shows through in his reminder that "we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all *under sin*." We will see how Paul explains the *meaning* of the phrase "under sin" a bit later. So just keep it in mind for now. It, too, has to do with the *parabolic imagery* of *The Teaching* that is related to the judgment seat of God.

What, Exactly, Does God Require?

Now that Paul has gotten some of the preliminaries regarding Judgment Day out of the way, he is going to start explaining the different functions of "law" and "the Law" in regard to that Great Day. He begins with this statement concerning "the Law":

We know that whatever the Law says, it says to those who are in the Law, so that every mouth would be shut and the whole world would become subject to prosecution by God, because no flesh will be acquitted in His sight from works of law, for knowledge of sin is because of law. (Romans 3:19–20) —my interim translation

Notice that Paul clearly says "the Law" speaks, but he just as plainly states that it only speaks to those who are "in the Law." To understand what he *means* by that prepositional phrase, you need to know that he is speaking in terms of an extremely specific *parabolic image*. It is essentially the same *parabolic image* that stands behind his use of the ubiquitous phrase *in Christ*. Think for a moment about how all the *parabolic imagery* relates: Jesus Christ is the *Living Word* of God. That is, He is *The Teaching*. But *The Teaching of Moses* is, in turn, "the Law" that Paul mentions. So when he says, "whatever the Law says, it says to those who are *in the Law*," he is *talking about* the fact that what *The Teaching* says can only be understood by those who are *in Jesus Christ*, the *Living Word* of God. Therefore, the imbecile who takes it upon himself to try to figure out "*The Mystery*" of the Scriptures should keep this one thing in mind the next time he has difficulty understanding something he reads there: He may be reading someone else's mail.

When Paul says God ordained that fools would never be able to understand the Truth "so that every mouth would be shut and the whole world would become subject to prosecution by God," he is pointing to the silencing of all those who have taken it upon themselves to teach their ignorant thoughts to others

and claim that they are accurately stating what God has said. The Truth is not as they say it is, and that will be obvious to all when they stand before their Maker stunned and, at long last, mute on that Great Day.

Paul concludes his statement concerning the separate roles of "law" and "the Law" by saying, "no flesh will be acquitted in His sight from works of law, for knowledge of sin is because of law." He is summarizing what he is going to explain more fully later on. That is, nobody can attain salvation "from works of law," because the only function of "law" is to raise awareness of sin by providing an objective standard by which people can gauge right and wrong. Then he says this:

But now what God requires has been made known outside of law, {with} evidence being provided by the Law and the Prophets, yet what God requires {is} because of the belief of Jesus Christ in all those who believe—for there is no distinction, for all have sinned and lack the glory of God—{in all} those who are being freely acquitted by His favor because of the ransom which is in Christ Jesus, the One Whom God publicly displayed as a propitiation—through belief in His blood—to demonstrate what He requires by passing over the sins previously committed—in the forbearance of God—for the demonstration of what He requires in the present time, so that He would be what is required and the One Who acquits the one who is from belief of Christ.

(Romans 3:21–26) —my interim translation

"The Law" Paul has in mind there is obviously the Pentateuch since "the Prophets" refers to Scripture. But did you notice the entire paragraph is one complex sentence? Paul sees so many intertwined *parabolic images* that he cannot express his thoughts in a series of short statements. Nonetheless, you can see he is *talking about* "what God requires"—that is, he is explaining things related to that fuzzy notion that is commonly called "God's righteousness." He begins by saying:

But now what God requires has been made known outside of law, {with} evidence being provided by the Law and the Prophets.

(Romans 3:21) —my interim translation

He concludes by telling us God passed over the sins of Old Testament Believers and sent Christ to die:

... for the demonstration of what He requires in the present time, so that He would be what is required and the One Who acquits the one who is from belief of Christ. (Romans 3:26) —my interim translation

If my translation of Paul's sentence-turned-into-paragraph didn't make sense to you, it may well be that you are not yet convinced by what God requires. (I'm sorry; I can't help mocking fools.) Let me put it this way: What God requires is God's righteousness. That is not just an explanation; it is also a definition. What God requires is nothing more than belief in the Truth of *The Teaching* that He explained to Moses. Therefore, God's righteousness—what He requires—can only be attained by believing the Truth that God revealed through Moses ("the Law") and the Prophets. Jesus Christ—*The Teaching*—not only demonstrates what God requires, He is what God requires and acquits the one who has been born again by believing Him—*The Teaching*. Paul is going to explain that for you *parabolically* later on. I just thought I should clarify the issue for all those who still want to hang on to one of Satan's most pernicious lies—that *faith* (belief) does not need an object, that is, a definite content, for one to believe. Paul goes on:

Where then is the boasting? It is excluded. Because of what law? {One} of the works? No, but because of a law of belief. For we hold that a man is acquitted by belief outside of works of law.
(Romans 3:27–28) —my interim translation

There! Now that Paul has told you what I've been telling you, are you satisfied? If you have not been born again, I doubt that you are. But whose fault is that? You certainly can't blame God. Your miserable condition continues only because you are not yet willing to believe the Truth. As Paul is getting ready to tell us, acquittal on that Great Day will depend on nothing more than one's belief in the Truth of the Gospel, which is, in turn, an introduction to *The Teaching* that Paul and the other Apostles taught—in perfect agreement. Paul just happened to be the only Apostle sent to preach to the Gentiles. So he had a vested interest in seeing that a few ignorant Jews did not impose on the Gentiles their slavish desire to continue observing all the *symbolic rituals* that Moses established. Paul's rejection of their goofiness left him open to the charge that he had rejected *The Law of Moses*. Here is his response:

Is the {Living} God only {the God} of Jews? {Is He} not also {the God} of the Gentiles? Yes, {He is} also {the God} of Gentiles since the {Living} God is One, Who will acquit a circumcised {person} on account of belief and an uncircumcised {person} because of his belief. Do we therefore abolish law because of our belief? Certainly not! Instead, we confirm law.
(Romans 3:29–31) —my interim translation

Fools will probably have difficulty understanding how belief in the Truth of *The Teaching of Moses* ("the Law") can "confirm law." That is only because they do not understand the fear of the Lord that motivates all those who have heard about the wrath of God and honestly sought His mercy. Look at it this way: We would not believe that we are sinners if we did not also believe that we had broken God's law. And if we did not believe God's law was valid, we would not try to escape the penalty of that law by believing the Truth. So the fact that we have responded to the Truth "confirms" the fact that we believe there is a law of God that we have broken.

Abraham, Martin, and John

If you require convincing evidence that God's salvation depends entirely on one's belief in the Truth, all you need do is look at what the Scriptures say about Abraham. Or, as Paul occasionally puts it in the Greek, take a look at "the Abraham" from which every other Abraham derives his name. Paul is now going to tell you how Abraham figures in all this belief stuff, so pay close attention. You might also want to keep in mind as you read the following translation from the New American Standard Bible that *faith* is nothing more than belief, *righteousness* is what is required (by law), and *justified means* nothing more than acquitted:

What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about; but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? "AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS." Now to the one who works, his wage is not reckoned as a favor, but as what is due. But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness, just as David also speaks of the blessing upon the man to whom

God reckons righteousness apart from works:

“BLESSED ARE THOSE WHOSE LAWLESS DEEDS

HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN,

AND WHOSE SINS HAVE BEEN COVERED.

BLESSED IS THE MAN WHOSE SIN

THE LORD WILL NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT.”

Is this blessing then upon the circumcised, or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say, “FAITH WAS RECKONED TO ABRAHAM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.” How then was it reckoned? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised; and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be reckoned to them, and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also follow in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham which he had while uncircumcised.

(Romans 4:1–12)

The point of that entire passage can be put much more succinctly than that. But Paul felt it necessary to dwell on it at quite some length because he knew that the density of fools sometimes exceeds that of a black hole. Here is a concise statement of what he has said: *There is no way anyone can escape the wrath of God by doing something in the flesh because the only thing God requires from us is our belief in the Truth.* Oh, boy! Now that I’ve put it bluntly, I can almost hear the howling of the “winds” as they swirl around in that vacant space between the deaf ears of Satan’s progeny. Or maybe you didn’t know. That’s why they are not Abraham’s children. They can’t stop listening to Satan’s lies long enough to listen to and believe the Truth of *The Teaching* that Abraham understood.

Enough mockery. Paul now begins to refer to things he has already taught Believers in the church at Rome concerning the *parabolic imagery* of the Hebrew Scriptures. The specific image he has in mind explains how Believers are going to attain a free pass on Judgment Day. You should pay close attention to what he says. He revisits the same *parabolic imagery* in several of his other epistles as well:

For the promise to Abraham, or {rather} to his Seed—that He would be the Heir of {the} world—was not because of law, but because of a belief {that

attained} what is required. For if those from law are heirs, the belief {of Abraham} has been emptied and the promise abolished.

(Romans 4:13–14) —my interim translation

You probably thought Paul was referring to Abraham when he said “that He would be the *Heir* of {the} world.” I did too—until I took a closer look at how carefully he phrased what he said. Then I realized he is pointing out the fact that the content of *the promise* that God made to Abraham had been, from the very beginning, focused on the absolute certainty that Jesus Christ would one day *inherit what was promised*—which included title to Planet Earth. Everybody else’s *inheritance of what was promised*—including Abraham’s—has always been conditioned on their *inheriting the promise* through belief in the Truth of *what was promised*. Christ’s *inheritance of what was promised* was never conditional because God Himself decided beforehand that He was going to do whatever was necessary to *inherit what was promised*. And He did. Which is what the *parabolic imagery* related to the death of Jesus Christ on the cross is *meant* to demonstrate. Along those same lines, the complete trustworthiness of what the *Living Word of God* has said is what the author of the Book of Hebrews is *talking about* when he mentions the oath that God swore to Abraham:

For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, saying, “I WILL SURELY BLESS YOU, AND I WILL SURELY MULTIPLY YOU.” And thus, having patiently waited, he obtained the promise. For men swear by one greater {than themselves}, and with them an oath {given} as confirmation is an end of every dispute. In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath, in order that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have strong encouragement, we who have fled for refuge in laying hold of the hope set before us.

(Hebrews 6:13–18)

That is one of my favorite passages, not just for what it says but also for the context in which it says it. The author has been *talking about* the *parabolic imagery* related to the high priesthood of Jesus Christ. He goes on to *talk about* the death of Jesus Christ in terms of the

parabolic imagery of *The Teaching of Moses* which describes His passing through the veil of the Tabernacle as the High Priest of the New Covenant. But that is another matter. The point of this discussion is, Paul is not only *talking about* the Believer's *inheritance of the promise* in Romans 4:13–14, he is also alluding to Jesus Christ's *inheritance of what was promised*.

As I explained in *Not All Israel Is Israel*, Jesus Christ became *the Heir of the promise* when all other Jews were “cut off from” Israel. He later became *the Heir of what was promised* when God bestowed it on Him. (I sincerely apologize for making what appears to be such an absolutely obvious statement. I'm just mocking fools who are content not knowing the Truth of *what was promised*.) Paul's point is, Abraham and all others who believe the same *promise* that he believed become *heirs of the promise* because of their belief in the Truth of *what was promised*. In the infinite wisdom of God, that Truth is *the promise*.

Before we move on, you need to understand an idiomatic expression that Paul has used in verses 14 and 16 (and earlier in 3:26). He explains the *parabolic imagery* that stands behind the idiom in his letter to the Galatians (Gal. 4:22–31). He says this in verse 14:

For if those from law are heirs, the belief {of Abraham} has been emptied and the promise abolished.
(Romans 4:14) —my interim translation

In this verse, Paul is speaking in terms of a very specific *parabolic image* which tells us God will, on Judgment Day, determine for Himself those who are and those who are not His legitimate *heirs*. So when Paul says “those from law,” he is contrasting God's legitimate Children with those who make asinine claims in that regard. You may not have noticed it, but you have already seen Jesus use that idiomatic expression to do the same thing when He addressed the very people Paul had in mind when he said “those from law”:

“You are from your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. That one was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth because the truth is not in him. When he speaks the lie, he speaks from his own person because he is a liar and the father of him, {the liar}.”
(John 8:44) —my interim translation

Did you see it? Did you see the idiom? Jesus said, “You are from your father.” That says it all. When Paul says “those from law,” he is speaking *parabolically* in terms of that same idiom. Keep in mind the fact that Jews were teaching the lie that something more than belief in the Truth of *The Apostolic Teaching* is necessary for one to be saved. From what Paul says, we can tell that they were at the very least teaching Gentile Believers they had to be circumcised. They were most likely also insisting that Gentile Christians had to observe at least some of the other Jewish rituals as well.

Paul completely repudiates those who held such incredibly stupid beliefs by referring to them as “those from law.” He could just as easily have said, “those from their father the devil” because he knew they believed a lie that Satan had propagated. Paul is, after all, speaking *parabolically* in terms of one's spiritual lineage. He began alluding to the *parabolic imagery* earlier, in Romans 3:26, when he said “the one who is from belief of Christ.” Then he said “those from law” in 4:14, and finally, “the One from the Law” and “the one from belief” in 4:16.

There is one additional thing you need to note about Paul's use of the phrase “those from law.” That is the fact that he does not say “those from the Law.” That is an incredibly important distinction. There has only been One Person Who descended directly “from the Law.” That Person is Jesus Christ. But Paul will get around to that *parabolic imagery* a bit later. Right now, you need to master the nuance of the mental images we have already seen. Earlier, you may remember, we saw him refer to Believers as “those who are in the Law”:

We know that whatever the Law says, it says to those who are in the Law, so that every mouth would be shut and the whole world would become subject to prosecution by God.
(Romans 3:19) —my interim translation

You must keep in mind the *parabolic imagery* that stands behind the two phrases “those from law” and “those who are in Law.” That is because of the sharp distinction Paul has made between “law” and “the Law.” As I stated earlier, when he uses the indefinite “law,” he is referring to the *statutes, judgments, and commandments* that governed the *symbolic rituals* that Moses established at Mt. Sinai. By contrast, he always uses “the Law” to in some way point his reader to *The Teaching* that explains the *symbolic rituals*—the *parabolic pantomimes*—mandated by the *statutes, judgments, and*

commandments. But even knowing that, you will still miss the point of what he says if you are not thinking in terms of the same *parabolic imagery* that he had in mind when he composed his letter to Believers in the church at Rome. Having said that, I am now going to show you what I *mean*. Paul goes on to say this:

For the Law produces wrath. But where no law exists, neither does violation.
(Romans 4:15)—my interim translation

That's a pretty one, isn't it? What does he expect us to understand by that? Well, let me give you a clue. He is *talking about* the contrast that exists between those "in the Law" and those outside. You may not have noticed that he has been giving us a list of arguments to substantiate his claim that the salvation of all Believers—that is, their *inheritance of what was promised*—must be on the same basis as that of Abraham—through belief alone. If you go back and review what he said, you will find that, after telling us Abraham is the father of all those who believe without being circumcised, he gives us the first reason why salvation—that is, *inheritance of what was promised*—is based solely on belief in the Truth of *the promise*:

For the promise to Abraham, or {rather} to his Seed—that He would be the Heir of {the} world—was not because of law, but because of a belief {that attained} what is required.
(Romans 4:13)—my interim translation

That verse should be easy enough for anyone to understand. The only reason Abraham *received the promise* was because he believed *what was promised*. If he had not believed, he would never have bothered to *hand the promise down* to his son Isaac, and *the promise* would have died with him. That makes sense, doesn't it? But there is more to what Paul has in mind. Having given us that solid argument to support his contention that belief is all that God requires, Paul then gives us a second reason why *inheritance of what was promised* is based solely on belief in the Truth of *the promise*:

For if those from law are heirs, the belief {of Abraham} has been emptied and the promise abolished.
(Romans 4:14)—my interim translation

That argument is a bit more difficult to understand. Paul is making the point that *the promise* has always been just that—a *promise*. And the essential content of *the promise* is that anyone can attain *what was promised* if they will only *receive* and *hold on to the promise*. But the only way anyone can *receive the promise* is to believe it. Therefore, if God ever changed the things that He stated in *the promise* by stipulating that one must do something more than believe *the promise*, then Abraham's belief would have been in vain because all he did was believe *what was promised*. Therefore, you should be able to see that Paul has cut to the heart of the matter when he says "and *the promise* abolished."

There Is No Law in "the Law"

As I just told you, *the promise* is founded on the single, solitary Truth that all anyone has to do to attain *what was promised* is *receive the promise*. And "The only Way" anyone can do that is by *believing what was promised*. That is why Paul says this:

For the Law produces wrath. But where no law exists, neither does violation.
(Romans 4:15)—my interim translation

I have already shown you that when Paul says "the Law," he is referring to *The Teaching*. Therefore, we know that he is saying *The Teaching* produces wrath. How does it do that? It does it by falling on the deaf ears of those who refuse to believe it. You see, the sin of mankind only makes God angry; their stubborn refusal to *receive* and *hold on to* the Truth of *the promise* fills Him with an absolute rage. Paul has already told you that in the first chapter:

And just as they did not {examine and} approve the {Living} God—to have {Him} in {their} consciousness—the {Living} God gave them up to a rejected mind, to do things that are not fitting, having been filled with everything that is opposite of what is right—evil intention, greed, hateful feelings.
(Romans 1:28–29a)—my interim translation

In saying, "But where no law exists, neither does violation," Paul is contrasting what lies in store for those outside the Law with the enviable position of all

“those who are in the Law.” Again, you must mentally visualize the same *parabolic imagery* that Paul had in mind when he said that. Jesus Christ is *The Teaching*. He is “the Law.” So there is no other “law” for those who are *in Christ*. But perhaps I should just let Paul himself tell you what he *meant*:

But I say, walk in spirit and you will not accomplish a desire of flesh. For the flesh desires {things} against the spirit. Yet the spirit {does the same} against the flesh. For these are opposed to one another so that what you don't want {to do}, these {things} you do. But if you are led by spirit, you are not under law. Yet the works of the flesh are apparent, which are sexual immorality, immorality, indecency, idolatry, witchcraft, acts of hatred, strife, jealousy, displays of anger, selfish acts, dissensions, divisions, envying, drunkenness, revelry, and things like these, which I forewarn you just as I have {already} forewarned you, that those who do these things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, belief, humility, self-control. Against things like these there is no law.

(Galatians 5:16–23) —my interim translation

Did you see how the idiom “walk in *The Way*” in verse 16 refers to the Galatian Believers’ knowledge of *The Apostolic Teaching*? Paul said “walk in spirit.” “*The Way*,” that is, *The Teaching*, is “spirit.” It is the Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ. But it is impossible for anyone to understand how that is unless they are thinking in terms of the specific mental *imagery* that the Greeks associated with the term that is ordinarily translated as “spirit.” I have already explained the *parabolic imagery* related to that term in *The Next Step* program. So I needn’t say more about it here. The only point I want to make here is the fact that Paul plainly says that those who “walk in spirit” are not “under law” because the things they do are not prohibited by law. Or, as he puts it, “against things like these there is no law.” That is essentially the same thing he says in Romans 4:15:

But where no law exists, neither does violation.
(Romans 4:15b) —my interim translation

Since Paul is going to explain more about the mind-set that stands behind that statement a bit later, I’ll let him tell you what he has in mind. For now, we need to continue following his train of thought

concerning the things related to “law” and “the Law.” He has been giving us reasons why *inheritance of the promise* as well as *inheritance of what was promised* has always been based on belief in the Truth of *what was promised*. He next says this:

For this reason {it is} from belief, so that—in accordance with favor for the purpose of confirming the promise to all the Seed—{it is} not only to the One from the Law, but also to the one from belief—{that is} Abraham, who is father of us all—just as it is written, that “I HAVE MADE YOU A FATHER OF MANY GENTILES” in the view of the One he believed—God, the One Who brings the dead to life and gives a name to those who don't exist as though they exist—who believed contrary to hope—against hope—so that he might become father of many Gentiles in accordance with what had been said, “THIS IS WHAT YOUR SEED SHALL BE.”

(Romans 4:16–18) —my interim translation

Unfortunately, translators, because they have had extremely little, if any, insight into what Paul is *talking about*, have shown a distinct tendency to distort what he says. Take a look at how the New American Standard Bible translates verse 16:

For this reason {it is} by faith, that {it might be} in accordance with grace, in order that the promise may be certain to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all.
(Romans 4:16)

Before I continue, I should tell you I have the utmost respect for the New American Standard Bible. I recommend it highly to anyone who seeks to study the Scriptures. It is the only English translation—to my knowledge—whose stated goal is to remain as faithful as it possibly can to the original languages in which the Scriptures were written. Having said that, however, I must also remind you that *every* translation of the biblical text, no matter how carefully made it may be, is still nothing more than the translator’s own interpretation. That interpretation cannot help but reflect his mistaken assumptions and presuppositions. That applies to my own translation as well.

Now that you have been forewarned, take a second look at what I understand Paul to be saying:

For this reason {it is} from belief, so that—in accordance with favor for the purpose of confirming **the promise** to all the Seed—{it is} not only to the One from the Law, but also to the one from belief—{that is} Abraham, who is father of us all.

(Romans 4:16) —my interim translation

You must get as far away from the individualistic notion of “descendants” as you possibly can. “Seed” is a *parabolic image*. Therefore, if a translator translates the term as anything other than “seed,” he has concealed that particular *parabolic image* from the eyes of the English reader. The “Seed” for Whom **the promise** was always intended is Jesus Christ, the *Living Word of God—The Teaching*, which Paul euphemistically calls “the Law” in his letters. But *parabolically*, the “Seed” Jesus Christ is also, collectively, all those who are *in Him*—that is, *in Israel*. So don’t be taken in by the mistaken assumptions of those who want to immediately understand the phrase “from the Law” in verse 16 as referring to the Jews. Paul is referring to Jesus Christ. That he is not referring to the Jews should be obvious to everyone but those who blindly assume he must be as illogical in his thinking as they are in theirs. He has, after all, categorically denied that goofiness just two verses earlier:

For if those **from law** are **heirs**, the belief {of Abraham} has been emptied and **the promise** abolished.

(Romans 4:14) —my interim translation

The idiom Paul has in mind when he says, “not only to the One *from* the Law, but also to the one *from* belief” is exactly the same idiom that I pointed out to you in that verse. That is disclosed by the phrase “Abraham, who is father of us all.” Paul is *talking about* the legitimacy of the **heirs of the promise**, which is also what he is referring to in Galatians 4:22–31. I will remind you once again that he is using exactly the same idiom that Jesus was using in John 8:44.

In Romans 4:16, Paul is *making an* extremely fine distinction on the basis of the *parabolic imagery* of *The Teaching*. As he indicates, all Believers are, like Abraham, “*from belief*,” because he is our father. But the *parabolic imagery* of the Scriptures also tells us we are *parabolically* “*from the Law*” in the sense that “the Law”—*The Teaching*—is what we believed in order to be born again. However, spiritual birth is not what

Paul had in mind when he referred to Jesus Christ as “the One *from* the Law.” He is pointing to the fact that Jesus Christ was born *in the flesh* of the Virgin Mary, because of things that are stated *parabolically* in **the promise**. **The promise**, or if you prefer, *The Teaching*—the *Living Word of God*—is also (according to the *parabolic imagery* of the Scriptures) God, the Father of Jesus Christ. Therefore, Jesus Christ was born in the flesh because of the latent power of the *Living Word of God* that God spoke when He gave **the promise** to Abraham.

I should say this as an admonition to any and all among us who might be tempted to take the little bit of knowledge I present here and use it to impress others: I am speaking in terms of a *parabolic image*. That image tells you nothing about what the reality it describes actually is. It only tells you what that reality IS LIKE.

Now that Paul has summarized the three reasons why **inheritance of the promise** as well as **inheritance of what was promised** is based solely on belief in the content of **the promise**, he returns to what the Scriptures tell us concerning Abraham. He insists this information confirms the fact that belief in the content of **the promise** is the only way anyone can attain “righteousness,” or as I prefer to put it, “what is required” (by law):

And without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah’s womb; **yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief, but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what He had promised, He was able also to perform. Therefore also IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.**

(Romans 4:19–22)

Having gotten all that out of the way, Paul now begins to explain some things that can be found in **the promise**. Not surprisingly, he focuses on the more elementary things—things that are supposed to be preached to unbelievers by God’s Evangelists when they **deliver** the Gospel message. Paul evidently does that because those are the things that the Pretenders who were teaching lies in the Roman church needed to hear. He says this:

Now not for his sake only was it written, that it was reckoned to him, but for our sake also, to whom it will be reckoned, as those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from

the dead, {He} who was delivered up because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification.
(Romans 4:23–25)

Again I remind you, justification *means* the same as acquittal. When Paul says Jesus Christ “was raised because of our justification,” he is speaking in terms of the *parabolic imagery* of *The Teaching of Moses* in which Believers are members of Israel. Since we were (*parabolically*) in Christ—in Israel—when He died, God could not resurrect the Body of Jesus Christ without first acquitting His members of all of the charges He held against us. So that is what He did. But Paul explains all of that later on, and since he can do a much better job than I, we will continue on:

Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.
(Romans 5:1–5)

As I have told you repeatedly, the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus Christ. It is *The Apostolic Teaching*—the *Living Word* of God. But to understand how all that imagery fits together, you must first be willing to take on the mind-set of the ancient Greeks. If you want to continue thinking in terms of your modern Western mind-set, by all means do so. But if you do, it might be better in the long run if you didn’t remain quite so certain that you understand what Paul *meant* by the Greek term translated “spirit.” That way, you leave open the possibility that the Gospel might someday bring about the miracle of the new birth within you. But that’s enough sarcasm. Paul continues explaining the basics concerning how forgiveness is attained:

For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ

died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath {of God} through Him. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.
(Romans 5:6–11)

If you have been born again, you should be able to see that Paul is doing nothing more than explaining the basics of the Gospel message: Anyone who hears a legitimate proclamation of the Truth concerning the death of Christ on the cross can be reconciled to God by simply believing that Truth and acting on it. An automatic acquittal of all charges is available to anyone who hears, believes, and continues to believe the Truth. But that bit of information is ancillary to Paul’s primary train of thought. He is only using it to prepare his reader mentally for the next point he is going to make in his ongoing argument against the erroneous Jewish-Christian teaching that, in addition to belief, Believers must observe some “law” if they want to *inherit what was promised*.

Adam Knew. But He Never Told You

Before we enter the treacherous minefield presented by what Paul says next, let me at least point out where the mines are buried. Then, if you fail to take heed to what I tell you, I will not be responsible for you being dispersed to the “winds.” (That’s *parabolic imagery* the Prophets used to describe the fate of the Wicked.) First, you need to keep in mind that Paul has been *talking about the inheritance of what was promised* through belief in the Truth of *the promise*. Now he is going to start talking in terms of the reality to which that *parabolic imagery* points. To understand what Paul has in mind, however, one needs to know that eternal life is the essence of *what was promised* (although that abstract statement says nothing at all about the concrete *parabolic imagery* that God used to describe it).

Since knowledge of and continued belief in the Truth of God’s Word—*The Teaching, the promise*, Jesus Christ, or whatever image you prefer—is eternal life, Paul begins to speak *parabolically* concerning ignorance of the Truth of God’s Word—*The Teaching*— as “the

death.” He also describes Adam’s ignorant rejection of the Truth that God had explained to him as “the sin.” By contrast, he describes God’s subsequent provision of the Truth of *The Teaching* as “the gift” and His willingness to forgive anyone who believes as “the favor” (which is normally translated as “grace”). Equipped with that information, you are now ready to navigate some of the most difficult terrain to be found in all of the Scriptures:

*{We received reconciliation} because of this One, just as because of one man, **the sin** came into the world, and **the death** because of **the sin**, and thus **the death** came to all men because all sinned. For until law {came}, sin was in the world, but sin is not charged {to anyone’s account} when there is no law. But **the death** reigned from Adam to Moses—even over those who did not sin in the likeness of the violation of Adam, who is a type of the one who is coming, {the Antichrist}. By contrast, **the** {spiritual} **gift** is not in the same way also like the transgression. For if the Many died in the transgression of the one, much more did the favor of God and **the gift** by the favor of one Man, Jesus Christ, become an abundance for the Many. Also, **the** {spiritual} **gift** {of life} is not like {what is} because of the one who sinned. For, on the one hand, the verdict {of death} is from one {transgression} for condemnation, but on the other hand, **the gift** {of life} is from many transgressions for acquittal. For if, because of the transgression of the one, **the death** has reigned because of the one, much more will those who receive the abundance of the favor and **the gift** of what is required reign in life because of the One, Jesus Christ. Consequently then, just as because of one transgression, {the verdict} was to all men for condemnation {to death}, likewise also because of one act of what is required, {the verdict} was to all men for acquittal to life. For just as because of the disobedience of the one man, the Many were made sinners, likewise also because of the obedience of the One, the Many will be made innocent. But law slips in so that the transgression might become greater. Yet where **the sin** became greater, the favor became more than abundant so that, just as **the sin** reigned in **the death**, likewise also the favor might reign—because of what is required—in eternal life because of Jesus Christ our Lord.*

(Romans 5:12–21) —my interim translation

I am now going to go through that passage verse by verse to make sure everyone has ample opportunity

to understand what Paul *meant* by what he said. He has already spent a considerable amount of time explaining the fact that knowledge of the Truth—*The Teaching*, **the promise**, the *Living Word of God*, Jesus Christ, whatever you want to call it—can now be made available (by Evangelists) to anyone who will believe it because of the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. In this passage, the Apostle is now going to point out the result of what Adam did with his knowledge of the Truth and contrast that with the result stemming from what Christ did with His knowledge of the Truth:

*{We received reconciliation} because of this One, just as because of one man, **the sin** came into the world, and **the death** because of **the sin**, and thus **the death** came to all men because all sinned.*

(Romans 5:12) —my interim translation

Paul’s point is, the opportunity to be reconciled with God and *inherit* eternal life through a knowledge of the Truth is the result of Jesus Christ acting in accord with His knowledge of the Truth of *The Teaching of Moses*. By contrast, ignorance of that Truth (“death”) is the result of Adam’s failure to continue believing the Truth he had. But pay careful attention to one thing: Paul says, “the death came to all men because all sinned.” He is saying that ignorance of the Truth is always a matter of choice. Any person who is honestly seeking Truth will be able to identify it when he sees it. The difficulty in that regard is, nobody voluntarily seeks Truth because everybody wants to go on sinning.

For until law {came}, sin was in the world, but sin is not charged {to anyone’s account} when there is no law.

(Romans 5:13) —my interim translation

Don’t misunderstand. The fact that sin was not charged to anyone prior to the time of Moses does not change the fact that all men stood under condemnation because of their ignorance and unbelief. But then, I didn’t have to tell you that; Paul does so immediately:

But the death reigned from Adam to Moses—even over those who did not sin in the likeness of the violation of Adam, who is a type of the one who is coming, {the Antichrist}.

(Romans 5:14) —my interim translation

Now what do you suppose it *means* to “sin in the likeness of the violation of Adam”? Well, Paul is referring to a sin committed by someone who has full knowledge of the Truth. You see, it has always been the case that some have known the Truth and some haven’t. Noah knew the Truth. Others in his generation didn’t. Therefore, Noah’s sin would have been “in the likeness of the violation of Adam.” The sin of those who labored in ignorance in his generation would not have been “in the likeness of the violation of Adam.” Although the actions of both would have been sin, neither would have accrued guilt from their sin because God had not yet proclaimed the standard by which He would one day judge the actions of men. Of the two, however, only Noah had opportunity to be saved because only he knew the Truth. And we are, as Paul has taken great pains to show, saved only on the basis of our belief in the Truth.

By contrast, the {spiritual} gift is not in the same way also like the transgression. For if the Many died in the transgression of the one, much more did the favor of God and the gift by the favor of one Man, Jesus Christ, become an abundance for the Many.
(Romans 5:15) —my interim translation

Paul has already told us the source of “the gift” (eternal life through our knowledge of the Truth) and the source of “the death” (ignorance of the Truth) are alike in that both stem from the actions of one man. In this verse, however, he wants us to understand that is the *only* way in which the two are alike. Beyond that, one cannot even begin to compare the life that comes through a knowledge of Jesus Christ, *The Teaching*, with the death that faces those who mindlessly cling to their ignorance and unbelief.

Also, the {spiritual} gift {of life} is not like {what is} because of the one who sinned. For, on the one hand, the verdict {of death} is from one {transgression} for condemnation, but on the other hand, the gift {of life} is from many transgressions for acquittal.
(Romans 5:16) —my interim translation

Paul is continuing to point out the ways in which the actions of Adam and Christ lack any means of comparison. Because of his failure to continue believing the Truth, Adam transgressed God’s law and left all of his

descendants to face the devastating consequences of his unbelief. Jesus Christ, on the other hand, because of His knowledge of the Truth, voluntarily died for the transgressions of Adam’s descendants so that everyone might have opportunity to hear and understand the same Truth He understood.

For if, because of the transgression of the one, the death has reigned because of the one, much more will those who receive the abundance of the favor and the gift of what is required reign in life because of the One, Jesus Christ.
(Romans 5:17) —my interim translation

What can I say? I have already explained everything you need to know in order to understand what Paul has said there. If you cannot already “see” the *parabolic imagery* in that verse so as to understand it on your own, nothing I could say would ever help.

Consequently then, just as because of one transgression {the verdict} was to all men for condemnation {to death}, likewise also because of one act of what is required, {the verdict} was to all men for acquittal to life.
(Romans 5:18) —my interim translation

Paul has gotten to the heart of why he mentions Adam’s transgression. Adam sinned and left himself and his descendants outside the boundary of God’s favor. To understand why that is, you must first understand what happened when Adam and Eve sinned. Since I am preparing to explain those things in The Next Step program, I will refer you to what I say there. However, I will tell you that Paul’s point in this verse is exactly the same point that Jesus made when He spoke to Nicodemus:

*“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. **And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be***

exposed. But he who practices the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God."

(John 3:16–21)

I should tell you Jesus was mocking the ignorance of Nicodemus in what He said there. *Darkness* is a *parabolic image* that represents the ignorance of men. *Light* is a *parabolic image* of *The Teaching* and the effect it has on all living things in this Creation. Plug those two images in their appropriate spot and you should be able to see that all Jesus said to Nicodemus was this: *Men stand under the judgment of God because they are ignorant of the Truth, and they are ignorant of the Truth because they refuse to believe it when they hear it.* So. Where does that leave you?

For just as because of the disobedience of the one man, the Many were made sinners, likewise also because of the obedience of the One, the Many will be made innocent.

(Romans 5:19) —my interim translation

Again, there is not a whole lot I can say. I will tell you that Paul got the designation "The Many" from Daniel 12. As far as God is concerned, "The Many" are the only ones that matter in the long run. I realize that statement runs completely counter to the lie the Liar has promulgated. That lie goes something like this: God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life. The idiot who came up with that bit of goofiness had no idea at all of what God has accomplished or what He is seeking to accomplish through the agency of nothing more than His spoken Word. Let me pose a question for those of you who think you already know the Truth: If God is still hard at work creating a new creature within everyone who hears and believes the Truth of His Word, what day of the week is it? If that one stumps you, go ask a dinosaur to explain it for you. I'm sure he would be more than willing to detail the wonderful plan that God had for his life.

But law slips in so that the transgression might become greater. Yet where the sin became greater, the favor became more than abundant so that, just as the sin reigned in the death, likewise also the favor might reign—because of what is required—in eternal life because of Jesus Christ our Lord.

(Romans 5:20–21) —my interim translation

What is "the sin"? Unbelief. That is, it is a refusal to believe the Truth that God has made known. What is "the transgression"? It is any physical action that stems from a refusal to believe. Paul is merely pointing out the fact that after the public proclamation of God's law, both the physical and spiritual repudiation of God's Truth took on a much greater gravity. Yet the willingness of God to freely forgive all who have rejected Him has proven to be far greater still. I suggest you consider that solemn Truth while you still have time because, unfortunately, time is all you have at this point. It may well be true that the proverbial "it" is not over 'til the fat lady sings. But what makes you so sure she is not already waiting in the wings?

Dead Men Don't Change Their Minds

Now that I have convinced the vast majority of readers that the things I see in the Scriptures are so far removed from reality that they had best get away quickly, let me show you what Paul says concerning "The Way" every True Believer should view their continued existence in this realm. I should warn you from the outset that his mind-set is far more radical than you probably would have ever suspected. He begins this way:

Therefore, what will we say? Should we remain in the sin so that the favor would increase? Certainly not! We who have died to the sin? How can we still live in it?

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

Keep in mind the fact that Paul is still *talking about* "the sin" of unbelief. His point is, the one who has believed the Truth has died to unbelief. That is, it is possible for a True Believer to be faithful to the Lord although he knows only a small bit of the Truth. However, if someone has actually been born again through belief in the Gospel message of Jesus Christ, the Spirit of Truth within him is constantly urging him to seek more Truth—to move on in *The Teaching*—so that outright lies and blatant distortions of the Truth no longer control his actions. That makes it difficult for a Believer to go on contentedly believing half-truths and lies after having understood and believed just a part of the Truth.

Paul insists that it is inconceivable that a True Believer—one who has died to unbelief—would ever

reject additional Truth when he has opportunity to hear it. So I pose the question concerning those who are only curious about the Truth: Could it be that they have not been born again in the first place?

Or do you not know that as many as have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore, we have been buried with Him because of the baptism into the death so that just as Christ was raised from {among} dead ones because of the glory of the Father, so also we could walk in newness of life.

(Romans 6:3-4) —my interim translation

It is obvious that Paul is speaking *parabolically* in terms of a specific *parabolic image* related to the death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. I have been constantly emphasizing the fact that “the sin” Paul has in mind is unbelief, because without that bit of information, nothing he says here will make much sense. The same is true concerning his *parabolic* reference to “the death.” I have already told you he is pointing to the ignorance of the Truth that has a solid grip on the “heart” of every unregenerate person. But you also need to know that he says what he says here because “death” is a *parabolic image*.

I have explained some of the *parabolic imagery* that relates to death in the Passover Parable that Moses explained to the sons of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai. (See “Did Jesus Leave a Will?” *The Voice of Elijah*®, July 1991 or *The Passover Parable*.) For example, when Paul speaks about being baptized into the death of Christ, he is alluding to that *parabolic imagery*. But the Prophets, in referring to the Truth concerning our experience of death that they found explained in *The Teaching of Moses*, used the Canaanite god named “Death” as a *parabolic image* to mock the ignorance of their own generation. Therefore, Paul is also going to speak *parabolically* in terms of the imagery they used.

It would be a tremendous mistake for you to think that I am explaining all that Paul had in mind when he stated the things you find in the Book of Romans. I am only skimming the surface because, in what Paul says here, he is doing much more than just alluding to the *parabolic imagery*. He is, at the same time, explaining how the *parabolic imagery* describes a spiritual reality—ignorance of the Truth. That is why he has been constantly referring to unbelief as “the sin” and ignorance of the Truth as “the death.”

Although Paul appears to be pointing only to the *parabolic imagery* that the Prophets used to describe the death of Jesus Christ, he is also alluding to what that *parabolic imagery* tells us about what happened when Jesus Christ died on the cross. As Jesus indicated by what He said during His *parabolic pantomime* of the Passover Parable, the God Who is *The Word of Truth* abandoned Him shortly before He died (Matt. 27:46). His wretched cry of desperation reflects “the death”—ignorance of the Truth—to which He finally surrendered Himself in agony so that His physical body could expire. I put it that way because, as I assume you are already aware, on another occasion Jesus said no one could take His life from Him (John 10:17-18).

Jesus Christ knew before He allowed Himself to be captured that He would be tortured and brutally executed on God’s Passover. He knew that because it is clearly stated in the *parabolic imagery* of *The Teaching of Moses*. But He also knew that after He had given up His knowledge of the Truth and died on the cross, the same life-giving “Spirit” Who had abandoned Him shortly before He died would be *restored* to Him and bring about His Resurrection. And He knew that because of His death, that same “Spirit” would enable True Believers to “walk in newness of life,” just as Paul mentions.

I assume that if you are a True Believer, you can already see that when Paul says “walk in newness of life,” he is using the idiom “walk in *The Way*.” In so doing, he is referring to the fact that because of what Christ did in reconciling us to God, we are now able to understand the Truth of *The Teaching* so that we can “walk” in it mentally just as Jesus Christ did when He walked among us physically as a man. Our ability to “walk in the Spirit” includes the fact that we can now “see” and understand the *parabolic imagery* that stands behind the things that Paul says here.

Having said that, I probably should tell you this also. If you are having difficulty understanding what I have explained in this article, you might want to consider that you might not have ever responded to an accurate explanation of the Truth of the Gospel. The Truth you must hear and believe to be born again is, after all, an extremely specific message. If you have felt a tendency to vehemently disagree with my explanation of what Paul said, however, I can tell you without hesitation that the “spirit” within you is not the Spirit of Christ. So whose might it be? ■



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 newsletter, you stated that the Mosaic Law was added to The Teaching in order to "obligate the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to ritually act out some of the parabolic images described in The Teaching." You also said that after Jacob divided the promise among his sons, God used Corporate Israel as a mediator to hold the promise until it could finally be transferred to Abraham's Seed, Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:16, 19–20). In this same passage, he also states that the Law was added to The Teaching "because of transgressions" (Gal. 3:19). What transgressions does he have in mind here? And does this mean that the Law was added to The Teaching for more reasons than you have discussed so far? Also, can you explain what Paul is talking about in Romans 5:20 when he says, "the Law came in that the transgression might increase"? How does this relate to what he said in Galatians 3:19?

Elijah: I must raise an objection to the second statement that you attributed to me. If I stated the matter as you put it, I made a grave error. That is, if I said, "after Jacob divided *the promise* among his sons, God used Corporate Israel as a mediator to hold *the promise* until it could finally be transferred to Abraham's Seed, Jesus Christ," I misled you. I looked for that statement in the January issue and could not find it. Perhaps I made it

elsewhere. If I did, it was a serious mistake. The part that does not ring true is "transferred to Abraham's Seed, Jesus Christ." That is inaccurate because *the promise* was never transferred from Corporate Israel to Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ came into possession of *the promise* when God "cut off from" Israel all other Jews and Jesus became—in His Own Person—Corporate Israel. The only transfer of *the promise* that has ever occurred has been its transfer from one individual to the next as an *inheritance*. It was transferred that way for centuries—until God finally parked it with Corporate Israel, who held it as a mediator until the death of Jesus Christ. Since then, it has been handed down from one person to the next as an *inheritance*. That is what Paul is talking about in Galatians 3 and Ephesians 1.

To answer your question about Galatians 3:19, I refer you to something I stated on *The Way, The Truth, The Life* tapes. [Editor: See Order Form.] The Law does nothing more than define sin; it provides the standard by which we will be judged. It can never convey *the blessing* God promised to Abraham because it is not concerned with those who "keep the Law." It is concerned with those who break it. That is why it carries only the curse. Knowing that, you can perhaps see why Paul says this:

However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, "HE WHO PRACTICES THEM SHALL LIVE BY THEM." Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE"—in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. (Galatians 3:12–14)

The Teaching alone carries *the blessing* that Paul mentions in that passage. And the one who believes *The Teaching* gains *the promised blessing* by means of *inheritance*. That is, they assert their claim to *the promise* under the terms of the oral testament of Jesus Christ. In the divine plan, the transgressions of all Believers are forgiven and righteousness bestowed on the basis of faith—belief—alone, which is the sole requirement that God has placed on *the inheritance of the promise*. That is a simple enough concept to understand. However, God's forgiveness of the transgressions of Believers because of their belief tells us nothing concerning how He will deal with the transgressions of those who do

not believe. That is where the Law comes in. *The Teaching of Moses* tells us God will judge what is and is not a transgression and impose the curse on the basis of the Law. That is why Paul says this:

*Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, "And to seeds," as {referring} to many, but {rather} to one, "And to your seed," that is, Christ. What I am saying is this: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise. For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise; but God has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise. **Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions**, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed should come to whom the promise had been made.*

(Galatians 3:16–19)

From what Paul says here, you should be able to see that belief in *The Teaching* has always been the means by which men have been saved. But on the basis of what I have told you, you should also be able to see that God established the Law and attached it to *The Teaching* as a public declaration of the standard by which He would one day judge the actions of all mankind. In other words, He used the Law to define what was and was not a transgression. On that basis alone, He has identified all men as sinners, because we have all broken the Law (Rom. 3:23).

The fool will, of course, immediately object that not everyone has heard of God's law—thereby implying that God would be unjust to judge according to an unknown standard. Those who ignorantly raise that objection reveal their complete lack of logic by stupidly ignoring the fact that the vast majority of men have never had an opportunity to hear the Truth of the Gospel so that they *might* be saved.

Since the majority of mankind has never had the opportunity to hear the Gospel—which is the only means by which anyone will ever escape the curse of the Law—what difference does it make whether they have heard someone explain the standard by which we will all be judged? Nevertheless, the Apostle Paul addressed the issue of those who have not heard in his letter to the church at Rome. Pay close attention to what he says:

*But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who WILL RENDER TO EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS: to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation. {There will be} tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek, but glory and honor and peace to every man who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God. **For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law; and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law;** for not the hearers of the Law are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified. For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them, on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.*

(Romans 2:5–16)

Did you notice how adroitly Paul sidestepped the issue that fools want to raise? Look again at what he says:

For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law; and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law.

(Romans 2:12)

His point is, it doesn't matter whether sinners have heard about God's law or not. They already stand under the condemnation of God because they have not done what they know to be right (James 4:17). That agrees with what the Apostle John said in John 3:16–18. If sinners have heard the Law, the Law confirms that they are, indeed, guilty. If they have not heard the Law, they will "perish without the Law" because God has already pronounced us all guilty. The only ones with whom God has any concern at all are those who have heard *The Law of Moses* because, in hearing the Law, they should have also had opportunity to hear the Gospel, which is the introduction to *The Teaching* to

which the Law was attached. If they did not hear an accurate explanation of the Gospel, it is only because their blood is on someone else's hands.

Having dealt with the issue of the Law being added "because of transgressions," let me respond briefly to your second question by saying that the Law was added to *The Teaching* for a variety of reasons. I have explained some of the issues related to the function of the Law in *Not All Israel Is Israel* and in the first volume of *The Mystery of Scripture*. I will eventually explain all of the various facets and functions of the Law. For now, I can only tell you the Law has been seriously overrated and yet consistently underestimated. So let me move on to address your final concern. That is, how does Romans 5:20 relate to Galatians 3:19? The short answer is, It doesn't. But a somewhat longer answer is required to tell you why it doesn't.

To understand what Paul is *talking about* in Romans 5:20, you must first consider the verse in a much larger context. According to the New American Standard Bible, Paul says 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. 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 5:12–21)

I assume you are able to see that Paul is not *talking about* transgression of the Law in a general sense in verse 20. He specifically says "the transgression." If you go back and read from verse 15 on, you will see that he has been *talking about* the specific activity of Adam in which Adam transgressed a specific prohibition of God. That is "the transgression" Paul has in mind when he says this:

And the Law came in that the transgression might increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more.

(Romans 5:20)

Did you see the fine *distinction* that Paul *made* between the "transgression" and the "sin" of Adam in that verse? Of course you didn't. And the reason you didn't is because what Paul said has been hidden behind the presuppositions of the translator. If you want to get closer to what Paul actually said, you have to add a couple of definite articles to the translation so that it reads something like this:

*But law slips in so that the transgression might become greater. Yet where **the** sin became greater, **the** favor became more than abundant.*

(Romans 5:20) —my interim translation

In contrast to his ongoing discussion of "the sin" of Adam, Romans 5:20 is the last time that Paul mentions "the transgression" of Adam. The reason for that is he has *made an* extremely fine mental *distinction* between "the sin" and "the transgression" of Adam. In Paul's view, "the sin" of Adam was his unbelief. "The transgression" was the physical act of disobedience that resulted from his unbelief. Paul has no continuing interest in the physical act of Adam's transgression because he views it as nothing more than an outward expression of his "sin" of unbelief. Therefore, he does not mention it again.

I quoted the entire text of Romans 5:12–21 because the context tells us Paul has not been *talking about*

“transgression,” “sin,” and “grace” generally. He has been *talking about* a specific “transgression,” a specific “sin,” and a specific “grace.” A more literal translation than that provided by the New American Standard Bible discloses what Paul actually said in that passage. He begins the passage with a reference to the fact that he has been *talking about* the reconciliation with God that we have *received through our belief* in the atoning death of Jesus Christ:

{We received reconciliation} because of this One, just as because of one man, the sin came into the world, and the death because of the sin, and thus the death came to all men because all sinned. For until law {came}, sin was in the world, but sin is not charged {to anyone's account} when there is no law. But the death reigned from Adam to Moses—even over those who did not sin in the likeness of the violation of Adam, who is a type of the one who is coming, {the Antichrist}. By contrast, the {spiritual} gift is not in the same way also like the transgression. For if the Many died in the transgression of the one, much more did the favor of God and the gift by the favor of one Man, Jesus Christ, become an abundance for the Many. Also, the {spiritual} gift {of life} is not like {what is} because of the one who sinned. For, on the one hand, the verdict {of death} is from one {transgression} for condemnation, but on the other hand, the gift {of life} is from many transgressions for acquittal. For if, because of the transgression of the one, the death has reigned because of the one, much more will those who receive the abundance of the favor and the gift of what is required reign in life because of the One, Jesus Christ. Consequently then, just as because of one transgression, {the verdict} was to all men for condemnation {to death}, likewise also because of one act of what is required, {the verdict} was to all men for acquittal to life. For just as because of the disobedience of the one man, the Many were made sinners, likewise also because of the obedience of the One, the Many will be made innocent. But law slips in, so that the transgression might become greater. Yet where the sin became greater, the favor became more than abundant so that, just as the sin reigned in the death, likewise also the favor might reign—because of what is required—in eternal life because of Jesus Christ our Lord.

(Romans 5:12–21) —my interim translation

The favor (grace) that Paul had in mind is obviously the favor that God exhibited in providing the gift

that he mentions. And, as my translation indicates, the gift he had in mind is eternal life. That is clear from the fact that he contrasts it with the verdict of “the death.” Paul himself makes that clear later when he says this:

*For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
(Romans 6:23)*

However, Paul also wants to make sure his reader knows exactly what form the gift of eternal life takes. Therefore, he twice (Rom. 5:15, 16) uses a Greek word that elsewhere refers to the gift(s) of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 1:11; 6:23; 11:29; 12:6; 1 Cor. 1:7; 7:7; 12:4, 9, 28, 30, 31; 2 Cor. 1:11; 1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6). But that bit of information is of little help to the one who does not understand the *parabolic imagery* related to the Spirit. So let me briefly remind you that he is referring to the Holy Spirit as *The Word of Truth—The Apostolic Teaching*—that Believers in the Roman church believed to gain the acquittal he mentions.

I have already told you that “the death” Paul had in mind here is the ignorance of the Truth that came about as the result of “the sin” and “the transgression” of Adam. (See “Questions & Answers,” *The Voice of Elijah*®, April 1998.) From my discussion of what Paul said concerning death, you should be able to see that he continues to *talk about* “the death” that resulted from “the sin” of Adam well into Romans 8. But I should point out also that he continues to *talk about* “the sin” of Adam as well. However, the English reader cannot see that because Paul’s specific references to “the sin” are normally translated just “sin.”

Paul has an intense interest in Adam’s “sin” because Adam’s failure to believe the Truth he had heard resulted in a circumstance in which mankind now lives in ignorance of the Truth. As Paul goes on to explain, “the sin” of Adam, that is, his unbelief, still controls the one who does not—for whatever reason—believe the Truth of *The Apostolic Teaching*. And the only thing that any law can do for those controlled by ignorance is increase their desire to do the very things prohibited by that law.

Editor: While we're on the subject of the Law, I want to ask you about the Apostle Paul's varied use of the term "the Law" when talking about different things. Although he seems to use it most often in reference to the Mosaic

Law or the rituals associated with the Mosaic Law, there are times when he appears to use it as a synonym for legalism and other times when he appears to use it in reference to the Ten Commandments and still other times when he uses it to allude to The Teaching. When you couple this with the fact that Bible translators sometimes capitalize the word Law and sometimes don't (which tends to influence how we think of the term), it becomes difficult at times to discern what Paul has in mind when he mentions "the Law." What can you tell us about Paul's varied understanding of the term law? Are there some things you can tell us that might clear up the ambiguity created by the manifold use of this term?

Elijah: Since that is a more complex issue than I can treat in a few short paragraphs, I'll explain it in a series of articles beginning in this issue. (See "We Know the Law Is Holy. But What About the Commandment?")

Editor: *A subscriber recently sent us a question that I know a lot of people probably wonder (and speculate) about. I'm not sure how much you can say on the subject at this time, but I'll ask the question anyway. Would you, please, explain what you can about the Holy Trinity? How it is possible for God to be One yet exist in three Persons?*

Elijah: I would be happy to explain those things. But since they have already been explained by the Apostles, I'll just point out what they said and briefly comment on it. Here is what the Apostle John wrote:

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. There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John. He came for a witness, that he might bear witness of the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but {came} that he might bear witness of the light. There was the true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the

right to become children of God, {even} to those who believe in His name, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. John bore witness of Him, and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'" For of His fulness we have all received, and grace upon grace. For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained {Him.}
(John 1:1–18)

It should be obvious to anyone with an intelligence level only slightly greater than that of a moron that the Apostle John is expressing a somewhat different view of the nature of God than we have in the Church today. In his view, Jesus Christ and God are a Word—as a matter of fact, they are *exactly the same Word*. The Truth is, John is giving us a view of God that was common not only to Christianity and Judaism in his day, but also to the Greek culture. (See *The Way, The Truth, The Life* seminar tapes.) And Christians continued to view God that way—as a Word—until the beginning of the third century. At that time, Greek philosophers-turned-Christian began to change the way Christians viewed God. As a result of their goofy speculation, the Christian mind-set today has so little in common with the mind-set of early Christian Believers that it would be laughable if it weren't so sad.

If you study the first four New Testament works that are attributed to the Apostle John (the Gospel of John, 1 John, 2 John, and 3 John), you will find that he appears to be somewhat partial to the *parabolic image* in which *The Apostolic Teaching*—the Word of God—is viewed as *Light*, which (in his Gospel) he also refers to as the *Glory* of God. It is not obvious unless you understand the mythology that the Prophets were mocking when they used that same *parabolic image*, but John used this particular *parabolic image* as the criteria by which he carefully selected the material he included in his account of what Jesus Christ said and did. That is why he began his Gospel with the *parabolic statement* concerning the nature of God that I quoted above.

Now that John has given us the *parabolic image* by which God intends us to view Him, we can look at other passages where the author speaks in terms of this same image. One of the more obvious is this one:

*And I saw heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and He who sat upon it {is} called Faithful and True; and in righteousness He judges and wages war. And His eyes {are} a flame of fire, and upon His head {are} many diadems; and He has a name written {upon Him} which no one knows except Himself. And {He is} clothed with a robe dipped in blood; and His name is called **The Word of God**.*

(Revelation 19:11–13)

The *parabolic image* in which Jesus Christ is viewed as the Word of God stands behind a whole host of statements in the New Testament. For example, the Apostle Paul makes this *parabolic statement* in which he confirms John's claim that Jesus Christ is the *spoken Word of God* by which God created all things:

*For this reason also, since the day we heard {of it}, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please {Him} in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. **And He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation. For by Him all things were created, {both} in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created by Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.***

(Colossians 1:9–17)

That same belief is stated in other places without any hint that Jesus Christ is the Word of God the author had in mind. The writer of the Book of Hebrews puts it this way:

By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.

(Hebrews 11:3)

Peter says much the same thing, again without any allusion to the fact that he is *talking about* Jesus Christ as the Word of God:

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

(2 Peter 3:3–7)

To fully understand the *parabolic imagery* of the Word that tells us what God IS LIKE, it is necessary to know that the ancients thought spoken words were alive. That is, they believed that once a word—a statement—had been spoken, it took on a life of its own and continued to live in any person who heard it and believed it. While that concept may be difficult for the modern mind-set to assimilate, it is, nevertheless, the basis for the *parabolic image* of the Prophets and Apostles in which God is viewed as a *Living Word*. It stands squarely behind this verse:

For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

(Hebrews 4:12)

The unique thing about the *parabolic image* of the *Living Word of God* is the fact that it has been used to explain what happens when a person hears the Truth of the Gospel, believes it, and is born again. The *Living Word of God* that they hear takes up residence within them as a "spirit" and imparts life to them. That is what the Apostle Peter is *talking about* in this passage:

Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, {that is,} through the living and abiding word of God.

(1 Peter 1:22–23)

I assume you can see that Peter is alluding to the parabolic image in which the Gospel—the introductory part of *The Apostolic Teaching* that one must hear and believe to be born again—is a “seed” that has been planted in the Believer as the *Living Word of God*. Since I have already shown you the parabolic imagery in which *The Apostolic Teaching* is viewed as a seed (see “If You Plan to Reap What You Sow, You Had Better Watch What You Plant,” *The Voice of Elijah*®, April 1998), I will merely point out what James says in that regard:

In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we might be, as it were, the first fruits among His creatures.

(James 1:18)

Then, finally, we come back to the Apostle John. He says this concerning the *Living Word* that takes up residence in the Believer when they hear it and believe:

I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.

(1 John 2:14)

I could point out a multitude of passages in the New Testament where *The Apostolic Teaching* is viewed parabolically as the *Living Word of God*. But my explanation would make little sense to the average person because one first needs to know how the Greek word translated “spirit” relates to the parabolic image in which God is a *Living Word*. Since I have already explained those things in The Next Step program, my time will be better spent explaining other things.

Editor: I want to close by asking a question that relates to what we see going on in the Church today. As you know, it has become very popular these days for professing Christians to be politically active. In fact, political

activism has become so popular that many associated with the “Christian Right” have suggested that every “good” Christian should, in some way, be involved with political issues like abortion, homosexual rights, school prayer, and so forth. With this being an election year, I’m sure some of our readers would be interested in your thoughts on the subject. I know you have no intention of telling others what to do, but I thought maybe you could give us some sage advice (or some pertinent Bible verses if there are any) about mixing politics and Christianity. Would you do that?

Elijah: I have long since learned that the fine art of giving sage advice eludes me. It is difficult enough for me to make decisions that don’t leave me in a pickle. So I certainly don’t need to be telling others how they should live their lives. But I should probably point out the one verse in the Scriptures that is most telling in regard to the question you asked. James says this:

Therefore, to one who knows {the} right thing to do, and does not do it, to him it is sin.

(James 4:17)

The key phrase in that verse is “to him.” James’ point is, if someone thinks something is the right thing for him to do, it is sin “to him” if he doesn’t do it. That doesn’t necessarily mean it is sin to someone else. It merely means that the conscience of a person is informed by that person’s understanding of the Truth. At this point, the fool will object that I am talking about situational ethics. I’m not. *The Law of Moses* clearly defines certain things as sin—in all circumstances. Beyond that, however, the conscience of every individual determines what is and is not sin—for that individual.

What makes living as a Christian in a democracy so difficult is the fact that, like it or not, we are all part of the political process. Each person has one vote, and that vote counts. Therefore, each one needs to ascertain for himself what he believes God would have him do with his one vote. No one should try to decide that for him because God is going to judge all of us on the basis of our own actions. And if we cause someone to do the wrong thing by telling him what we think he should do, God may judge us for what he does. Under those circumstances, it seems to me that the best course of action for me would be to make sure that as many as possible have opportunity to understand the Truth. ■