



## Got a Problem With the God of the Old Testament?

There was after this the passage from the Gospel, where the Saviour said, that for this reason did He speak to those without in parables, that “seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand; lest they should be converted, and their sins be forgiven them.”

Now, our opponent will say, “If some persons are assuredly converted on hearing words of greater clearness, so that they become worthy of the remission of sins, and if it does not depend upon themselves to hear these words of greater clearness, but upon him who teaches, and he for this reason does not announce them to them more distinctly, lest they should see and understand, it is not within the power of such to be saved; and if so, we are not possessed of free-will as regards salvation and destruction.”

Effectual, indeed, would be the reply to such arguments, were it not for the addition, “Lest they should be converted, and their sins be forgiven them,”—namely, that the Saviour did not wish those who were not to become good and virtuous to understand the more mystical (parts of His teaching), and for this reason spake to them in parables; but now, on account of the words, “Lest they should be converted, and their sins be forgiven them,” the defence is more difficult.

In the first place, then, we must notice the passage in its bearing on the heretics, who hunt out those portions from the Old Testament where is exhibited, as they themselves daringly assert, the cruelty of the Creator of the world in His purpose of avenging and punishing the wicked, or by whatever other name they wish to designate such a quality, so speaking only that they may say that goodness does not exist in the Creator; and who do not deal with the New Testament in a similar manner, nor in a spirit of candour, but pass by places similar to those which they consider censurable in the Old Testament.

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For manifestly, and according to the Gospel, is the Saviour shown, as they assert, by His former words, not to speak distinctly for this reason, that men might not be converted, and, being converted, might become deserving of the remission of sins: which statement of itself is nothing inferior to those passages from the Old Testament which are objected to.

And if they seek to defend the Gospel, we must ask them whether they are not acting in a blameworthy manner in dealing differently with the same questions; and, while not stumbling against the New Testament, but seeking to defend it, they nevertheless bring a charge against the Old regarding similar points, whereas they ought to offer a defence in the same way of the passages from the New. And therefore we shall force them, on account of the resemblances, to regard all as the writings of one God. Come, then, and let us, to the best of our ability, furnish an answer to the question submitted to us.

We asserted also, when investigating the subject of Pharaoh, that sometimes a rapid cure is not for the advantage of those who are healed, if, after being seized by troublesome diseases, they should easily get rid of those by which they had been entangled. For, despising the evil as one that is easy of cure, and not being on their guard a second time against falling into it, they will be involved in it (again). Wherefore, in the case of such persons, the everlasting God, the Knower of secrets, who knows all things before they exist, in conformity with His goodness, delays sending them more rapid assistance, and, so to speak, in helping them does not help, the latter course being to their advantage.

Origen, "De Principiis," Book iii, Chap. i, in Roberts and Donaldson (Eds.), *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (1885), Vol. 4, pp. 317-318.

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## *A Note From the Editor*

Since beginning this series nearly three years ago, I have repeatedly emphasized a few basic points. Although I have tried to drive these points home in a number of different ways, the gist of what I have said can be summed up in three succinct statements:

*Every True Believer needs to be taught the Truth of God's Word by a legitimate Teacher called of God.*

*The Scriptures provide the only tangible means by which True Believers can confirm the truthfulness of what they hear taught by those who claim to be Teachers.*

*True Believers will have a much better chance of validating the Truth and coming to a clearer understanding of the Truth if they pay close attention to facts and details stated in the Scriptures.*

During the course of this series, I spent a great deal of time expanding on each of these basic points to one extent or another. For instance, I elaborated on the first point by saying that God never intended True Believers to come to an understanding of the Truth on their own by merely reading the Scriptures. God never would have established the office of Teacher in the Church (Eph. 4:11) if ascertaining the Truth from the Scriptures were that easy. And it's obviously not that easy, as is evidenced by the wide divergence of opinion that exists among scholars, pastors, and laymen in all areas of biblical study.

Although God clearly ordained the office of Teacher in the Church, I warned you repeatedly not to blindly follow any person or group—including *The Voice of Elijah*®—merely because they claim to know the Truth or claim the calling of a Teacher. Just because God established the office of Teacher in the Church doesn't mean He expects True Believers to foolishly listen to everyone who claims to be one. The fact is, false teachers are as prevalent in the Church today as they were in Israel in the time of Christ, if not more so. Therefore, God expects the wise to use discernment in judging who is and who is not a legitimate Teacher. He also expects them to use their knowledge of the Scriptures in making that judgment, which brings us to the second and third points above.

If it seems like a circular argument to say that True Believers cannot discern the Truth of the Scriptures without having been taught by a legitimate Teacher and then to say that True Believers cannot discern who is a legitimate Teacher without studying the Scriptures, it is. That's because each is dependent on the other. Without a legitimate Teacher to explain the Truth, one cannot apprehend the meaning and significance of the Scriptures. On the other hand, without the Scriptures, it is

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impossible to confirm or refute the accuracy of any teacher's words. So each provides checks and balances for the other. A legitimate Teacher provides the insight necessary for True Believers to understand the Scriptures, while the Scriptures, in turn, authenticate both the Teacher and his Teaching in the mind of the Believer. That happens when the Scriptures suddenly start making perfect sense to the Believer.

The responsibility of True Believers is to scrutinize what they hear taught by diligently studying the Scriptures so that they can verify the truthfulness of the "word" they have heard. Should True Believers fail to examine the Scriptures carefully by paying close attention to the facts and details contained therein, they run the risk of being deluded by any and every false teacher who has a talent for twisting the Scriptures to make them fit their version of the "truth." That's why I have repeatedly pointed to the Berean Christians as an example for True Believers to follow in our own day. Here is what Luke said about the Bereans:

*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 17:11-12)*

The Bereans were taught by no less an authority than the Apostle Paul, yet they refused to blindly accept his words. Instead they examined the Scriptures daily to see if his *Teaching* was confirmed within. And since it obviously was, many of them chose to believe the Word—The Apostolic Teaching—that Paul preached. But they did so only because they found supporting evidence in the Scriptures that confirmed the validity of The Teaching they heard taught. That's the way it should be.

The Scriptures should always be used to confirm the Word of God, which is not to say that the Scriptures and the Word of God are one and the

same. They are not. The Teaching is the Word of God; the Scriptures themselves are not. After all, the Word of God has been around since the very beginning (John 1:1 ff.), but the Scriptures have only been around since the time of Moses. So how can they be one and the same? Besides that, Jesus Himself said that the Scriptures have no power to produce eternal life; they merely bear witness of the One Who has (John 5:39-40).

Although the Scriptures provide the only tangible (physical; visible) means by which True Believers can verify the Truth, I do not discount the importance of the intangible Holy Spirit working within True Believers to help them understand the Truth. There is no question that the Holy Spirit is crucial to a True Believer's ability to understand the Truth. However, as Jesus Himself said, the Holy Spirit does not speak the Truth on His Own initiative, but, instead, takes the Truth He hears and uses that spoken Word to help True Believers come to an understanding of the Truth in their own minds (John 16:13). However, since The spoken Word of Truth—The Teaching—can only be verified in the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit is better able to disclose (John 16:13-15) the Truth to True Believers when they pay close attention to what is stated in the Scriptures.

That is why I suggested you approach the Scriptures with an inquisitive, detective-like mind. By that, I mean you should look at everything in the Scriptures as evidence that when taken as a whole, testifies to the Truth. The only way the Truth can and will be fully restored in these Last Days is by taking into account all the evidence contained in the Scriptures, not just bits and pieces of it. *The Voice of Elijah*® does not attempt to prove what we believe by using isolated proof texts from the Scriptures, because the entire Bible provides the only valid proof text of what is true.

Any legitimate Teacher who understands the Truth of the Scriptures should be able to explain all the evidence found in the Scriptures in such a way that True Believers can see how everything fits together as part of a coherent whole. True Believers who are then able to see the Truth in their mind's eye will have all the proof they need to convince

them that what they have heard is the Truth. For that to happen, however, True Believers must first be willing to forsake any and all preconceived ideas and assumptions (along with any and all emotional attachments that go with them) because these things hinder one's ability to logically evaluate all of the evidence and facts in the case.

If you are a True Believer, you need to be like a juror at a trial. You must put aside your biased opinions and presuppositions so that you can determine what is true based strictly on the evidence found in the Scriptures. The two sides presenting evidence in this case and trying to convince you what that evidence means are represented by *The Voice of Elijah*<sup>®</sup> and all other teachers in the Church who disagree with our beliefs (which is practically everyone). Up to this point, you have heard but one side of the story. The only question that remains is whether you have enough concern for the Truth to keep listening while *The Voice of Elijah*<sup>®</sup> presents its case in defense of the historic tenets of the Christian faith that were known and believed by the Early Church.

### *Help for the Honest of Heart*

For the benefit of the few among us who honestly want to know the Truth, I have spent nearly three years presenting a few helpful hints on Bible study that have benefited me in my own personal study. As I pointed out early on, the methodology I have presented in this series is not my own, at least not entirely. I picked up the idea a number of years ago from a course I took on how to study the Bible. The course had been put together by a staff member at a theological seminary so that it could be made available to the public.

Although I eventually discarded most of what I learned from the course, I did hang on to the basic concept I have presented here. I also held on to another concept that you would be wise to remember: It is very easy to overlook what the Bible actually says when we assume we already know what it says.

That is why we need to read the Bible as though we were reading it for the first time. Nothing breeds complacency like familiarity. If we

think we already know what a passage of Scripture says, we probably aren't going to read it as carefully as we otherwise would. I cannot tell you how many times I have read a passage of Scripture that I had read dozens of times before only to suddenly see something I had never seen before. While my ability to see new things in the Scriptures is due largely to the fact that I have been taught the Truth of The Teaching, thoughtful contemplation and careful examination of the Scriptures play a part as well.

The Bible study technique I have presented in this series is intended to help you, in one small way, scrutinize the Scriptures so that you can extract more information from the text than you might otherwise extract under normal circumstances. As I have stated repeatedly, however, there is a lot more to Bible study and ascertaining the Truth than I have shown you in this series. I am not trying to oversimplify a complex process. My only claims are that this method has helped me in my own study of the Bible and that I believe it can help you in yours.

The Bible study technique I have explained 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. The thing to keep in mind with this approach is that the ultimate objective is the first activity above—ascertaining specific information—not the second. The second activity is merely a tool to help you accomplish the first. If you train yourself to watch for certain key words and phrases as you read the Scriptures, they can help you glean specific information from the text. Here is some, but not necessarily all, of the information you should be looking for as you read the Bible:

- ▲ *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 said before, this is not an exhaustive list of things you should look for or pay attention to when reading the Scriptures. Other things could be added. For instance, you could add timing, order, or sequence (as a single item) to this list. That's because it is generally worthwhile for True Believers to know the timing associated with certain events (past, present, and future) and/or the sequence or order in which certain things have taken, are taking, will take, or should take place.

Since this is the last item I intend to add to the list above, I will complete what I started by giving you some key words that often denote timing, order, or sequence. They are *before*, *after*, *first*, *until*, *now*, *then*, and *when*. As always, it is imperative that you pay attention to the context in which these words are used since they all carry various meanings that depend on their contextual usage. That having been said, I'm sure you can see that each of these words has the capacity to denote something specific regarding timing, order, or sequence. Here are some examples of these words being used in this way:

*And Jesus said to him, "Truly I say to you, that you yourself this very night, **before** a cock crows twice, shall three times deny Me."*  
(Mark 14:30)

*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.'"*  
(John 1:15)

*For if we go on sinning willfully **after** receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain terrifying expectation of judgment, and THE FURY OF A FIRE WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES.*  
(Hebrews 10:26-27)

*Now I desire to remind you, though you know all things once for all, that the Lord, **after** saving a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe.*  
(Jude 1:5)

*"But seek **first** His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you."*  
(Matthew 6:33)

*"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside they are full of robbery and self-indulgence. You blind Pharisee, **first** clean the inside of the cup and of the dish, so that the outside of it may become clean also."*  
(Matthew 23:25-26)

*"For truly I say to you, **until** heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, **until** all is accomplished."*  
(Matthew 5:18)

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

*"If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin, but **now** they have no excuse for their sin."*  
(John 15:22)

*But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR {God's} OWN POSSESSION, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but **now** you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but **now** you have RECEIVED MERCY.*  
(1 Peter 2:9-10)

*For **now** we see in a mirror dimly, but **then** face to face; **now** I know in part, but **then** I shall know fully just as I also have been fully known.*  
(1 Corinthians 13:12)

*While they are saying, "Peace and safety!" **then** destruction will come upon them suddenly like birth pangs upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.*  
(1 Thessalonians 5:3)

"But *when* you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION standing where it should not be (let the reader understand), *then* let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains."

(Mark 13:14)

"But you shall receive power *when* the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

(Acts 1:8)

Was not Abraham our father justified by works, *when* he offered up Isaac his son on the altar?

(James 2:21)

These key words denote specific things related to timing, order, or sequence. However, the thing to remember about these key words, like all key terms, is that the context dictates their meaning and the sense in which they should be understood. So always pay attention to the context when trying to determine how key words are being used.

## A Final Review

Now I want to briefly review all the key words and phrases I have covered during this series so that you have a handy reference with all this information in one place. I have also included the various substitute words that can be mentally substituted in place of certain key words to help you better discern how those key words are being used.

Since I won't be discussing any of this information in great detail here, I have referenced the newsletter in which all these terms were originally discussed so that you can go back and review that information if you wish or purchase a back issue if you need one. (See Order Form in this issue.) I have also included a brief summary of what you are ultimately looking for in each of the categories below. And finally, I have included examples from the Scriptures for most of the key words and phrases to demonstrate how they can denote specific types of information.

*Stated reasons why something is true* (July and October 1996). **Key words and phrases:** *because, for, for this reason, for this purpose, that, so that, and in order that.* You can mentally substitute *because* in place of *for* and *so that* or *in order that* in place of *that* when there is doubt about how these two words are being used. If the statement still makes sense after the substitution, then a reason or purpose for something is most likely being stated. **What you are looking for:** stated reasons that explain *why*—*why* something is true, *why* something has happened, *why* something is required, *why* something is important, etc:

*Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.*

(1 John 4:1)

*Let each one {do} just as he has purposed in his heart; not grudgingly or under compulsion; for God loves a cheerful giver.*

(2 Corinthians 9:7)

*And because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me—to keep me from exalting myself!*

(2 Corinthians 12:7)

*The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil.*

(1 John 3:8b)

*Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.*

(Ephesians 6:11)

*And he must have a good reputation with those outside {the church,} so that he may not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.*

(1 Timothy 3:7)

*But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord in order that we may not be condemned along with the world.*

(1 Corinthians 11:32)

**How something is accomplished** (January 1997). **Key words:** *by* and *through*. **What you are looking for:** the means by which (that is, how) something is accomplished, obtained, or brought to fruition:

*And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed **by** the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.*  
(Romans 12:2)

*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 1:23)

**Conditions that must be met** (April 1997). **Key words and phrases:** *if*, *unless*, *until*, and *as long as*. **What you are looking for:** stipulated conditions and those things that are dependent on, cannot take place without, or will be the end result of those conditions being met or not being met:

*“For **if** you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But **if** you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.”*  
(Matthew 6:14–15)

*“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, **unless** it abides in the vine, so neither {can} you, **unless** you abide in Me.”*  
(John 15:4)

*I will go away {and} return to My place  
**Until** they acknowledge their guilt and seek My face;  
In their affliction they will earnestly seek Me.*  
(Hosea 5:15)

*At the command of the LORD the sons of Israel would set out, and at the command of the LORD they would camp; **as long as** the cloud settled over the tabernacle, they remained camped.*  
(Numbers 9:18)

**Who is being spoken to or about** (July 1997). **Key words:** *I*, *you*, *your*, *he*, *she*, *his*, *her*, *him*, *we*, *us*, *our*, *whom*, *they*, *them*, *their*, *those*, *these*, and *both*. These key words let you know in most cases that an individual or group is being referred to or addressed, although some of these words can refer to things. **What you are looking for:** *who* is being addressed (spoken to), *who* is being referred to (spoken about), or, in some cases, *who* is doing the speaking. This information is usually easy to determine but sometimes takes some thought. Whatever you do, don't overlook the obvious. For instance, we know that the New Testament epistles were originally written to born-again Believers in the Church. Therefore, you need to keep in mind *who* is being addressed when warnings like this are issued:

*But I say, walk by the Spirit, and **you** will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that **you** may not do the things that **you** please. But if **you** are led by the Spirit, **you** are not under the Law. Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn **you** just as I have forewarned **you** that **those** who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*  
(Galatians 5:16–21)

**Contrasts and comparisons between two things** (October 1997). **Key words and phrases:** *like*, *as*, *just as*, *so also*, *so shall*, *likewise*, *in the same way*, and *but*. The key word *but* is associated with contrasts. Be careful to pay attention to the contextual usage of *as* and *but*. Mentally substitute the word *like* or the phrase *in the same way* in place of *as* when there is doubt about its usage. If the statement still makes sense after the substitution, you most likely have a comparison. **What you are looking for:** what two things are being compared and whether the comparison is parabolic in nature (that is, has a hidden meaning and significance) or should be taken literally. In a contrast, look for the

distinction or difference that is being emphasized between two or more people, places, or things. Contrasts, like comparisons, can either be parabolic or literal:

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

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

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

*“For **just as** the lightning comes from the east, and flashes even to the west, **so shall** the coming of the Son of Man be.”*  
(Matthew 24:27)

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

*“Woe {to you} when all men speak well of you, for **in the same way** their fathers used to treat the false prophets.”*  
(Luke 6:26)

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

*Exceptions or restrictions to what has been said* (January 1998). **Key words:** *except, unless, but, and only.* Again, pay attention to the contextual usage of these words. Mentally substitute *except* in place of *but*; if the statement still makes sense, *but* is probably denoting an exception. *Unless* generally denotes both an exception and a condition (See above.) because certain conditions and exceptions go hand

in hand. Here’s why: Those who are the exception in God’s eyes are those who meet the conditions He has set forth (see John 3:3 below). *What you are looking for:* any person, group, or thing that is designated as distinctly unique (the one and only) or as the exception to the rule. Also, look for limitations or restrictions that are imposed on individuals, groups, or things:

*“Not that any man has seen the Father, **except** the One who is from God; He has seen the Father.”*  
(John 6:46)

*Jesus answered and said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, **unless** one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”*  
(John 3:3)

*Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, **but** through Me.”*  
(John 14:6)

*But He answered and said, “I was sent **only** to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”*  
(Matthew 15:24)

*Repeated words and phrases* (April 1998). There are no key words. *What you are looking for:* recurring words and phrases that appear close to each other. This generally indicates that something in particular is being emphasized and that it is the central theme that ties together a passage, chapter, or set of chapters. An example of this can be found in the seven letters written to the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3. Each letter specifically mentions the need to “overcome” and thereby provides a common theme of the two chapters: True Believers must overcome sin or go to Hell.

Repeated words and phrases can also help us see when an author or speaker is tying together thoughts that seem unrelated. For instance, Jesus’ discourse in Matthew 18:1–14 appears to be full of disjointed thoughts that are completely unrelated. Yet throughout His discourse, He never stops talking about the little children, whom He refers to as “these little ones” (vv. 6, 10, and 14). Once we realize

He is using little children as a parabolic image to represent born-again Believers (v. 3), we can then see that everything He says in this passage somehow relates to True Believers in the Body of Christ. Although this insight alone does not tell us everything we need to know about this passage (only a legitimate Teacher can do that), we can at least see that everything is related.

**Cause and effect** (July 1998). **Key words:** *therefore, if, and then* (when used in conjunction with each other), and almost any phrase containing the word *result*, e.g., *as a result, with the result, or resulting in*. I originally excluded *therefore* from this list because I found it seldom used in the New Testament to denote cause and effect. However, I failed to examine its usage in the Old Testament as closely as I should have. The truth is, *therefore* is used quite often in the Old Testament to denote cause and effect, so I have included it here. *If* often denotes cause and effect as well as conditions (see above), because when conditions are met or not met, they cause something else to happen, which creates an effect. This is seen a great deal in the Pentateuch where Moses lays out several if-this-happens-then-do-this type of stipulations. **What you are looking for:** any kind of action, event, or circumstance that directly or indirectly causes a subsequent action, event, or circumstance to take place, which is the effect:

*Then the Lord said,  
"Because this people draw near with their words  
And honor Me with their lip service,  
But they remove their hearts far from Me,  
And their reverence for Me*

*consists of tradition learned {by rote,}  
Therefore behold, I will once again deal marvelously  
with this people, wondrously marvelous;  
And the wisdom of their wise men shall perish,  
And the discernment of their discerning men  
shall be concealed."*

(Isaiah 29:13–14)

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

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

*But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to  
God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctifica-  
tion, 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)*

**Conclusions and summaries** (October 1998). **Key words:** *therefore* and *so then*. These two terms are used to denote conclusions and summaries most often in the New Testament. *Therefore* is used quite often in both the Gospels and the Apostolic letters—the epistles—while *so then* is used primarily in the epistles. Since both Jesus and the Apostles used logical arguments to make points, it stands to reason that they also drew logical conclusions as well, many of which begin with *therefore* or *so then*. The use of *therefore* in the New Testament differs somewhat from its use in the Old Testament, where it generally denotes cause and effect. This difference is due largely to the fact that the Prophets were not trying to make persuasive arguments in the Old Testament that required conclusions and summaries, as were Jesus and the Apostles in the New Testament. They were primarily concerned with making veiled statements pertaining to "The Mystery" of what God had done, was doing, and would someday do with and to Israel, His firstborn Son. **What you are looking for:** statements that conclude or sum up an author or speaker's previously stated thoughts; any statement that takes you to the heart of what a speaker or author was previously talking about:

*Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of  
His might. Put on the full armor of God, that you may  
be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.  
For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but  
against the rulers, against the powers, against the*

*world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual {forces} of wickedness in the heavenly {places.} Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.*

*(Ephesians 6:10–13)*

*And let the one who is taught the word share all good things with him who teaches. Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life. And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary. So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.*

*(Galatians 6:6–10)*

## Final Thoughts

The truth is, there is a whole lot more to Bible study than I have explained here or am capable of explaining. Since I am not an expert in the area of Bible study, all I have tried to do is explain a technique that has helped me, a common layman, understand more of what I read in the Scriptures.

My final word of encouragement to you is to hang in there and keep studying the Scriptures. Don't be discouraged by what you don't yet fully understand. Learn to be patient. It is far better that you wait for the Lord to show you the Truth, via a legitimate Teacher, than to become impatient and forge ahead into speculation. Having a little true knowledge is far better than having a lot of false knowledge. So don't force the issue when it comes to understanding the Scriptures. If you can see generally what a passage is talking about, be content with that limited understanding until you have an opportunity to hear the specifics fully explained.

As a final note, I would like to remind you of a suggestion I made early in this series. If you have never tried highlighting your Bible as you study, you might want to give it a try and see if you like it. I'm talking about using a pencil (a mechanical pencil works best) to highlight (circle or underline) key

words and phrases as you read the Scriptures. The advantage of using a pencil is that it can be erased if necessary.

The benefit of highlighting key words, to my way of thinking, is that it makes them stand out for easy reference when you come back to a passage of Scripture. These visual markers readily catch your eye and remind you that specific information of some kind is being denoted. Personally, I have found this method to be the most helpful when reading the words of Christ and the Apostles because they constantly state things of theological importance that are worth noting and remembering.

Try this experiment. Pick one of the Apostle Paul's shorter epistles and carefully read through it while at the same time highlighting (circling or underlining) these five basic key words: *because, by, through, if, and like*. If you wish to highlight other key words as you go along, that's fine. But for those of you who don't know whether you like the idea of marking in your Bible, don't overdo it. Highlight the key words above (when the context dictates that you should) and then go back after you are done and read the epistle again. This time, however, pause at each highlighted word and momentarily reflect on what is being said and try to tie together specific statements and thoughts before continuing. If after going through this process you can't honestly say that you see any benefit in it, then give it up. There is no reason to spend time doing something that does not benefit you.

I wish you the best in your studies. Down the road, I hope to discuss resource materials such as concordances, commentaries, Bible dictionaries, etc. and how they can help, or hinder, you in your study of the Bible. But don't look for any of this right away. All I can tell you is that you will see it when you see it.

*Allen Fries*

# How Do You Tell the Difference Between an Alcoholic and a Drunkard?

**F**or the April 1991 issue of *The Voice of Elijah*<sup>®</sup>, I submitted a short article titled "The Forecast." I did the same for the next three issues as well. And I fully intended to continue submitting articles for that column in all subsequent issues. But then, in writing the main article for the April 1992 issue, I became so engrossed in researching that article that I did not submit anything for publication as "The Forecast" in that issue. My neglect in that regard continued for well over a year and a half until finally, after being urged by others, I revived the column in the December 1993 issue of *The Voice of Elijah*<sup>®</sup> *Update*.

From that issue through the August 1994 issue of *The Update*, I missed only the month of June in submitting short articles for publication as "The Forecast." By then, however, I had almost completely lost interest in "forecasting" future events. That is why, from September 1994 until now, the only issue of *The Update* in which you will find "The Forecast" is the June 1995 issue.

I began "The Forecast" in 1991 with the intention of providing True Believers insight into the *parabolic imagery* related to the Prophet Elijah and the role that he played in ending the drought in the days of Ahab, king of Israel. But a year after I began the column, in April of 1992, I stumbled onto a phenomenal Truth concerning what the ministry of "Elijah" was all about. In light of the new information I had uncovered, I was no longer certain that I could see how all the things I already understood in regard to my calling fit together with the "latter rain" and other things the Prophets had stated concerning the Antichrist.

Knowing what my mind-set was at the time, you can, perhaps, understand why I was no longer quite so

willing to put my beliefs down on paper. It should also not surprise you to find that in writing every subsequent submission for "The Forecast," I assiduously avoided any explanation of the *parabolic imagery* which had originally provided the basis for the column. Instead, I *talked about* current events in more general terms. Therefore, the only legitimate contributions I have made toward my original goal can be found in the four issues of *The Voice of Elijah*<sup>®</sup> mentioned above. The things I submitted for publication in *The Update*, although valid in themselves, contribute little, if anything, to my original purpose.

Now that nearly seven years have passed since I discovered the startling Truth about the nature of my calling, the dust has finally settled somewhat, and I can see that the things I understood early on are still just as valid as they were when I wrote the first installment of "The Forecast." Hence, my intentions at this time are to resume that column with this issue and continue on until the End. My purpose remains the same as when I wrote the first four installments.

## *All the Prophets Were Drips*

The Early Church Fathers tell us that shortly before the Antichrist appears pretending to be Jesus Christ, a man whom the Prophet Malachi and Jesus Christ called "Elijah" (Mal. 4:5; Matt. 17:11; Mark 9:12) will appear. They claim he will come heralding the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and warning True Believers not to be taken in by the masquerade of the Antichrist. (See *The AntiChrist*.) In this article, I plan to explain the *parabolic imagery* that Malachi and all the other Prophets used to *talk about* that *parabolic* "Elijah." It is intricately intertwined with the *parabolic image* of

the rain that ends the drought the Prophet Amos mentions in this passage:

*"Behold, days are coming," declares the Lord GOD,  
 "When I will send a famine on the land,  
 Not a famine for bread or a thirst for water,  
 But rather for hearing the words of the LORD.  
 And people will stagger from sea to sea,  
 And from the north even to the east;  
 They will go to and fro to seek the word of the LORD,  
 But they will not find {it.}  
 In that day the beautiful virgins  
 And the young men will faint from thirst."  
 (Amos 8:11-13)*

It should be obvious that Amos is speaking in terms of a specific *parabolic imagery*. But unless one knows the source of that imagery, one has no way of knowing how or why Moses and the Prophets used it to describe the ministry of the one whom Malachi calls "Elijah."

*"For behold, the day is coming, burning like a furnace; and all the arrogant and every evildoer will be chaff; and the day that is coming will set them ablaze," says the LORD of hosts, "so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. But for you who fear My name the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings; and you will go forth and skip about like calves from the stall. And you will tread down the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day which I am preparing," says the LORD of hosts. "Remember the law of Moses My servant, {even the} statutes and ordinances which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel. Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD. And he will restore the hearts of the fathers to {their} children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse."  
 (Malachi 4:1-6)*

First of all, you need to know the origin of the *parabolic imagery* in which a *parabolic* Elijah will come heralding the Day of the Lord, that is, the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. It is based on what Jeremiah tells us about the activities of the Prophet Elijah in the First Book of Kings. Jeremiah begins his account of Elijah's ministry this way:

*Now Ahab the son of Omri became king over Israel in the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah, and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty-two years. And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD more than all who were before him. And it came about, as though it had been a trivial thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he married Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and went to serve Baal and worshiped him. So he erected an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he built in Samaria. And Ahab also made the Asherah. Thus Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel than all the kings of Israel who were before him. In his days Hiel the Bethelite built Jericho; he laid its foundations with the {loss of} Abiram his first-born, and set up its gates with the {loss of} his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the LORD, which He spoke by Joshua the son of Nun. Now Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the settlers of Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the LORD, the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, surely there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word."  
 (1 Kings 16:29-17:1)*

In recording what Elijah said in regard to there being "neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word," Jeremiah is mocking those in his day and in our own who are ignorant of how he, Moses, and the other Prophets used the *parabolic image* of dew or rain to speak concerning *The Teaching*. *Parabolically* speaking, the Word of the Lord that came "by my word," as the Prophet Elijah puts it, was water that "dripped" from Heaven. That is, it was both dew and rain. Let me show you why I say that.

I have already explained how Jesus used the *parabolic image* in which *The Teaching* is a *seed* that can be either planted in the soil or ground up and made into bread. (See "If You Plan to Reap What You Sow, You Had Better Watch What You Plant," *The Voice of Elijah*®, April 1998.) On several occasions (among them, "Thy Kingdom Come. Thy Will Be Done, on Earth," *The Voice of Elijah*®, April 1997), I also pointed out the following passage. In it, Moses succinctly summarizes the point of the *parabolic pantomime* in which God led the sons of Israel around in the wilderness for forty years:

*"All the commandments that I am commanding you today you shall be careful to do, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the LORD*

swore {to give} to your forefathers. And you shall remember all the way which **the LORD your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. And He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD.**"

(Deuteronomy 8:1–3)

What Moses states in that passage is absolutely crucial to your understanding of the things that he and the other Prophets concealed behind their use of weather-related *parabolic imagery*. In that passage, Moses is obviously comparing *The Teaching* to the manna that God provided the sons of Israel. In so doing, he has carefully defined an essential *parabolic image*. However, the *parabolic image* in which *The Teaching* is the bread of life is not what I am concerned with here. I only mention that image because I want to show you the link that exists between the *parabolic image* in which *The Teaching* is the bread of life—the manna that comes down from Heaven—and the *parabolic image* in which *The Teaching* is the water of life—the dew or rain that, likewise, comes down from Heaven. Not surprisingly, those two images can be found linked in what Moses tells us concerning the manna that God provided the sons of Israel:

*And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "I have heard the grumblings of the sons of Israel; speak to them, saying, 'At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread; and you shall know that I am the LORD your God.'" So it came about at evening that the quails came up and covered the camp, and **in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. When the layer of dew evaporated, behold, on the surface of the wilderness there was a fine flake-like thing, fine as the frost on the ground.** When the sons of Israel saw {it,} they said to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. **And Moses said to them, "It is the bread which the LORD has given you to eat. This is what the LORD has commanded, 'Gather of it every man as much as he should eat; you shall take an omer apiece according to the number of persons each of you has in his***

*tent."* And the sons of Israel did so, and {some} gathered much and {some} little. When they measured it with an omer, he who had gathered much had no excess, and he who had gathered little had no lack; every man gathered as much as he should eat.

(Exodus 16:11–18)

If we are to believe what Moses tells us here, the manna that the sons of Israel ate in the wilderness came down from Heaven inextricably mixed with a dew that covered the ground during the night. When the morning sun evaporated the dew, only the manna remained. But that event, like every other event the Scriptures tell us God orchestrated, provides a *parabolic image* that describes a far different reality in terms of this physical reality. In that image, *The Teaching* is the bread of life—the manna that came down from Heaven—and the words of the Prophets are the dew in which *The Teaching* is contained. But you don't have to take my word for it. Here is what Moses said about his spoken expression of *The Teaching* as the rain or dew that, like the manna it contained, came down from Heaven:

*"Give ear, O heavens, and let me speak;  
And let the earth hear the words of my mouth.*

*Let my teaching drop as the rain,  
My speech distill as the dew,  
As the droplets on the fresh grass  
And as the showers on the herb.*

*For I proclaim the name of the LORD;  
Ascribe greatness to our God!"*

(Deuteronomy 32:1–3)

In that passage, Moses certainly implies that *The Teaching* he taught came down to Earth LIKE ("as") rain or dew when he, the Prophet of God, spoke. But to fully understand the basis for the *parabolic image* in which the words of the Prophets—as well as every other legitimate Teacher of God's Truth—are *parabolically* a dew or rain which contains *The Teaching*, one needs to know a bit more about a simple wordplay that the Prophets understood quite well. If you look closely at the song that Deborah, a Prophetess, and her field general Barak sang after the defeat of Sisera at Mt. Tabor, you will find the following verse embedded in it:

*"LORD, when Thou didst go out from Seir,  
When Thou didst march from the field of Edom,*

*The earth quaked, the heavens also dripped,  
Even the clouds dripped water."  
(Judges 5:4)*

We will ignore for now the fact that Deborah is talking about *The Teaching* in terms of the *parabolic image* of rain. The word *dripped* is the only thing in that verse that I want to key on here. "Dripped" is a translation of the Hebrew verb *nataph*. And although it is not obvious that Deborah is speaking in terms of a specific *parabolic image* that describes *The Teaching*, even a dolt should be able to see that she is using that verb to describe rain as something that "drips" from the clouds. At least, that is the way the individual who translated the following verses from Psalm 68 understood it. The psalmist uses the same verb that Deborah used in the verse above, but the translator chose to translate it as "drop" instead of "drip" and assumed an implied "rain":

*O God, when Thou didst go forth before Thy people,  
When Thou didst march through the wilderness, Selah.  
The earth quaked;  
The heavens also dropped {rain} at the presence of God;  
Sinai itself {quaked} at the presence of God, the God of Israel.  
Thou didst shed abroad a plentiful rain, O God;  
Thou didst confirm Thine inheritance,  
when it was parched.  
(Psalm 68:7–9)*

A cursory look at the parallel members of that piece of poetry indicates that the implied noun in verse 8 is most likely *dew* instead of *rain*. But for the sake of poetic monotony, I'll go along with *rain*. The only point I want to make is, when the Hebrew verb *nataph* is used to speak concerning water that falls from the sky, it means either "drip" or "drop" in the sense of "precipitate." You need to know that because the same verb is used to describe the activity of the Prophets in speaking to Israel. While learned scholars consider that use of the term to be "figurative," you already know (provided you have ears to hear) that in the Scriptures, a *figurative* use of a term is quite often nothing more than a *parabolic* use.

Having told you what biblical scholars have long known to be true, let me show you a few passages where the *parabolic* use of the Hebrew verb *nataph* can be found. I have bolded the English translation of the Hebrew verb in the following passages so that you can

easily see where the Scriptures tell us the Prophets "dripped on" (not "spoke against" or "spoke to") Israel:

*"Son of man, set your face toward Teman, and **speak out against** the south, and prophesy against the forest land of the Negev, and say to the forest of the Negev, 'Hear the word of the LORD: thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I am about to kindle a fire in you, and it shall consume every green tree in you, as well as every dry tree; the blazing flame will not be quenched, and the whole surface from south to north will be burned by it.'"  
(Ezekiel 20:46–47)*

*"Son of man, set your face toward Jerusalem, and **speak against** the sanctuaries, and prophesy against the land of Israel; and say to the land of Israel, 'Thus says the LORD, "Behold, I am against you; and I shall draw My sword out of its sheath and cut off from you the righteous and the wicked.'"  
(Ezekiel 21:2–3)*

*"And now hear the word of the LORD: you are saying, 'You shall not prophesy against Israel nor shall you **speak against** the house of Isaac.'"  
(Amos 7:16)*

*"Arise and go,  
For this is no place of rest  
Because of the uncleanness that brings on destruction,  
A painful destruction.  
If a man walking after wind and falsehood  
Had told lies {and said},  
'I will **speak out to** you concerning wine and liquor,'  
He would be spokesman to this people."  
(Micah 2:10–11)*

Complete understanding of the *parabolic* use of the Hebrew verb *nataph* in those contexts demands a much greater insight into the mind-set that stands behind them than I intend to provide at this time. That is especially the case regarding Micah 2:11. In this verse, the Prophet is contrasting the water of life which "dripped" LIKE rain from the mouth of God's Prophets with the *parabolic* wine and strong drink that "dripped" LIKE rain from the lips of false prophets. That is, he is contrasting the Prophets' explanation of *The Teaching of Moses* with the lies taught by all those who were ignorant of that Truth. However, I know that only because I

know from other sources that false teaching as a source of intoxication is a common *parabolic image* in *The Teaching*. Jesus was speaking in terms of that image when He said this:

*And the Lord said, "Who then is the faithful and sensible steward, whom his master will put in charge of his servants, to give them their rations at the proper time? Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes. Truly I say to you, that he will put him in charge of all his possessions. But if that slave says in his heart, 'My master will be a long time in coming,' and begins to beat the slaves, {both} men and women, and to eat and drink and get drunk; the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect {him,} and at an hour he does not know, and will cut him in pieces, and assign him a place with the unbelievers."*  
(Luke 12:42–46)

What can I say? Jesus is speaking in terms of a specific *parabolic image* in which alcoholic beverages are false teaching. He is making the point that the wrath of God will fall on any legitimate leader of the Church who has started drinking the wine of false teaching by the Time of the End. So what makes you think He will spare you, if after hearing the Truth of *The Teaching*, you choose to twist and distort it so that it becomes a lie that you find more appealing? And what are we to say about the time—"on the third day" (John 2:1)—when Christ, speaking in *parabolic pantomime*, said He would turn the *parabolic* water into wine at a wedding feast? Enough said about that. I am explaining the *parabolic image* of the water, not the wine.

## ***Drink the Water, Not the Wine***

There are several passages in the Prophets that speak in terms of the *parabolic image* in which *The Teaching* comes down in the rain or dew that falls from Heaven. I have repeatedly quoted the following passage from Isaiah 55 only because I happen to like "The Way" Isaiah ties all the *parabolic imagery* together. He is speaking in terms of Jesus Christ the Word of God—Who is, in Himself, *The Teaching*—coming down from Heaven to accomplish the work for which God sent Him:

*Seek the LORD while He may be found;  
Call upon Him while He is near.*

*Let the wicked forsake his way,  
And the unrighteous man his thoughts;  
And let him return to the LORD,  
And He will have compassion on him;  
And to our God,  
For He will abundantly pardon.  
"For My thoughts are not your thoughts,  
Neither are your ways My ways," declares the LORD.  
"For {as} the heavens are higher than the earth,  
So are My ways higher than your ways,  
And My thoughts than your thoughts.  
For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven,  
And do not return there without watering the earth,  
And making it bear and sprout,  
And furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater;  
So shall My word be which goes forth from My mouth;  
It shall not return to Me empty,  
Without accomplishing what I desire,  
And without succeeding {in the matter}  
for which I sent it."  
(Isaiah 55:6–11)*

I have on various occasions also pointed out what Hosea said about Jesus Christ, "the Lord" Who comes to the True Believer as "rain" "on the third day." But until now, I have never explained that in the *parabolic image*, the "rain" of the Lord always "drips" LIKE rain from the mouth of anyone who has in some way attained insight into the Truth and then been commissioned to teach others that Truth by the one from whom they gained it. You need to know that is the process God ordained for the transfer of *The Teaching* from one generation to the next when Moses established *The Teaching*. It could spare you the fate of all mystics and false teachers.

In *The Mystery of Scripture, Volume 1*, I have told you that Moses appointed the priests as the legitimate Teachers of Israel. But because the priests repeatedly "turned Israel aside from *The Way*" by distorting *The Teaching of Moses*, the task of teaching the Truth most often defaulted to the Prophets whom God sent to *restore The Teaching*. Thus we find the Prophet Hosea describing the Resurrection of the Body of Jesus Christ this way:

*"Come, let us return to the LORD.  
For He has torn {us,} but He will heal us;  
He has wounded {us,} but He will bandage us.  
He will revive us after two days;*

*He will raise us up on the third day  
That we may live before Him.  
So let us know, let us press on to know the LORD.  
His going forth is as certain as the dawn;  
And He will come to us like the rain,  
Like the spring rain watering the earth.”*  
(Hosea 6:1–3)

The *parabolic imagery* that Hosea is using in that passage speaks directly concerning the Resurrection of Christ. However, as I have explained on several other occasions, the Resurrection of Jesus Christ includes not only the Resurrection of His *literal* physical body but also the Resurrection of all the *literal* members of His *parabolic* Body at the Time of the End. That is why insight into the *parabolic image* of the “spring rain” that Hosea mentions is so important to an accurate understanding of what he *means* by his use of the *parabolic imagery*. So let me explain a bit about that.

The climate in Palestine is one in which a hot, dry summer (from late May through September) is followed by a rainy season that begins with the “early,” or autumn, rain of October/November. The rainy season continues through the winter and ends with the “latter,” or spring, rain of April/May. The autumn rain of October/November is critical since it not only provides sufficient moisture for the ground to be tilled, it also ensures the germination of the seed which must be planted at that time. Likewise, the spring rain of April/May is just as critical. Without it, the crops will not mature. That is *why* Moses mentions both “the early and late rain” in the following passage:

*“And it shall come about, if you listen obediently to my commandments which I am commanding you today, to love the LORD your God and to serve Him with all your heart and all your soul, that He will give the rain for your land in its season, the early and late rain, that you may gather in your grain and your new wine and your oil. And He will give grass in your fields for your cattle, and you shall eat and be satisfied.”*  
(Deuteronomy 11:13–15)

Hosea speaks in terms of the “spring rain” in the passage above (Hos. 6:3) because he has in mind *The Teaching* that makes it possible for the “plants” in God’s “field” to mature. The same is true of Joel’s use of the identical *parabolic imagery* in this passage:

*Do not fear, O land, rejoice and be glad,  
For the LORD has done great things.  
Do not fear, beasts of the field,  
For the pastures of the wilderness have turned green,  
For the tree has borne its fruit,  
The fig tree and the vine have yielded in full.  
So rejoice, O sons of Zion,  
And be glad in the LORD your God;  
For He has given you the early rain  
for {your} vindication.  
And He has poured down for you the rain,  
The early and latter rain as before.  
And the threshing floors will be full of grain,  
And the vats will overflow  
with the new wine and oil.  
“Then I will make up to you for the years  
That the swarming locust has eaten,  
The creeping locust, the stripping locust,  
and the gnawing locust,  
My great army which I sent among you.  
And you shall have plenty to eat and be satisfied,  
And praise the name of the LORD your God,  
Who has dealt wondrously with you;  
Then My people will never be put to shame.  
Thus you will know that I am in the midst of Israel,  
And that I am the LORD your God  
And there is no other;  
And My people will never be put to shame.  
And it will come about after this  
That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind;  
And your sons and daughters will prophesy,  
Your old men will dream dreams,  
Your young men will see visions.  
And even on the male and female servants  
I will pour out My Spirit in those days.  
And I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth,  
Blood, fire, and columns of smoke.  
The sun will be turned into darkness,  
And the moon into blood,  
Before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.  
And it will come about that  
whoever calls on the name of the LORD  
Will be delivered;  
For on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem  
There will be those who escape,  
As the LORD has said,  
Even among the survivors whom the LORD calls.  
For behold, in those days and at that time,*

When I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem,  
I will gather all the nations,  
And bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat.  
Then I will enter into judgment with them there  
On behalf of My people and My inheritance, Israel,  
Whom they have scattered among the nations;  
And they have divided up My land.  
They have also cast lots for My people,  
Traded a boy for a harlot,  
And sold a girl for wine that they may drink."  
(Joel 2:21–3:3)

The translator's translation of two completely unrelated Hebrew verbs as "pour" in 2:23 and 2:28 is unfortunate. That translation only serves to confuse the issue in the mind of the reader of the English translation. Joel said that God would "bring down" the rain in verse 23 and that He would "pour out" His Spirit in verse 28. Those two verses are describing two entirely different things, but both of them speak concerning True Believers' understanding of the Truth of *The Teaching*. God "brings down" the *parabolic* "rain" through the legitimate ministry of those whom He has designated to teach His People. He then "pours out" His Spirit within the one who has heard and understood the Truth of *The Teaching*. Jesus is speaking in terms of that *parabolic imagery* in what He says in the following passage:

So He came to a city of Samaria, called Sychar, near the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph; and Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, was sitting thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour. There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink." For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. The Samaritan woman therefore said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water." She said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with and the well is deep; where then do You get that living water? You are not greater than our father Jacob, are You, who gave us the well, and drank of it himself, and his sons, and his cattle?" Jesus answered and said to her, "**Everyone who drinks of this water shall thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the**

**water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life."**  
(John 4:5–14)

You would do well to remember that Jesus said a person must first drink the *parabolic* water of *The Teaching* before it can become a well of water springing up within him. Fools tend to forget that. Later on, John tells us Jesus also said this about the water that flows within the True Believer:

Now on the last day, the great {day} of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, '**From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.**'" But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet {given,} because Jesus was not yet glorified.  
(John 7:37–39)

That is quite clearly *parabolic imagery*. But to understand it, you probably also need to know that Jesus is alluding to what Isaiah says immediately before the passage in which he *talks about* the Messiah coming down to Earth LIKE rain or snow. This is what Isaiah says:

**"Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters;**  
And you who have no money come, buy and eat.  
Come, buy wine and milk  
Without money and without cost.  
Why do you spend money for what is not bread,  
And your wages for what does not satisfy?  
**Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good,**  
**And delight yourself in abundance.**  
**Incline your ear and come to Me.**  
**Listen, that you may live;**  
And I will make an everlasting covenant with you,  
{According to} the faithful mercies shown to David.  
Behold, I have made him a witness to the peoples,  
A leader and commander for the peoples.  
Behold, you will call a nation you do not know,  
And a nation which knows you not will run to you,  
Because of the LORD your God, even the Holy  
One of Israel;  
For He has glorified you."  
(Isaiah 55:1–5)

It isn't obvious unless you know the source from which the Prophets drew all of the *parabolic imagery* related to the weather, but when Jesus spoke about rivers of living water flowing from the True Believer, He was speaking in terms of the same *parabolic image* that the Prophet Isaiah uses when he says this:

*"But now listen, O Jacob, My servant;  
And Israel, whom I have chosen:  
Thus says the LORD who made you  
And formed you from the womb, who will help you,  
'Do not fear, O Jacob My servant;  
And you Jeshurun whom I have chosen.  
For I will pour out water on the thirsty {land}  
And streams on the dry ground;  
I will pour out My Spirit on your offspring,  
And My blessing on your descendants;  
And they will spring up among the grass  
Like poplars by streams of water.'  
This one will say, 'I am the LORD's';  
And that one will call on the name of Jacob;  
And another will write {on} his hand,  
'Belonging to the LORD,'  
And will name Israel's name with honor."  
(Isaiah 44:1-5)*

Isaiah uses the same verb twice in verse 3 to say that God would "pour out" both a *parabolic* water—rain—and His "Spirit." The Prophet did that because in his use of Hebrew parallelism, he has carefully defined the *meaning* of the *parabolic image* in which *The Teaching* is rain. But you should also be aware that he is providing his reader a brief introduction to the invocation he presents in the very next chapter:

*"Drip down, O heavens, from above,  
And let the clouds pour down righteousness;  
Let the earth open up and salvation bear fruit,  
And righteousness spring up with it.  
I, the LORD, have created it."  
(Isaiah 45:8)*

If you understand that righteousness comes only through belief in the Truth, the point of that verse is not all that difficult to grasp. If you don't understand that basic Truth, however, nothing I say here will make much difference to you one way or another. I have not been called as an Evangelist to preach the Gospel to

unbelievers who are *outside* God's Church. I have been called as a Teacher to teach *The Teaching* to True Believers who are already *inside* God's Church. A clear-cut distinction exists between those two ministries, their audiences, and their respective objectives. I pity you if you cannot see that.

The Truth is, Jesus Christ, the One Who is, in Himself, the Word of God, that is, *The Teaching* that one must believe in order to attain righteousness, brought the "early rain" down on the Earth shortly after He arose from the dead. Then, after He had securely "planted" God's *Seed* in the Earth, He came down again as the "latter rain" with the distinct purpose of ensuring that God's "plants" would have sufficient "water" to attain full maturity. However, that is all nothing more than *parabolic imagery* that describes the reality of the Word of God at work in the lives of all those who understand and believe it. Anyone who treads too heavily on the details inherent in that *parabolic image* will most likely end up with nothing more to show for it than mud on his boots.

Now is not the time for me to explain the various things the Prophets have stated in terms of the *parabolic imagery* in which *The Teaching* is mixed with the "rain" or "dew" that "drips" from the mouth of the one whom God has called to teach His People. However, one simple Truth should be obvious to everyone who has spent any time at all getting close to nature: Rivers and springs (fountains) are nothing more than conduits for rain that has fallen from Heaven at some earlier time. So you would do well to be forewarned! Those who are wise will not divert the "rain" that God provides and try to store it in a cistern. They will instead continually soak up the "rain" which is the source from which all "living water" comes and let it flow freely within them. That is because they know that if they do otherwise, their "river" or "fountain" (spring) will eventually dry up, and they will be found guilty of having changed gods, just as the Prophet Jeremiah said:

*"Therefore I will yet contend with you,"  
declares the LORD,  
"And with your sons' sons I will contend.  
For cross to the coastlands of Kittim and see,  
And send to Kedar and observe closely,  
And see if there has been such {a thing} as this!  
Has a nation changed gods,*

When they were not gods?  
 But My people have changed their glory  
 For that which does not profit.  
**Be appalled, O heavens, at this,  
 And shudder, be very desolate," declares the LORD.**  
**"For My people have committed two evils:  
 They have forsaken Me,  
 The fountain of living waters,  
 To hew for themselves cisterns,  
 Broken cisterns,  
 That can hold no water."**  
 (Jeremiah 2:9–13)

If you take the time to think about that *parabolic imagery*, it should eventually begin to make sense to you. If it doesn't, don't worry about it. Perhaps it will a bit later on. As the Prophet Isaiah obviously understood, there are only two kinds of people—those who continually drink the living water and those who drown in it:

*Thus says the LORD your Redeemer,  
 the Holy One of Israel,  
 "For your sake I have sent to Babylon,  
 And will bring them all down as fugitives,  
 Even the Chaldeans, into the ships in which they rejoice.  
 I am the LORD, your Holy One,  
 The Creator of Israel, your King."  
 Thus says the LORD,  
 Who makes a way through the sea  
 And a path through the mighty waters,  
 Who brings forth the chariot and the horse,  
 The army and the mighty man  
 (They will lie down together {and} not rise again;  
 They have been quenched  
 {and} extinguished like a wick):  
 "Do not call to mind the former things,  
 Or ponder things of the past.  
**Behold, I will do something new,  
 Now it will spring forth;  
 Will you not be aware of it?  
 I will even make a roadway in the wilderness,  
 Rivers in the desert.  
 The beasts of the field will glorify Me;  
 The jackals and the ostriches;  
 Because I have given waters in the wilderness  
 And rivers in the desert,  
 To give drink to My chosen people.***

*The people whom I formed for Myself,  
 Will declare My praise."  
 (Isaiah 43:14–21)*

## ***A False god Is No god at All***

*The Teaching of Moses* speaks in terms of the "early rain" beginning shortly after the Resurrection of Jesus Christ because He and all the other Prophets were mocking the ancient Canaanites for firmly believing that their god Baal came riding on the clouds to bring the early rain immediately after he arose in the resurrection. That is how that goofy mythological belief came to be the source of the *parabolic imagery* in *The Teaching* that speaks in terms of weather-related phenomena. But the remarkable thing in that regard is how intricately the *parabolic image* of "rain" has been tied to the Hebrew/Canaanite idiom "build a house." Take a look at this translation of an ancient Canaanite mythological text which purports to describe the decree of the supreme god El which resulted in the resurrection of the god Baal:

*But El the Kind, the Compassionate, replied:  
 "Am I a servant, a power of Asherah?  
 am I a servant, holding a trowel,  
 or Asherah's brickmaker?  
 Let a house like the other god's be built for Baal,  
 a court like Asherah's sons."  
 And Lady Asherah-of-the-Sea replied:  
 "You are great, El, you are truly wise;  
 your gray beard truly instructs you ....  
**Now Baal will begin the rainy season,  
 the season of wadis in flood;  
 and he will sound his voice in the clouds,  
 flash his lightning to the earth.  
 Let him complete his house of cedar!  
 let him construct his house of bricks!**  
 Let Baal the Conqueror be commanded:  
 'Call a caravan into your house,  
 a wagon train within your palace;  
 the mountains will bring you much silver,  
 the hills fine gold in abundance;  
 the camels will bring you jewels.  
**And build a house of silver and gold,  
 a house of purest lapis lazuli.'"**  
 (Michael David Coogan, *Stories From Ancient Canaan*  
 [Louisville, Ky.: The Westminster Press, 1978], p. 101)*

If you want to ignorantly assume that the Canaanite priest who wrote that text did not know the *meaning* and *significance* of the Canaanite/Hebrew idiom “build a house,” by all means do so. But just for the sake of those who have ears to hear, let me inform you that he most certainly did. I should also tell you that the priests who composed the Canaanite mythological texts like the one you just read were extremely fond of euphemisms. That is why the passage above euphemistically details the issuing of a divine decree whereby folks all over the Levant were granted success in trying to “build a house” for Baal in their own most peculiar way. Since I have already begun to explain those things in another series of articles, I won’t say more about them here. (See “The Sad, Sordid History of the People of God,” *The Voice of Elijah*®, July 1996 and “So Why Would a Nomad ‘Build a House’ and Settle Down?” *The Voice of Elijah*®, October 1997.) But I will tell you that the Prophets’ mockery of those stupid mythological beliefs is why Jesus combined the *parabolic image* of “building a house” with that of a torrential “rain” in this parable:

*“Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine, and acts upon them, may be compared to a wise man, who built his house upon the rock. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and {yet} it did not fall, for it had been founded upon the rock. And everyone who hears these words of Mine, and does not act upon them, will be like a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and it fell, and great was its fall.”*

*(Matthew 7:24–27)*

According to Canaanite mythology, the resurrection of Baal could occur only after the decree of the supreme god El had gone forth that his “house” could be “built,” whatever you want to understand that Hebrew/Canaanite idiom to *mean*. Then, after Kothar-wa-Hasis, the god of wisdom, had “built the house” of Baal—with the enthusiastic assistance of Baal’s consort, the virgin Anat, of course—Baal would appear in the clouds, bringing the autumn rains. You need to know that is the mythological goofiness that stands behind the biblical account of the confrontation Elijah had with the prophets of Baal.

At God’s specific direction, the Prophet Elijah demonstrated the teaching of the prophets of Baal to be utter nonsense. However, God’s purpose in orchestrating the Prophet Elijah’s *parabolic pantomime* was to add a slight twist to an already complex *parabolic imagery* so that the Prophets could use it to speak specifically, yet incredibly cryptically, concerning our own time. In case you have never read the account of Elijah and the prophets of Baal for yourself, here is what Jeremiah tells us Elijah did:

*And it came about, when Ahab saw Elijah that Ahab said to him, “Is this you, you troubler of Israel?” And he said, “I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father’s house {have}, because you have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and you have followed the Baals. Now then send {and} gather to me all Israel at Mount Carmel, {together} with 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of the Asherah, who eat at Jezebel’s table.” So Ahab sent {a message} among all the sons of Israel, and brought the prophets together at Mount Carmel. And Elijah came near to all the people and said, “How long {will} you hesitate between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.” But the people did not answer him a word. Then Elijah said to the people, “I alone am left a prophet of the LORD, but Baal’s prophets are 450 men. Now let them give us two oxen; and let them choose one ox for themselves and cut it up, and place it on the wood, but put no fire {under it;} and I will prepare the other ox, and lay it on the wood, and I will not put a fire {under it.} Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the LORD, and the God who answers by fire, He is God.” And all the people answered and said, “That is a good idea.” So Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, “Choose one ox for yourselves and prepare it first for you are many, and call on the name of your god, but put no fire {under it.}” Then they took the ox which was given them and they prepared it and called on the name of Baal from morning until noon saying, “O Baal, answer us.” But there was no voice and no one answered. And they leaped about the altar which they made. And it came about at noon, that Elijah mocked them and said, “Call out with a loud voice, for he is a god; either he is occupied or gone aside, or is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and needs to be awakened.” So they cried with a loud voice and cut themselves according to their custom with swords and lances until the blood gushed out on them. And it came about when midday was past, that they raved until the*

time of the offering of the {evening} sacrifice; but there was no voice, no one answered, and no one paid attention. Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come near to me." So all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD which had been torn down. And Elijah took twelve stones according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the LORD had come, saying, "Israel shall be your name." So with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD, and he made a trench around the altar, large enough to hold two measures of seed. Then he arranged the wood and cut the ox in pieces and laid {it} on the wood. And he said, "Fill four pitchers with water and pour {it} on the burnt offering and on the wood." And he said, "Do it a second time," and they did it a second time. And he said, "Do it a third time," and they did it a third time. And the water flowed around the altar, and he also filled the trench with water. Then it came about at the time of the offering of the {evening} sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, "O LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, today let it be known that Thou art God in Israel, and that I am Thy servant, and that I have done all these things at Thy word. Answer me, O LORD, answer me, that this people may know that Thou, O LORD, art God, and {that} Thou hast turned their heart back again." **Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.** And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, "The LORD, He is God; the LORD, He is God." Then Elijah said to them, "Seize the prophets of Baal; do not let one of them escape." So they seized them; and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there. Now Elijah said to Ahab, "Go up, eat and drink; for there is the sound of the roar of a {heavy} shower." So Ahab went up to eat and drink. But Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he crouched down on the earth, and put his face between his knees. And he said to his servant, "Go up now, look toward the sea." So he went up and looked and said, "There is nothing." And he said, "Go back" seven times. **And it came about at the seventh {time,} that he said, "Behold, a cloud as small as a man's hand is coming up from the sea."** And he said, "Go up, say to Ahab, 'Prepare {your chariot} and go down, so that the {heavy} shower does not stop you.'" **So it came about in a little while, that the sky grew black with clouds and wind, and there was a heavy shower.** And Ahab rode and went to Jezreel. Then the hand of the LORD was on

Elijah, and he girded up his loins and outran Ahab to Jezreel.  
(1 Kings 18:17-46)

The prophets of Baal were desperately seeking confirmation that the divine decree of El had already been issued and Baal's "house" had been "built." Only then would Baal be free from the clutches of the god Death and able to come riding on the clouds, bringing the autumn rain. As Jeremiah makes perfectly clear, Baal's "house" had not been "built." So he failed to bring the rain. But Elijah's God didn't fail. And in that confrontation, Elijah demonstrated that the Lord, the God of Israel, not the Pretender Baal, was the God of the resurrection.

Now I can't help but wonder how all of that *parabolic imagery* pertains to the "Elijah" who the Early Church Fathers tell us will come heralding the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and the Resurrection of the Body of Jesus Christ. (See *The AntiChrist*.) Could it be that he—LIKE the Prophet Elijah—will disclose the folly of all those in our own time who ignorantly believe in a false god just because they have been told he is the god of the resurrection?

In the parable He told about the wise man and the fool, Jesus Himself said a *parabolic* "rain" would destroy the "house" of the Antichrist after it has been "built." And we already know that the Antichrist is going to pretend to be Jesus Christ—"*The House*" of Israel. (See "That's Why He's Called AntiChrist!" *The Voice of Elijah*®, April 1992.) So is it conceivable that some anonymous "Elijah" might actually bring down a *parabolic* "rain" that ultimately destroys the "house" the Antichrist has "built" for himself? Perhaps. But perhaps I expect too much. How could anyone reasonably expect fools to be able to tell the difference between the Antichrist and Jesus Christ?

You do know that Christ is the One Who will come riding on the clouds, bringing a torrential "rain," just as the prophets of Baal claimed their fake god Baal did, don't you? Maybe not. Just for the record, I should tell you that is what Jesus was *talking about* when He said this:

*"But immediately after the tribulation of those days THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken, and then the sign of the*

Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and **they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory.** And He will send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.” (Matthew 24:29–31)

The Prophet Isaiah has *parabolically* described those events this way:

*The oracle concerning Egypt.*  
**Behold, the LORD is riding on a swift cloud,**  
*and is about to come to Egypt;*  
*The idols of Egypt will tremble at His presence,*  
*And the heart of the Egyptians will melt within them.*  
 (Isaiah 19:1)

In Psalm 72, the psalmist *talks about* those same mind-boggling events. But he speaks a bit more openly about the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, using the *parabolic imagery* of the “rain” only when it serves to conceal the Truth of what he has to say about the importance of *The Teaching* in the lives of all those who hear it and believe:

*A Psalm of Solomon.*  
**Give the king Thy judgments, O God,**  
**And Thy righteousness to the king's son.**  
*May he judge Thy people with righteousness,*  
*And Thine afflicted with justice.*  
*Let the mountains bring peace to the people,*  
*And the hills in righteousness.*  
*May he vindicate the afflicted of the people,*  
*Save the children of the needy,*  
*And crush the oppressor.*  
*Let them fear Thee while the sun {endures},*  
*And as long as the moon, throughout all generations.*  
**May he come down like rain upon the mown grass,**  
**Like showers that water the earth.**  
**In his days may the righteous flourish,**  
**And abundance of peace till the moon is no more.**  
**May he also rule from sea to sea,**  
**And from the River to the ends of the earth.**  
*Let the nomads of the desert bow before him;*  
*And his enemies lick the dust.*  
*Let the kings of Tarshish and of the islands bring presents;*  
*The kings of Sheba and Seba offer gifts.*

**And let all kings bow down before him,**  
**All nations serve him.**  
 (Psalm 72:1–11)

The time which the psalmist described in that psalm is rapidly approaching, folks. You can believe that if you care to; disbelieve it if you dare to. I don't care all that much one way or the other what you do. I'm just doing what God called me to do. But I will say this for the benefit of those who have ears to hear: You stand about the same chance as a gnat in a hurricane if you don't approach the Lord in the way the Prophet Zechariah recommended:

**Ask rain from the LORD at the time of the spring rain—**  
**The LORD who makes the storm clouds;**  
**And He will give them showers of rain,**  
*vegetation in the field to {each} man.*  
**For the teraphim speak iniquity,**  
**And the diviners see lying visions,**  
**And tell false dreams;**  
**They comfort in vain.**  
**Therefore {the people} wander like sheep,**  
**They are afflicted, because there is no shepherd.**  
 (Zechariah 10:1–2)

Can you see why Zechariah juxtaposed “spring rain” with “diviners see lying visions”? He's contrasting the Truth of *The Teaching of Moses* with the lies you hear preached all around you. If you can't see that, I pity you. However, if you are still pretending to be a Teacher called of God, that is, if you are still mindlessly passing along the inane tripe you hear taught in the Church today, you should stop for a moment to consider how God views your ridiculous, juvenile efforts to “shepherd” His People. He has already taken over that work Himself, just as Zechariah promised He would. However, He no longer views His People *individually* as scattered sheep, willing to blindly follow some shepherd. Instead, He looks at them *corporately* as a horse that He is training to carry Him into battle:

*My anger is kindled against the shepherds,*  
*And I will punish the male goats;*  
*For the LORD of hosts has visited His flock,*  
*the house of Judah,*  
*And will make them like His majestic horse in battle.*  
 (Zechariah 10:3)

If reading that verse does not evoke a pronounced surge of rejoicing within you, it may well be that you have not yet *received* the “early rain” of the Gospel so that God’s *Seed* could be planted in you. In that case, you should perhaps consider heeding the admonishment of the Prophet Hosea:

*Sow with a view to righteousness,  
Reap in accordance with kindness;  
Break up your fallow ground,  
For it is time to seek the LORD  
Until He comes to rain righteousness on you.  
You have plowed wickedness,  
          you have reaped injustice,  
You have eaten the fruit of lies.  
(Hosea 10:12–13a)*

I trust you can see that Hosea, like Zechariah above, is contrasting the benefit of knowing the Truth of *The Teaching of Moses* that he taught with the misery brought on by the lies of false prophets. A bit later, he again uses the *parabolic imagery* I have explained in this article. He *parabolically* describes the benevolent response the Word of God has toward all those who seek to know the Truth:

*I will heal their apostasy,  
I will love them freely,  
For My anger has turned away from them.  
I will be like the dew to Israel;  
He will blossom like the lily,  
And he will take root like {the cedars of} Lebanon.  
His shoots will sprout,  
And his beauty will be like the olive tree,  
And his fragrance like {the cedars of} Lebanon.  
Those who live in his shadow  
Will again raise grain,  
And they will blossom like the vine.  
His renown {will be} like the wine of Lebanon.  
(Hosea 14:4–7)*

In light of what the Prophet says in that passage, you should be able to see that it would be wise for you to diligently “seek the LORD until He comes to rain righteousness on you” (Hos. 10:12). That response is all the more important if you have not fully understood the things I have explained concerning the “early rain” and the “spring rain.” It is, after all, the goal of all True

Believers to become exactly LIKE “The One”—the Word of God—in Whom they have believed. Knowing that, however, I also know that when the time comes, those who understand the Truth will rise to the occasion, just as the Prophet Micah promised they would:

*“But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,  
{Too} little to be among the clans of Judah,  
From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel.  
His goings forth are from long ago,  
From the days of eternity.”  
Therefore, He will give them {up} until the time  
When she who is in labor has borne a child.  
Then the remainder of His brethren  
Will return to the sons of Israel.  
And He will arise and shepherd {His flock}  
In the strength of the LORD,  
In the majesty of the name of the LORD His God.  
And they will remain,  
Because at that time He will be great  
To the ends of the earth.  
And this One will be {our} peace.  
When the Assyrian invades our land,  
When he tramples on our citadels,  
Then we will raise against him  
Seven shepherds and eight leaders of men.  
And they will shepherd the land of Assyria with the sword,  
The land of Nimrod at its entrances;  
And He will deliver {us} from the Assyrian  
When he attacks our land  
And when he tramples our territory.  
Then the remnant of Jacob  
Will be among many peoples  
Like dew from the LORD,  
Like showers on vegetation  
Which do not wait for man  
Or delay for the sons of men.  
And the remnant of Jacob  
Will be among the nations,  
Among many peoples  
Like a lion among the beasts of the forest,  
Like a young lion among flocks of sheep,  
Which, if he passes through,  
Tramples down and tears,  
And there is none to rescue.  
Your hand will be lifted up against your adversaries,  
And all your enemies will be cut off.  
(Micah 5:2–9)*

Unless the eyes of your heart can see the *parabolic imagery* that stands behind that passage, it is a bit hard to understand how it speaks concerning the Time of the End. But I trust that you can at least see that “*The Remnant*” of Jacob is both Jesus Christ and all the members of the Body of Jesus Christ, the One Who is “*The House*” of Israel. (See *Not All Israel Is Israel*.) If so, you should also be able to see that Micah is *parabolically* depicting the destiny of all those who truly believe:

*Then the remnant of Jacob  
Will be among many peoples  
Like dew from the LORD,  
Like showers on vegetation  
Which do not wait for man  
Or delay for the sons of men.  
(Micah 5:7)*

That is a *parabolic* description of what it will be LIKE for those who are resurrected in the Resurrection of the Righteous. They will be exactly LIKE the One Who is, was, and always has been the Word of God—the One Whom the Prophets *parabolically* refer to as the “rain” or “dew” that comes down from Heaven to water the plants in God’s field. But since I am not the first to state that concept so plainly, perhaps I should show you what the Apostle John said:

*Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is.  
(1 John 3:2)*

What do you think? Did John have in mind “seeing” with the eyes of the physical body or with the eyes of the “heart” when he said, “we shall see Him just as He is”? And if you think he *meant* True Believers would see Christ with the physical eyes of a mortal body, why did he say “it has not appeared as yet what we shall be” and “we shall be like Him” before going on to tell us *why* “we shall be like Him”? Didn’t you understand that “we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is”? Don’t be dense! The foggy brain will miss the train! He is *talking about* Jesus Christ, the Word of God, the One you can “see” only if the eyes of your heart have been enlightened. So get ready. You may not understand everything in *The Teaching* on this side of

that Great Divide, but He has *promised* it will be one wild ride on the other side.

## *I’m in No Hurry. Are You?*

The wrath of God is an awesome thing to behold. Consider this: It has been eighteen hundred years since the Church turned away from the *parabolic imagery* of *The Teaching* and took up Origen’s goofy allegorical method of interpreting the Scriptures. (See “Did You Mean That Literally?” and “The Origen of Folly,” *The Voice of Elijah*®, January 1993.) Then, over the past 170 years, the conservative wing of the Church has foundered on the equally goofy literal method of interpretation. [See “Wanna Hear the Whopper the Liar Came Up With? (I Doubt You’ll Believe It!)” *The Voice of Elijah*®, October 1996.] All the while, people have been starving to death, wanting to hear a Truth that false teachers claimed to understand yet could never provide. And where has God been all that time? Waiting.

*“I have kept silent for a long time,  
I have kept still and restrained Myself.  
{Now} like a woman in labor I will groan,  
I will both gasp and pant.  
I will lay waste the mountains and hills,  
And wither all their vegetation;  
I will make the rivers into coastlands,  
And dry up the ponds.  
And I will lead the blind by a way they do not know,  
In paths they do not know I will guide them.  
I will make darkness into light before them  
And rugged places into plains.  
These are the things I will do,  
And I will not leave them undone.”  
They shall be turned back and be utterly put to shame,  
Who trust in idols,  
Who say to molten images,  
“You are our gods.”  
Hear, you deaf!  
And look, you blind, that you may see.  
Who is blind but My servant,  
Or so deaf as My messenger whom I send?  
Who is so blind as he that is at peace {with Me},  
Or so blind as the servant of the LORD?  
You have seen many things, but you do not observe {them;}  
{Your} ears are open, but none hears.  
(Isaiah 42:14–20) ■*



**The Voice of Elijah**<sup>®</sup> includes this column to show you how some of the underlying parabolic images of the Gospel message of the Old Testament speak to the times in which we find ourselves. There are a variety of weather images to be found in the parables of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Most are associated in some way with the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

**Strong Winds:** The invisible “winds” that stalk the Earth will continue to blow at gale force until the End. And everyone who hears them will feel their effect. Yet few will muster the strength necessary to stand against them.

Extremely powerful currents are at work among us, molding and shaping public opinion so as to create cynicism, divisiveness, and lawlessness in this, the most powerful nation on Earth. The best cover one can find from those “winds” is to avoid getting emotionally involved. Those who do will be carried away by them. So don’t let politicians and the media play you for a fool. Neither the conservatives nor the liberals have accurately defined the current debate over impeachment. The issue at stake is not the “rule of law” or any other such nonsense. What has been trampled underfoot by both parties involved in the impeachment process is Truth and justice. If neither political party is willing to tell the public the cold, hard Truth, how can either be expected to seek justice?

**Cloudy:** The Cold War lasted for more than forty years. During that entire time, the superpowers allowed only a handful of nations to join their exclusive nuclear club. However, that war ended just a decade ago, and already there is speculation that some parts of the vast stockpile of nuclear weapons produced by the former Soviet Union may be on the auction block, for sale to the highest bidder. So where do we go from here but downhill? There is also talk that terrorists may be

acquiring the technology to produce miniature versions of the weapons of mass destruction favored by the United States and the former Soviet Union. How does one go about building a defense against a highly portable bomb when smugglers are already bringing tons of contraband into the United States and other countries every year?

**Isolated Showers:** In spite of the fact that four of the seven seals have already been removed from the Scriptures, little more than the bare outlines of those four messages can be seen. The details are obviously not going to be available until we get closer to the End. How long that will be is nothing more than speculation.

Outside of what the Prophets have told us about the persecution and deliverance of True Believers at the Time of the End, it is impossible to discern what God has planned or the timetable according to which He intends to accomplish what He has planned. Furthermore, the only indication the Prophets have given us of what lies in store for us prior to the appearance of the Antichrist and the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem is an occasional mention of what may well be nothing more than just another *parabolic image*. It is, therefore, difficult to make any confident assertions one way or another about the future.

In *The Voice of Elijah*<sup>®</sup> *Update*, I have mentioned the “tax” that God has already begun to collect. My beliefs in that regard are nothing more than an extrapolation from the fact that Satan’s lie—Dispensationalism—claims the Antichrist will rule over the countries who have joined together to form the European Common Market. Obviously, to get from where we are today to where Satan knows we eventually will be, the United States economy must decline and the European economy must fill that vacuum. How we get to that point is anybody’s guess. And that’s all it is—a guess.

The effects of God’s tax collection process here in the United States have been muted to this point by the continual inflow of money from other countries as their economies have headed south. Those investments have helped to keep our own economy rolling along at a fairly good clip, in spite of near-depression conditions in many parts of the world. One has to wonder what would happen in this country if some of that money suddenly started to flow in the other direction. After all, the meltdown in Asia began when investors pulled out of Thailand. ■



**The Voice of Elijah**<sup>®</sup> publishes articles based on the findings of The Elijah Project, a private research group headed by Larry D. Harper. In this column we seek answers to general-interest questions concerning the findings, purpose, and philosophy of this project.

*Editor: I want to ask you about a subject that has long captured the imagination of most people: angels. It seems that no matter where you turn these days—movies, television, books, magazines, etc.—angels are the focus of a lot of attention. Based on what I have seen and heard, it's obvious that most people have fanciful imaginations when it comes to their beliefs about angels. Would you please provide our readers with a biblical explanation of who angels are and what their primary mission is? Also, is there any validity to the notion that there are guardian angels? Is this belief rooted in Daniel 12:1?*

*Elijah:* I have already explained some of those things in The Next Step program. And I have no intention of making all that information available to the general public at this time. I have too many other things that need to be explained first and not nearly enough time to explain them. But I will say this: The Scriptures clearly indicate that angels are created beings. That is, they are a part of this Creation and are, therefore, just as limited by time and space as we are. Furthermore, the Scriptures tell us their primary place of residence—in this Creation—is a place called “Heaven,” where they have immediate access to the presence of God Himself. That view quite obviously conflicts with the nebulous notions concerning the nature of “Heaven” that the majority in the Church hold today. But it only

takes a smattering of logic and a little common sense to figure out how and why—in spite of Satan’s lies—it must be true. So I’ll let your readers figure out how and why that is for themselves.

God’s purpose in creating the beings we call angels was actually quite simple: They were to be His messengers, *delivering* His messages throughout this Creation. That is precisely what the Hebrew and Greek terms that have been translated “angel” in the Bible *mean*—messenger. And a whole host of passages in the Scriptures describe angels carrying out their assigned task of *delivering* God’s messages to folks here on Earth. One of the most interesting is Luke’s extended account of the birth of Jesus Christ. He begins by telling us what the angel Gabriel said to Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist:

*In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah; and he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. And they were both righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord. And they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both advanced in years. Now it came about, while he was performing his priestly service before God in the {appointed} order of his division, according to the custom of the priestly office, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. And the whole multitude of the people were in prayer outside at the hour of the incense offering. And an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense. And Zacharias was troubled when he saw {him,} and fear gripped him. **But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will give him the name John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and he will drink no wine or liquor; and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, while yet in his mother’s womb. And he will turn back many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God. And it is he who will go {as a forerunner} before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, TO TURN THE HEARTS OF THE FATHERS BACK TO THE CHILDREN, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous; so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”***

*(Luke 1:5–17)*

After Zacharias recovered from the shock of seeing an angel and hearing him speak, he responded to the message he had been given by asking for confirmation of its truthfulness:

*And Zacharias said to the angel, "How shall I know this {for certain?} For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years." And the angel answered and said to him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God; and I have been sent to speak to you, and to bring you this good news. And behold, you shall be silent and unable to speak until the day when these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which shall be fulfilled in their proper time." And the people were waiting for Zacharias, and were wondering at his delay in the temple. But when he came out, he was unable to speak to them; and they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple; and he kept making signs to them, and remained mute. And it came about, when the days of his priestly service were ended, that he went back home.  
(Luke 1:18–23)*

It would appear that doubters should learn a lesson from what happened to Zacharias: Beware of angels. But most folks have nothing to fear in that regard. God has nothing to say to the unregenerate that is not already contained in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And since that Gospel has been preached by God's Evangelists for the past two thousand years, the only angels the majority of the lost will ever encounter are the false messengers who deliver Satan's lies. Under those circumstances, they would be better off doubting. Being ignorant of the Truth, they have no certain way of judging the truthfulness of any message they hear spoken by an angel anyway.

Luke goes on to tell us the angel Gabriel next appeared to Mary in order to *deliver* yet another message from God in connection with the birth of Christ:

*And after these days Elizabeth his wife became pregnant; and she kept herself in seclusion for five months, saying, "This is the way the Lord has dealt with me in the days when He looked {with favor} upon {me,} to take away my disgrace among men." Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee, called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and*

*the virgin's name was Mary. And coming in, he said to her, "Hail, favored one! The Lord {is} with you." But she was greatly troubled at {this} statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this might be. And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb, and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and His kingdom will have no end." And Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God. And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age; and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month. For nothing will be impossible with God." And Mary said, "Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; be it done to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.  
(Luke 1:24–38)*

Luke then tells us a bit about the role that angels played in heralding the birth of Christ:

*Now it came about in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth. This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all were proceeding to register for the census, everyone to his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, in order to register, along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child. And it came about that while they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her first-born son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. And in the same region there were {some} shepherds staying out in the fields, and keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. And the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold,*

*I bring you good news of a great joy which shall be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this {will be} a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths, and lying in a manger." And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased."*

*And it came about when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds {began} saying to one another, "Let us go straight to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us." And they came in haste and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as He lay in the manger.*

*(Luke 2:1–16)*

Although Luke's account of the birth of Christ is replete with mention of angels *delivering* God's messages to one person or another, Luke rather pointedly refuses to tell us anything at all about the experiences that Joseph had with the angels who had been charged with orchestrating that event. Instead, he left that task to Matthew, who, as it turns out, has done a rather commendable job of telling us God was not about to allow His messenger to speak directly to Joseph:

*Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows. When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, and not wanting to disgrace her, desired to put her away secretly. But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins."*

*(Matthew 1:18–21)*

I'll take up the matter of where Joseph stood in relation to *the promise* on some other occasion. It is enough for now that you know God had a special reason for allowing His messenger to speak to Joseph only in his dreams. You should already be aware that the

method of *delivery* was according to His request, unless you want to arbitrarily assume that all God's angels have followed Satan's lead in doing whatever they choose to do. The Truth is, Joseph stood in a particularly precarious position as far as God was concerned. But that's another story. He stood in more or less the same position as the magi who came to worship Christ, which is why Matthew indicates they got their special *delivery* from God the same way that Joseph did:

*Then Herod secretly called the magi, and ascertained from them the time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, "Go and make careful search for the Child; and when you have found {Him,} report to me, that I too may come and worship Him." And having heard the king, they went their way; and lo, the star, which they had seen in the east, went on before them, until it came and stood over where the Child was. And when they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And they came into the house and saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they fell down and worshiped Him; and opening their treasures they presented to Him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh. **And having been warned {by God} in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed for their own country by another way.***

*(Matthew 2:7–12)*

Matthew tells us this about the second and third occasions on which an angel of the Lord spoke to Joseph in his dreams:

*Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise and take the Child and His mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is going to search for the Child to destroy Him." And he arose and took the Child and His mother by night, and departed for Egypt; and was there until the death of Herod, that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, "OUT OF EGYPT DID I CALL MY SON." Then when Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he became very enraged, and sent and slew all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its environs, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had ascertained from the magi. Then that which was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled, saying, "A VOICE WAS HEARD IN RAMAH,*

WEEPING AND GREAT MOURNING,  
 RACHEL WEEPING FOR HER CHILDREN;  
 AND SHE REFUSED TO BE COMFORTED,  
 BECAUSE THEY WERE NO MORE."

*But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Arise and take the Child and His mother, and go into the land of Israel; for those who sought the Child's life are dead." And he arose and took the Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel.*  
 (Matthew 2:13–21)

I pointed out the role that angels played in orchestrating events related to the birth of Jesus Christ only to demonstrate that their primary function is and always has been to ensure the on-time *delivery* of the Word of God. (The pun is most definitely intended.) The angels who have steadfastly refused to follow Satan in his rebellion against God have magnificently continued to carry out their assigned task of *delivering* God's Word throughout this Creation. Those rebellious angels—commonly called demons—who sided with Satan in his rebellion against God have drifted off into a variety of other occupations and preoccupations. But even in their rebellion, they continue to be nothing more than messengers, capable only of delivering their lies and distortion of God's Truth to anyone ignorant enough to listen to their stupidity. However, that also is another story. You didn't ask about demons, you asked about angels. And as I just explained, angels are nothing more than divine messengers.

Now there is one aspect of the angels' role as messengers of the Lord that simpleminded folks would do well to consider carefully: They always carry the Word of God. That's what stands behind the following passage in which God warns Moses to be on guard when dealing with the Angel whom He obliquely says "carries *The Name*" of God:

*"Behold, I am going to send an angel before you to guard you along the way, and to bring you into the place which I have prepared. Be on your guard before him and obey his voice; do not be rebellious toward him, for he will not pardon your transgression, since My name is in him. But if you will truly obey his voice and do all that I say, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries. For My angel will go before you and bring you in to {the land of} the Amorites,*

*the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hivites and the Jebusites; and I will completely destroy them."*  
 (Exodus 23:20–23)

I find that passage to be humorous because its significance is so completely obscure. But if one does not know the meaning and significance of the Hebrew idiom "carry *The Name*," it is a whole lot more enigmatic than humorous. As I have explained on various occasions, "*The Name*" of God is Jesus Christ, Who is, in Himself, the Word of God. But even knowing that doesn't help you all that much if you lack an understanding of the *parabolic imagery* related to the Hebrew idioms "raise up a seed," "build a house," and "make a name." However, insight into that *parabolic imagery* has little to do with the point I want to make here.

If you were paying close attention when you read the passage above, you already know that the mission of the Angel of the Lord regarding the sons of Israel was to guide and protect them on their way up to the Promised Land. That is undoubtedly where the faulty notion that everyone has a guardian angel comes from. Fools have taken yet another basic truth of *The Teaching* and extrapolated from it to fabricate a lie with which they feel more comfortable.

As the psalmist clearly stated, some folks do, indeed, enjoy the protection of a "guardian angel":

*The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear Him,  
 And rescues them.*  
 (Psalm 34:7)

Any lamebrain should be able to clearly see that is a qualified statement. The psalmist knew that the only ones who live under the protection of the angel of the Lord are those who fear the Lord. That's why he immediately goes on to explain in some detail what is required of anyone who seeks the protection of a divine messenger:

*O taste and see that the LORD is good;  
 How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!  
 O fear the LORD, you His saints;  
 For to those who fear Him, there is no want.  
 The young lions do lack and suffer hunger;  
 But they who seek the LORD  
     shall not be in want of any good thing.  
 Come, you children, listen to me;*

*I will teach you the fear of the LORD.  
Who is the man who desires life,  
And loves {length of} days that he may see good?  
Keep your tongue from evil,  
And your lips from speaking deceit.  
Depart from evil, and do good;  
Seek peace, and pursue it.  
(Psalm 34:8–14)*

How do Daniel 12:1 and the events described in that particular chapter of the Book of Daniel fit in with the concept of a guardian angel standing guard over the Righteous? Rather neatly. You see, most folks look at miracles and supernatural healings as arbitrary events that occur haphazardly, with no real rhyme or reason. The Truth is, every such event is the result of a spoken word.

If a miracle or supernatural healing is from God, it is always the result of the Word of God spoken with conviction by someone who knows the Truth and sincerely believes it. In many cases, that certain someone is invisible, that is, an angel of the Lord, *delivering* the Word of the Lord according to the Lord's command. In other cases, however, the Word is spoken by a True Believer who is responding in faith to a circumstance which can be altered by no means other than the spoken Word of God. An example that I am especially fond of is Luke's account of the Apostle Peter healing a lame man who was begging at the Temple gate:

*Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the ninth {hour,} the hour of prayer. And a certain man who had been lame from his mother's womb was being carried along, whom they used to set down every day at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, in order to beg alms of those who were entering the temple. And when he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he {began} asking to receive alms. And Peter, along with John, fixed his gaze upon him and said, "Look at us!" And he {began} to give them his attention, expecting to receive something from them. But Peter said, "I do not possess silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene—walk!" And seizing him by the right hand, he raised him up; and immediately his feet and his ankles were strengthened. And with a leap, he stood upright and {began} to walk; and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God.  
(Acts 3:1–8)*

All it took for Peter to heal the man was to speak the Word. I could show you dozens of similar examples in the Gospels and the Book of Acts. My point is, the supernatural activity of the Lord will always come about as the result of the spoken Word of God. However, that spoken Word may not be heard by humans, since divine messengers do not always communicate on frequencies perceived by the human ear. Yet the Word will most certainly be spoken, and the elements of this Creation will obediently respond to the command of the Lord. That is, after all, how the archangel Michael is going to guard the Elect of God in the days leading up to the End of this Age. Isaiah *parabolically* describes the supernatural protection of that divine messenger this way:

*O people in Zion, inhabitant in Jerusalem, you will weep no longer. He will surely be gracious to you at the sound of your cry; when He hears it, He will answer you. Although the Lord has given you bread of privation and water of oppression, {He,} your Teacher will no longer hide Himself, but your eyes will behold your Teacher. And your ears will hear a word behind you, "This is the way, walk in it," whenever you turn to the right or to the left.  
(Isaiah 30:19–21)*

Common sense should have already told the diligent student of the Prophet Isaiah that the Teacher, Jesus Christ, and the messenger who is speaking "a word" from behind the True Believer cannot be one and the same. But maybe it didn't. It could be the moron is a sideshow freak with eyes in the back of his head. So he would not easily identify with anyone who can see only in front while hearing "a word" from behind. Then again, he may be one of those physically blind folks who can't see backwards, sideways, or frontwards.

The point is, some folks have a legitimate excuse for not understanding what the Prophet Isaiah *meant* when he spoke *parabolically* and *talked about* seeing and hearing with the "heart," that is, the mind. But what does that matter to a fool? If he doesn't know what "The Way" is, he will never understand *why* the Angel of the Lord would say to the True Believer, "This is the way, walk in it." So what good is any excuse in his case? Hell is already filled with millions who have contrived better.

*Editor: Since we are on the subject of angels and Daniel 12:1, I want to ask you about something you said in the January 1997 "Questions & Answers" section (p. 11). While talking about the archangel Michael, you said, "It won't be long before that magnificent messenger begins to carry out his mission: to ensure that all God's People hear the Word that God has hidden in seven sealed messages of the Hebrew Scriptures. That's how he is going to 'guard' Israel, that is, the members of the Body of Jesus Christ, Who is Israel. He will make sure the Elect understand and hold on to the Truth they have heard." My question is, How will the archangel Michael be able to "ensure" that God's People hear the Word that has been hidden in the Scriptures and, more importantly, how will he "guard" the Elect and make sure they understand and hold on to the Truth they have heard? Are you talking about some kind of supernatural activity here? Isn't it the responsibility of individual Believers to "guard" the Truth and make sure they hold on to it?*

*Elijah:* The Elect are, indeed, responsible to ensure that they understand and "guard," that is, hold on to, the Truth they have heard. But what could possibly make anyone absolutely certain that they have accurately understood the Truth when they hear it spoken? On hearing that question, a simpleton might immediately refer to what I have taught concerning this verse:

*Jesus therefore answered them, and said, "My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me. If any man is willing to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or {whether} I speak from Myself."  
(John 7:16-17)*

If you look at this passage carefully, you should be able to see that Jesus is not *talking about* the True Believer accurately *understanding* the Truth of *The Teaching*. He is referring to the True Believer's ability to recognize that *The Teaching* actually came from God. But in rejecting the use of that passage in defense of the claim that True Believers have been given some inate ability to accurately understand the Truth of *The Teaching*, I may well provoke an idiot into appealing to what Jesus said in this passage:

*"When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, {that is} the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of Me, and you*

*{will} bear witness also, because you have been with Me from the beginning."  
(John 15:26-27)*

Again, Jesus says nothing at all in that passage about the notion that True Believers have some supernatural ability to accurately understand the Truth. He is instead *talking about* the same thing He mentioned in John 7:16-17. That is, the Holy Spirit constantly testifies concerning the truthfulness of *The Teaching*. But as Jesus plainly states, the Apostles were able to do exactly the same thing because they had heard Him teach the Truth. The same is true of anyone who hears and accurately understands the Truth of *The Teaching* today.

While those things are essential to an accurate understanding of the Truth of *The Teaching*, they contribute nothing to a solution to the conundrum we are addressing. In fact, they only set it off in bold relief: How is it possible for the True Believer who "bears witness" to the Truth to know for certain that he accurately understands *The Teaching* concerning which he testifies? In what Jesus said to His disciples shortly before His Crucifixion, He points out how God has made that possible. If you know what a "spirit" is, you may already understand what He *meant* by what He said. In *talking about* the ministry of the Holy Spirit to the True Believer, Jesus said this:

*"These things I have spoken to you, while abiding with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you."  
(John 14:25-26)*

Those enamored by mysticism will, in their ignorance concerning the true nature of a spirit, argue that all anyone need do to understand the Truth is listen to that "still, small voice" within. I showed that goofiness for what it actually is several years ago. [Editor: See "Mystics, Meatballs, and the Marvelous Works of God," *The Voice of Elijah*®, April 1993.] So I need not go into it again here. That idiocy is one of Satan's more inane delusions. Anyone with a half-ounce of common sense can see that it cannot possibly be true. Yet fools are more than willing to believe it because it demands nothing of them other than drifting on the wind. That's how they came to be mesmerized by the one whom the Prophets *parabolically* describe as a hot, dry wind.

If you actually want to know the Truth, there is a bit more to what Jesus was saying about the Holy Spirit bringing things in *The Teaching* to the True Believer's remembrance than unregenerate dullards will ever be able to grasp. It has to do with the *parabolic imagery* related to the "eyes of the heart" that Paul mentions in this passage:

*For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which {exists} among you, and your love for all the saints, do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention {of you} in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. {I pray that} the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. {These are} in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly {places}, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come.*

*(Ephesians 1:15–21)*

One would do well to keep in mind the fact that Paul wrote that bit about the "eyes of the heart" being "enlightened" to folks who had already heard the Truth of *The Apostolic Teaching*. And John tells us that shortly before His death, Jesus said this about the very same thing:

*"I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear {them} now. But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. He shall glorify Me; for He shall take of Mine, and shall disclose {it} to you. All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said, that He takes of Mine, and will disclose {it} to you. A little while, and you will no longer behold Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me." {Some} of His disciples therefore said to one another, "What is this thing He is telling us, 'A little while, and you will not behold Me; and*

*again a little while, and you will see Me'; and, 'because I go to the Father'?" And so they were saying, "What is this that He says, 'A little while'? We do not know what He is talking about." Jesus knew that they wished to question Him, and He said to them, "Are you deliberating together about this, that I said, 'A little while, and you will not behold Me, and again a little while, and you will see Me'? Truly, truly, I say to you, that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned to joy. Whenever a woman is in travail she has sorrow, because her hour has come; but when she gives birth to the child, she remembers the anguish no more, for joy that a child has been born into the world. Therefore you too now have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one takes your joy away from you. And in that day you will ask Me no question. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you shall ask the Father for anything, He will give it to you in My name. Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be made full. **These things I have spoken to you in figurative language; an hour is coming when I will speak no more to you in figurative language, but will tell you plainly of the Father.** In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I will request the Father on your behalf; for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from the Father. I came forth from the Father, and have come into the world; I am leaving the world again, and going to the Father."*

*(John 16:12–28)*

I have already explained what Jesus was *talking about* when He told His disciples that they would "see" Him again after His death. [Editor: See "Thy Kingdom Come. Thy Will Be Done, on Earth," *The Voice of Elijah*®, April 1997.] He plainly admitted that He had been speaking "figuratively" when He said that. The Truth is, He and the Apostle Paul had in mind exactly the same *parabolic image* that the Prophet Isaiah had in mind when he wrote this:

*O people in Zion, inhabitant in Jerusalem, you will weep no longer. He will surely be gracious to you at the sound of your cry; when He hears it, He will answer you. Although the Lord has given you bread of privation and water of oppression, {He,} your Teacher will no longer hide Himself, but your eyes will behold your Teacher.*

*And your ears will hear a word behind you, "This is the way, walk in it," whenever you turn to the right or to the left.*

*(Isaiah 30:19-21)*

In all that Jesus said about the ministry of the Holy Spirit to True Believers in the passages above from the Gospel of John, He never once addressed the issue of how a True Believer can be *certain* that he has accurately understood the Truth. Jesus was only *talking about* the fact that the Holy Spirit would ensure that the True Believer would be able to "see" *The Word of Truth* that He is. So I guess that leaves you, provided you honestly want to be *certain* that you actually know the Truth, completely dependent on your ability to "hear a word behind you, 'This is the way, walk in it,' whenever you turn to the right or to the left." I pity those fools among us who fail to recognize the test God has ordained in that circumstance.

Let me say this before I go on: If anyone is so proud of his own mental abilities that he *thinks* he can accurately understand the Truth all by himself in the face of Satan's onslaught against the Truth in these Last Days, he needs to check his email a bit more frequently. Another think is most assuredly on its way. And that thought has something or other to do with pride going before destruction.

I have already told you that angels can communicate on frequencies other than those that are audible to the human ear. If you stop to think about it, you should already know that they are able to do so on the same frequencies the brain uses to transport memories from short-term memory to long-term memory. If that were not so, how could the Angel of the Lord have communicated with Joseph in a dream?

I should also tell you that since angels are limited by time and space, they can appear to someone only if they are actually present at that spot here on Earth. That is made clear by what the angel says to the Prophet Daniel when he appeared to him and *delivered* God's response to his prayer:

*Then behold, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. And he said to me, "O Daniel, man of high esteem, understand the words that I am about to tell you and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you." And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling. Then he said to me, "Do not be afraid,*

*Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart on understanding {this} and on humbling yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia. Now I have come to give you an understanding of what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision pertains to the days yet {future.}"*

*(Daniel 10:10-14)*

Hagar had an experience similar to Daniel's after Sarai's harsh treatment sent her packing:

*Now the angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur. And he said, "Hagar, Sarai's maid, where have you come from and where are you going?" And she said, "I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai." Then the angel of the LORD said to her, "Return to your mistress, and submit yourself to her authority." Moreover, the angel of the LORD said to her, "I will greatly multiply your descendants so that they shall be too many to count." The angel of the LORD said to her further,*

*"Behold, you are with child,*

*And you shall bear a son;*

*And you shall call his name Ishmael,*

*Because the LORD has given heed to your affliction.*

*And he will be a wild donkey of a man,*

*His hand {will be} against everyone,*

*And everyone's hand {will be} against him;*

*And he will live to the east of all his brothers."*

*Then she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, "Thou art a God who sees"; for she said, "Have I even remained alive here after seeing Him?" Therefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi; behold, it is between Kadesh and Bered.*

*(Genesis 16:7-14)*

We can be certain that the Angel of the Lord appeared visibly to Hagar at that time because the text tells us she thought she had seen God Himself. So we know God's messenger spoke to her face to face when he *delivered* the Word of the Lord to her. However, the Scriptures clearly indicate that angels do not have to be in close proximity to the person to whom they are speaking. That is, they can communicate over a rather

long distance. In fact, they can remain in Heaven—wherever that is—and communicate directly with someone here on Earth. Moses makes that point several times in what he says about angels. For example, in the following account, he tells us what happened to Hagar after Sarah finally got her way:

*Now Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, mocking. Therefore she said to Abraham, "Drive out this maid and her son, for the son of this maid shall not be an heir with my son Isaac." And the matter distressed Abraham greatly because of his son. But God said to Abraham, "Do not be distressed because of the lad and your maid; whatever Sarah tells you, listen to her, for through Isaac your descendants shall be named. And of the son of the maid I will make a nation also, because he is your descendant." So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water, and gave {them} to Hagar, putting {them} on her shoulder, and {gave her} the boy, and sent her away. And she departed, and wandered about in the wilderness of Beersheba. And the water in the skin was used up, and she left the boy under one of the bushes. Then she went and sat down opposite him, about a bowshot away, for she said, "Do not let me see the boy die." And she sat opposite him, and lifted up her voice and wept. And God heard the lad crying; and **the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven**, and said to her, "What is the matter with you, Hagar? Do not fear, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is. Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him by the hand; for I will make a great nation of him." (Genesis 21:9–18)*

The key phrase in that passage is "from heaven." That innocuous-sounding phrase indicates we are dealing with a form of communication far superior to anything we as human beings currently have available to us. That will undoubtedly be difficult for skeptics to accept. Yet Moses tells us the Angel of the Lord communicated with Abraham in exactly the same way after he had passed the test that God ordained for him:

*And Abraham stretched out his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. **But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven**, and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." And he said, "Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your*

*son, your only son, from Me." Then Abraham raised his eyes and looked, and behold, behind {him} a ram caught in the thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the place of his son. And Abraham called the name of that place **The LORD Will Provide**, as it is said to this day, "In the mount of the LORD it will be provided." **Then the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven**, and said, "By Myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son, indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies. And in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice." (Genesis 22:10–18)*

If the Angel of the Lord actually spoke to Hagar and Abraham directly "from heaven" as the text indicates, it would seem plausible that his long-distance communication was accomplished mentally rather than in a form audible to the human ear. After all, if one admits that the Scriptures are true and that angels can, in fact, speak to us mentally in our dreams while we are sleeping, what basis is there for denying that they can also speak to us mentally while we are awake?

Now that you know angels can communicate with us mentally at any and all times, what makes you think that Satan—who was formerly an archangel—and every last member of his rebel band of messengers cannot do exactly the same thing? And if they can do that, what sort of messages do you think they might be intent on purveying to you? And how do you think you should go about recognizing when they slip in a stray thought, or two, or three, or ten, or a hundred, about *The Teaching* and let you go on thinking those things came to you because of your great ability to comprehend the Truth?

To appropriate a CB radio metaphor from the '70s, good buddy, I prefer to let Christ take the front door and the archangel Michael the back door. Since they are much more familiar with "The Way" than I am, I'm perfectly content to remain in the rocking chair.

*Editor: While we are on the subject of supernatural communication, there seems to be an increasing number*

*of people these days who claim to have had some kind of supernatural encounter. I'm talking about people who claim to have seen visions of the Virgin Mary or to have had a near-death experience where they momentarily crossed over into another realm before being physically revived or to have seen UFOs (if that qualifies as supernatural) or to have experienced other kinds of strange and unusual phenomena. What do you make of all this? It's hard to imagine that all these people are crazy and that none of them actually experienced what they claim to have experienced. So what's going on? Could these extraordinary events merely be the front edge of the lying signs and false wonders that will be part of Satan's activity here at the End (2 Thess. 2:9)?*

**Elijah:** Now is not the time or the place to explain what Satan is about in all the things you mentioned. So what can I say that fools will not wrest to their own destruction? Only that he is doing what he does best. He is lying to people—crafting his most extravagant and unbelievable lie—and folks left and right are ignorantly lapping it up without so much as a quibble over details. But a person would have to have rocks for brains to assume that this time around Satan's lie will not have even more far-reaching consequences than the preposterous lie that he told Eve in the Garden.

Every True Believer needs to get one thing straight: Satan is nothing more than a deceiver—a liar. He would have us all believe that he is an all-powerful divine being that we should fear and, therefore, hold in high regard. The Truth is, he was created as nothing more than a messenger—just another one of God's flunkies. But he deliberately chose to distort the message concerning the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil that God had charged him to *deliver* to Eve. Through that action, he fell from favor with God and brought upon himself the curse of God. In case you missed it, that is one of the points that Moses makes in his account of the fall of Adam and Eve.

The only power that Satan has is the power of suggestion, that is, his ability to get people to believe whatever lie he wants them to believe. But that's all he needs to control most people. They haven't had a thought in years that he hasn't had a hand in, in one way or another. For example, I saw the results of a Harris poll on the internet recently that illustrates the sort of technique he uses. The question asked and the three responses allowed were:

*Do you think the Child Online Protection Act, a law aimed at protecting children from sexually explicit material on the internet, is constitutional?*

*Yes—it doesn't prohibit pornography online, it simply makes it a crime for websites to knowingly give minors access to sexually explicit material*

*No—the law threatens constitutional free-speech rights and "the greater good" would be served by barring enforcement of this law*

*Unsure—while minors need to be protected, the public interest is not served by the enforcement of an unconstitutional law*

Did you notice the suggestion concerning how you should respond? It's in the "unsure" response.

**Editor:** *Another year has come to an end and a lot has happened both in this ministry and in the world. Were there any significant events that occurred in 1998 (either in this ministry or in the world) that you think are worth noting or worth commenting on?*

**Elijah:** To tell you the Truth, I haven't paid much attention to what is going on in the world lately. It's not that I'm not aware of current events; it's just that I don't consider them to be all that important. I have been thinking a lot about the *significance* of what has been happening in Washington, D.C., over the past year, but I'm not sure what Satan is up to in all that. And since I hope to include another installment of "The Forecast" in this issue, that leaves just the things related to this ministry for me to comment on.

Perhaps the most *significant* development over the past year has been my growing insight into the various causes of my fibromyalgia. After struggling for fourteen years against a constant mental and physical fatigue, I have been able to accomplish a tremendous amount since the mental fog began to lift in late April or early May. While I still have nights when I can't sleep and must therefore struggle against an overwhelming feeling of fatigue the next day, I am gradually learning what causes that as well. At the moment, I'm feeling better than I have felt in at least thirty years. So I'm looking forward to an even more productive year this year. ■