



Need Confirmation, Anyone?

For if He were the son of Joseph, how could He be greater than Solomon, or greater than Jonah, or greater than David, when He was generated from the same seed, and was a descendant of these men? And how was it that He also pronounced Peter blessed, because he acknowledged Him to be the Son of the living God?

But besides, if indeed He had been the son of Joseph, He could not, according to Jeremiah, be either king or heir. For Joseph is shown to be the son of Joachim and Jechoniah, as also Matthew sets forth in his pedigree. But Jechoniah, and all his posterity, were disinherited from the kingdom; Jeremiah thus declaring, "As I live, saith the Lord, if Jechoniah the son of Joachim king of Judah had been made the signet of my right hand, I would pluck him thence, and deliver him into the hand of those seeking thy life."

And again: "Jechoniah is dishonoured as a useless vessel, for he has been cast into a land which he knew not. Earth, hear the word of the Lord: Write this man a disinherited person; for none of his seed, sitting on the throne of David, shall prosper, or be a prince in Judah." And again, God speaks of Joachim his father: "Therefore thus saith the Lord concerning Joachim his father, king of Judea, There shall be from him none sitting upon the throne of David: and his dead body shall be cast out in the heat of day, and in the frost of night. And I will look upon him, and upon his sons, and will bring upon them, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, upon the land of Judah, all the evils that I have pronounced against them."

Those, therefore, who say that He was begotten of Joseph, and that they have hope in Him, do cause themselves to be disinherited from the kingdom, falling under the curse and rebuke directed against Jechoniah and his seed. Because for this reason have these things been spoken

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concerning Jechoniah, the [Holy] Spirit foreknowing the doctrines of the evil teachers; that they may learn that from his seed—that is, from Joseph—He was not to be born, but that, according to the promise of God, from David's belly the King eternal is raised up, who sums up all things in Himself, and has gathered into Himself the ancient formation [of man].

For as by one man's disobedience sin entered, and death obtained [a place] through sin; so also by the obedience of one man, righteousness having been introduced, shall cause life to fructify in those persons who in times past were dead. And as the protoplast himself, Adam, had his substance from untilled and as yet virgin soil ("for God had not yet sent rain, and man had not tilled the ground"), and was formed by the hand of God, that is, by the Word of God, for "all things were made by Him," and the Lord took dust from the earth and formed man; so did He who is the Word, recapitulating Adam in Himself, rightly receive a birth, enabling Him to gather up Adam [into Himself], from Mary, who was as yet a virgin.

If, then, the first Adam had a man for his father, and was born of human seed, it were reasonable to say that the second Adam was begotten of Joseph. But if the former was taken from the dust, and God was his Maker, it was incumbent that the latter also, making a recapitulation in Himself, should be formed as man by God, to have an analogy with the former as respects His origin.

Irenæus, "Against Heresies," Book iii, Chap. xxi, in Roberts and Donaldson (Eds.), *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (1867), Vol. 1, pp. 453–454.

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A Note From the Editor

I am pleased to announce that *The Voice of Elijah*® now has a website at www.voiceofelijah.org. We first mentioned our intention to utilize the internet and create our own website in the August 1997 *Update*. Although I initially thought we could have our site up and running by the middle of 1998, I also knew that things tend to move slower than anticipated. And such was the case with this. But I am happy to report that our website is nearing completion. Although there is still some work to be done as of this writing, there is now a fairly extensive body of information available to anyone with internet access who wishes to learn the basics of what we believe.

The main benefit of a website is that it provides us another avenue for reaching True Believers with information they need to hear but have likely never heard. Our main challenge, of course, will be getting True Believers to actually visit our site. This will not be an easy process. With literally thousands, if not tens of thousands, of “Christian” websites out there already, our site merely becomes one more tree in the forest. That means the likelihood that True Believers will somehow find our site on their own is remote, to say the least.

While I have no doubt that God could easily lead those who are seeking Truth to our site, the fact is, most Believers will never find it on their own. They need to be told where to look. That’s why we intend to publish our web address on every piece of literature we send out from this point forward. But that alone won’t be enough. We will also need your help in leading “The Many” to righteousness (Dan. 12:3).

Share the Good News (About Our Website)

Since we have often stated that one should not be teaching others unless one has been called to do so, I’m sure some of you have been reluctant to say much about *The Voice of Elijah*® to others for fear of saying or doing something you believe you shouldn’t. On the other hand, some of you have not told others about our ministry because you lack confidence in your ability to intelligently articulate your beliefs to others. And still others have refrained from saying much to anyone out of fear that they would jump to conclusions before hearing you out. I can understand all of these concerns because I have had them myself.

This is where our website can be useful. By merely passing along our web address (through casual conversation, for instance, or through one of the tracts we hope to eventually produce), many of the aforementioned concerns can be alleviated and the burden of responsibility placed on others. If they choose not to visit our site or if they go there and aren’t interested in what they read, that’s not your problem—it’s theirs.

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The benefit of our website is that it alleviates the need to tell others what *The Voice of Elijah*® believes. The website speaks for itself. The *Doctrinal Statement* and *Questions & Answers* provide an adequate outline of our beliefs. People will either believe what they read or they won't. It will either make sense to them or it won't. Whatever happens, they are accountable—not you.

Since the essential part of the website is *Questions & Answers*, I'll tell you why we chose to answer only those fourteen questions. First of all, the primary purpose of *Questions & Answers* is to provide interested readers with a basic outline of *what* we believe and *why* we believe it. Since everything we believe and teach ultimately centers around God's use of parables from the very beginning to explain what spiritual reality is like, all of the questions asked and answers provided relate to parables and are linked to each other in one way or another. As such, the only way anyone can come away with a comprehensive understanding of what we believe will be if they read and study all of the questions and answers as a whole.

Second, by limiting ourselves to these fourteen specific questions, we believe we have provided enough information to inform those who have a love for the Truth, while limiting the information that goes out to curiosity seekers. Hopefully, we have struck the right balance in our questions and answers, but only time will tell. For now, we intend to leave this information as it is until enough time has passed for us to determine what, if anything, should be done differently. In the meantime, I hope you will help us with the process by pointing others to our website and sending us your comments as well.

Don't Forget The Isaiah Seminar

This is the final reminder that *The Isaiah Seminar* is coming up on October 23 and 24. It will be held in Dallas, Texas, from approximately 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, October 23 and 9:00 a.m. to noon on Sunday, October 24. If you plan to attend

this seminar or if you think you might like to attend, it is not too late to notify us. Simply complete and return the enclosed flyer as soon as possible so we can send you more information. You are not obligating yourself in any way by returning the flyer. It merely tells us that you would like to receive more details as they become available. However, seating is limited, so if you are interested, we need to know.

The cost of attending the seminar is \$50 per person or \$75 per couple. This price entitles each attendee to a syllabus on the day of the seminar and each individual or couple to a copy of the audiotapes, transcript, and Larry Harper's translation of relevant portions of the Book of Isaiah when these materials become available. They should be available by the summer of 2000 (if not sooner) and can be purchased at that time by anyone unable to attend the seminar.

On a personal note, I am especially looking forward to *The Isaiah Seminar*. As some of you know, it was during my own personal study of the Book of Isaiah nearly nine years ago that I was forced to admit how little of this book I understood and that I, like the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:30–31), needed someone to explain it to me. Little did I know when I abandoned my study of Isaiah and told God that I needed help to understand it that within a year, I would be a disciple of *The Voice of Elijah*®.

If you haven't yet realized that we all desperately need the insight *The Voice of Elijah*® offers, it is probably because you are unwilling to admit how ignorant we all are. I suggest you come clean and admit it now so the Spirit of Truth can begin to work within you.

To that end, let me remind you that you can still order the newly remastered audiotapes and transcript of *The Way, The Truth, The Life* at the reduced price of \$30. These tapes were produced from the only other seminar we have ever held and contain crucial information that all True Believers need to hear and understand. The Order Form for these tapes is on the back of *The Isaiah Seminar* flyer.

Allen Friend

They Got God at a Fire Sale Price (and a Whole Lot More Than They Bargained For)—Part II

*In the “Questions & Answers” section of the April 1999 issue of **The Voice of Elijah**®, I was asked to explain where the quote found in Matthew 27:9–10 can ostensibly be found in the Old Testament. The text appears to be pointing to Zechariah 11:12–13, yet Matthew seems to indicate he has taken it from Jeremiah. Since scholars have had tremendous difficulty in explaining what Matthew intended, one should not expect an easy resolution to the problem. I began addressing the issue of what Matthew was talking about in the last issue of this newsletter. I will conclude my explanation in this issue.*

In the last issue of *The Voice of Elijah*® (April 1999), I explained a bit about the *parabolic image* in which God is a Potter Who is in the process of re-forming His Firstborn Son, Israel, into an earthenware Vessel more to His liking. I told you that image stems from God having identified Himself to Moses and the Patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—as the supreme god of the Canaanite pantheon, a god named El. I also pointed out that the *significance* of God explaining how He was *parabolically* LIKE the Canaanite god El lay in the most distinctive characteristic of El—that he held sole authority for decreeing a deceased individual could have his “house” “built.” That is, El alone decided who would be allowed to enter the resurrection of the dead. I then explained that the god El determined who was worthy to be resurrected by means of a river ordeal in which the deceased had to triumph over “Judge River” and “Prince Sea.”

I also told you that God’s public proclamation of the Ten Commandments from the top of Mt. Sinai was part of a *parabolic pantomime* that I call the Passover Parable (see “The Passover Parable,” *The Voice of Elijah*®,

July 1991, or the booklet *The Passover Parable*). I explained that in proclaiming the Ten Commandments from the top of Mt. Sinai, God was, in fact, making known the standard by which He would judge the dead. I also told you that His designation of the Tabernacle as the “tent of meeting” stems from the fact that according to Canaanite mythology, the *mythological* assembly of the sons of El met in a “tent of meeting” on the mountain of god (El) somewhere to the north of Canaan. In that funky old tent, they assembled to hear the decree of the supreme god El concerning the one who was qualified to have his “house” “built”—that is, the one who was fit to enter the Resurrection.

I also mentioned in passing that in the Hebrew Scriptures, the Prophets have carefully explained, through the use of divine names other than the name El, how God is *parabolically* LIKE various other gods (and goddesses). I then told you that the divine name which is normally translated “Jehovah” or “Yahweh” is actually a verbal form that *means* “He will become.” And I briefly touched on the fact that in identifying Himself as the God “He will become,” God *parabolically* took to Himself the divine attributes of the Canaanite god Baal while, at the same time, rejecting any notion that Baal even existed.

I also mentioned that the Prophets tell us how the *parabolic* Temple of God is being “built” on a *parabolic* mountain called Mt. Zion. The heavenly Mt. Zion is said to be located on a ridge running off another *parabolic* mountain—which is identified in the Hebrew Scriptures as Mt. *Zaphon*. I explained that the assembly of the sons of God is said to meet on Mt. *Zaphon*, which is the same *mythological* mountain on which Baal supposedly lived in the “house” that was “built” for him after he triumphed over “Judge River” and “Prince

Sea." I also told you that—according to *The Teaching of the Prophets*—God is in the process, even now, of *parabolically* "building" His Own "house" on that very mountain, on the ridge known as Mt. Zion.

At this point, I could veer off and explain the *meaning and significance* of all the *parabolic imagery* inherent in the *symbolic rituals* of the Tabernacle cult. For example, I could explain how God used the symbolism of the sacrificial rituals to explain how the death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ was just LIKE the Canaanite god Baal obtaining El's decree that his "house" could be "built." But I won't. I will merely point you to a portion of what the writer of the Book of Hebrews has said on the subject:

Now the main point in what has been said {is this:} we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister in the sanctuary, and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man. For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices; hence it is necessary that this {high priest} also have something to offer. Now if He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all, since there are those who offer the gifts according to the Law; who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned {by God} when he was about to erect the tabernacle; for, "SEE," He says, "THAT YOU MAKE all things ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN WHICH WAS SHOWN YOU ON THE MOUNTAIN." But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises. For if that first {covenant} had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second. For finding fault with them, He says, "BEHOLD, DAYS ARE COMING, SAYS THE LORD, WHEN I WILL EFFECT A NEW COVENANT WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AND WITH THE HOUSE OF JUDAH; NOT LIKE THE COVENANT WHICH I MADE WITH THEIR FATHERS ON THE DAY WHEN I TOOK THEM BY THE HAND TO LEAD THEM OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT; FOR THEY DID NOT CONTINUE IN MY COVENANT, AND I DID NOT CARE FOR THEM, SAYS THE LORD. FOR THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD: I WILL PUT MY LAWS INTO THEIR MINDS,

AND I WILL WRITE THEM UPON THEIR HEARTS. AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. AND THEY SHALL NOT TEACH EVERYONE HIS FELLOW CITIZEN, AND EVERYONE HIS BROTHER, SAYING, 'KNOW THE LORD,' FOR ALL SHALL KNOW ME, FROM THE LEAST TO THE GREATEST OF THEM. FOR I WILL BE MERCIFUL TO THEIR INIQUITIES, AND I WILL REMEMBER THEIR SINS NO MORE." When He said, "A new {covenant}," He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear. Now even the first {covenant} had regulations of divine worship and the earthly sanctuary. For there was a tabernacle prepared, the outer one, in which {were} the lampstand and the table and the sacred bread; this is called the holy place. And behind the second veil, there was a tabernacle which is called the Holy of Holies, having a golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which {was} a golden jar holding the manna, and Aaron's rod which budded, and the tables of the covenant. And above it {were} the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat; but of these things we cannot now speak in detail. Now when these things have been thus prepared, the priests are continually entering the outer tabernacle, performing the divine worship, but into the second only the high priest {enters}, once a year, not without {taking} blood, which he offers for himself and for the sins of the people committed in ignorance. **The Holy Spirit {is} signifying this, that the way into the holy place has not yet been disclosed, while the outer tabernacle is still standing, which {is} a symbol for the present time.** Accordingly both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make the worshiper perfect in conscience, since they {relate} only to food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until a time of reformation. **But when Christ appeared {as} a high priest of the good things to come, {He entered} through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.** (Hebrews 8:1–9:12)

It is impossible for anyone to understand that passage if they do not know what Moses and the other Prophets of Israel have said about Jesus Christ "building

The House” of God on Mt. Zion. For example, the phrase “the way into the holy place has not yet been disclosed, while the outer tabernacle is still standing, which {is} a symbol for the present time” is completely unintelligible unless you know about “the way of the sea” and the subtle difference Moses has drawn between the Tabernacle (Hebrew: *mishkan*), the “tent of meeting” (Hebrew: *’ohel mo’ed*), and the “sanctuary” (Hebrew: *miqdash*). If you understand those things, then you can see that the author of the Book of Hebrews has quite clearly gotten his information from passages like this one in Isaiah where the Prophet uses the term *miqdash*:

*“Take counsel, and it will be frustrated;
 Speak a word, but it will not stand,
 Because God is with Us.
 Because this is what His Majesty said to me when {He}
 strengthened {my} hand and admonished me against
 walking in the way of this people, saying:
 ‘You shall not say, “Conspiracy!”
 Concerning all that this people says, “Conspiracy!”
 And you shall not fear what he fears,
 And you shall not tremble.
 You will set apart as holy His Majesty of Hosts
 —Him alone.
 And He will be what you fear,
 And He will be what causes you to tremble.
 Then He will become the Sanctuary;
 But a stone to strike and a rock to stumble over
 To the two houses of Israel—
 A snare and a trap to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.
 And many will stumble over them
 {the stone and the rock}.
 They will fall and be broken;
 They will be trapped and caught.’
 Bind up The Testimony!
 Seal up The Teaching in My disciples!
 Then I will wait for His Majesty, the One Who is
 hiding His face from the House of Jacob.
 I will eagerly wait for Him.”
 (Isaiah 8:10–17) —my interim translation*

The author of the Book of Hebrews is *talking about* what Isaiah mentions briefly in verse 14. But he refers specifically to that *parabolic image* when he says this:

But when Christ appeared {as} a high priest of the good things to come, {He entered} through the greater and

*more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation.
 (Hebrews 9:11)*

The translator added the words *He entered* to that verse because the passage did not make sense to him as it stands written. But you should keep in mind that when a translator finds it necessary to do that, it is sometimes because he does not understand what the text is *talking about*. Therefore, let me give you my own translation of Hebrews 9:1–12. I have translated the text so as to add as few extra words as possible. The following translation is more than fifteen years old, and I will undoubtedly change parts of it before I publish a complete translation of the Book of Hebrews, so don’t hold me to it in every detail. But you can at least use it to see what the author had in mind:

*Therefore, even the first {covenant} had both ordinances of service and an earthly holy place. Because a tent was constructed (the first one) in which were the lampstand, the table, and the presentation of the loaves, which is called “holy.” Yet behind the second curtain was a tent called “Holy of Holies,” which had an incense altar and the ark of the covenant entirely covered with gold, in which was a gold jar holding the manna, Aaron’s rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant. Yet above these were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat (concerning which it is not now {possible} to speak in detail). Yet when these had been so constructed, the priests who complete the services are always entering into the first tent, but the high priest into the second only once a year, not without blood, which he offers for himself and the people’s lack of knowledge. This is the Holy Spirit explaining that the way of the holy ones has not yet been made apparent while the first tent still has existence, which is a parable for the present time, according to which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which are not able to complete the worshipper with respect to conscience: only to food, drink, and different baptisms—ordinances of flesh imposed until a time of a new order. But Christ, having arrived as high priest of the coming good things by means of the greater and more complete tent not made with hands (that is, not of this creation), He entered once for all into the holy (not by means of the blood of goats and calves, but by means of His own blood), obtaining eternal redemption.
 (Hebrews 9:1–12) —my interim translation*

It is not obvious to the one who is unaware of what *The Teaching of Moses* says about “*The Man*,” but the author is explaining how Jesus Christ “built *The House*” of God by entering into what he calls “the second tent”—which is the “Sanctuary” (Hebrew: *miqdash*) that Isaiah mentions—as the High Priest of the New Covenant. That perfect cube *parabolically* represents “*The House*” in which the God “He will become” will dwell forever on Mt. Zion—that is, on the Mountain of God in Heaven. That’s why the author first *talks about* the Tabernacle having been constructed according to the pattern of the tent that Moses saw on the Mountain of God in Hebrews 8:5 and then, in Chapter 12, says this about Mt. Zion:

For you have not come to {a mountain} that may be touched and to a blazing fire, and to darkness and gloom and whirlwind, and to the blast of a trumpet and the sound of words which {sound was such that} those who heard begged that no further word should be spoken to them. For they could not bear the command, “IF EVEN A BEAST TOUCHES THE MOUNTAIN, IT WILL BE STONED.” And so terrible was the sight, {that} Moses said, “I AM FULL OF FEAR and trembling.” But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than {the blood} of Abel.
(Hebrews 12:18–24)

The author of the Book of Hebrews is speaking in terms of the *parabolic imagery* in which Jesus Christ ratified a New Covenant with God on the heavenly Mountain of God just as Moses ratified the Old Covenant with God on the earthly Mountain of God. But the author wants it understood that the Tabernacle and its *symbolic rituals* are associated with the Old Covenant. “*The House*” of God that Jesus Christ is “building” on Mt. Zion and its *symbolic rituals* are associated with the New. But even knowing that, it is still difficult to see what he has in mind in Chapters 8 and 9 if you have not followed his train of thought over the first seven chapters of the book. He has been covering some of what *The Teaching* has to say about how Jesus Christ—the Word of God—“built *The House*” of God

just as Nathan told David He would in 2 Samuel 7:13. But I shouldn’t have to tell you that. He intimated that was his intention in Chapter 1 when he began his treatise this way:

God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in {His} Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high; having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they.
(Hebrews 1:1–4)

An understanding of that passage depends on one knowing the difference between *the promise* and *what was promised*. It also doesn’t hurt to know that *the promise* has always been transferred by *inheritance*, while *what was promised* is *inherited* only by those who hold on to *the promise* until they die. But without the knowledge that Jesus Christ is both *the Heir of the promise* and *the fulfillment of the promise*, there is no way to know that the author of the Book of Hebrews is *talking about* how God, the Potter, re-formed Jesus Christ—that is, Israel, His Firstborn Son—into an earthenware Vessel more to His liking. Lacking insight into those things, one should not even bother to read the rest of the book. One certainly will not understand it.

The purpose the author of the Book of Hebrews had in writing was to provide an explanation of how important it is that Believers hold on to *the promise* so that they may claim *what was promised* when they, like Jesus Christ, pass through “the veil” (Heb. 6:19; 9:3; 10:20) as priests of the New Covenant. He clearly defines his purpose when he writes this in Chapter 3:

Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession. He was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was in all His house. For He has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, by just so much as the builder of the house has more honor than the house. For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God. Now Moses was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those

things which were to be spoken later; but Christ {was faithful} as a Son over His house whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end.
(Hebrews 3:1–6)

At this time, my only interest in the *parabolic imagery* related to the “building” of “The House” of God on Mt. Zion lies in its relation to the *parabolic* mountain known as Mt. *Zaphon*. I have already explained that Mt. *Zaphon* and Mt. Zion are, in fact, two peaks on one and the same *parabolic* mountain. And I should not have to remind you that according to *The Teaching*, both of those peaks are situated somewhere in that far-off place called “Heaven.” So I won’t. I will just tell you that the “tent of meeting” in which God dwells and “The House” which is being “built” for the God “He will become” are both located there. Then, for the benefit—or detriment—of those completely beguiled by Satan’s lie, I will conclude by telling you that is nothing more than *parabolic imagery* that speaks concerning a far greater reality.

Two Plus Two Is at Least Seven

The most amazing thing about the *parabolic imagery* of *The Teaching of Moses* and *The Teaching of the Prophets* is this: It is extremely easy for the True Believer to understand and believe. The next most amazing thing about the *parabolic imagery* of *The Teaching of Moses* and *The Teaching of the Prophets* is this: It is just as easy for skeptics and scoffers to understand isolated details, but they find it impossible to believe. Consequently, they cannot “see” the big picture. Fools that they are, they will discount what they cannot understand while vehemently denying that they are blind. The most ignorant will reject the Truth of *The Teaching* outright.

To this point, I have been intentionally flying under the radar of the blind. That is, I have tried to make it more difficult for them to understand *The Teaching* by explaining it in bits and pieces—a little bit here, a little bit there. I have often not emphasized what is important to remember because I know that the True Believer sees the Truth of *The Teaching* with the “eyes of the heart.” That is, those who believe “see” a mental image, a *parabolic image*, to which they add pertinent details as they hear them explained.

Those who know what I am *talking about* already understand: The *parabolic imagery* of *The Teaching* speaks far more eloquently than any of its individual elements viewed separately. So for the benefit—or detriment—of those dullards who are reading along in stubborn unbelief, let me stoke the fire of God’s wrath on their behalf by explaining a few more details openly.

The sons of Israel, because they lived alongside the Canaanites, used the same linguistic conventions and obscure idiomatic expressions that the Canaanites used. And their view of Heaven and Earth was no different than that of the Canaanites because, more often than not, they worshiped the very same gods the Canaanites worshiped. However, the *parabolic* world view of *The Teaching* that Moses and the other Prophets of Israel taught differed radically from the *mythological* world view of the Canaanites. In many cases, that is how Moses and the Prophets were able to conceal what they said concerning the First and Second Advents of Jesus Christ.

All the Prophets had to do to hide the Truth was use exactly the same expressions the Canaanites and their fellow Hebrews used. But instead of speaking in terms of the *mythological* world view of the Canaanites, they spoke in terms of the *parabolic* world view of *The Teaching*. To further confuse those who are unaware of what *The Teaching of Moses* says in regard to “The eternal House” that God is “building” on Mt. Zion, the Prophets sometimes spoke in terms of one world view and immediately thereafter spoke in terms of the other. Then, to ridicule the devoutly religious morons among us who mindlessly insist the Hebrew Scriptures are easy for the spiritually discerning to understand, the Prophets often merged the two world views by pointing to divinely orchestrated historical events as *parabolic pantomime*.

If you did not grasp the *meaning* and *significance* of what I just said, take heart. I doubt anybody else did either. They weren’t *meant* to. I was just jotting down a few of the techniques that Jeremiah used to conceal the *meaning* and *significance* of his prophecies. More than anything else, I was making notes to myself as to how carefully he concealed what he said about the Antichrist. So if the *meaning* and *significance* of the previous paragraph went sailing high over your head, get out your handy-dandy highlighter and go to work on it. Then hang on for a while longer. I am eventually going to show you what Jeremiah did. But first, you

need to know how the world view of the Prophets differed from that of the Canaanites.

Pardon Me—Which Way Is “Heaven”?

In the Canaanite *mythological* world view, the gap between Heaven and Earth was bridged by at least one cosmic mountain (and perhaps several others) located somewhere to the far north of Canaan. That is, the Canaanites believed that if one were to journey to the northern edge of the Earth, they would come to a mountain whose base was firmly fixed in the depths of the Sea of El (Hell) and whose top extended into the far reaches of the Sea of Waters (Heaven). Therefore, all one had to do to get into Heaven—that is, the “Sea of Waters” where the gods lived—was travel “*The Way*” that led to that cosmic mountain, cross the water hazard presented by “Judge River” and “Prince Sea,” and follow “*The Way*” the gods used to ascend the mountain to the stars. Of course, getting into Heaven was one thing; being allowed to stay there as a permanent resident was quite another. For that, one needed a “house” to live in. That is where the Semitic idiom “build a house” gains its *significance*.

Moses and the other Prophets of Israel had quite a different world view than that of the Canaanites. In their *parabolic* world view, Heaven (the “Sea of Waters”) and Earth are two entirely separate (but created) places. Moses tells us they are, in fact, two bodies of water that are separated by a vast expanse that has, for the sake of convenience, also been called “a Sea of Waters,” that is, “Heaven.” But, as Moses records it, those two bodies of water were originally one:

In the beginning, God created the Sea of Waters and the Earth. [Now the Earth was formless and void, and Darkness was on the face of the Deep, but the Spirit of God was hovering on the face of the waters. Then God said, “Let there be Light!” and there was Light. Then God saw the Light—that (it was) good, and God made a distinction between the Light and the Darkness. Then God called the Light “Day,” and He called the Darkness “Night.”] And there was an evening and there was a morning—one day.

(Genesis 1:1–5)—my interim translation

Moses next tells us that, after that initial stage of Creation, God put a vast expanse between Heaven (the

“Sea of Waters”) and Earth, that is, between the two bodies of water. But he also explains that God intentionally called that expanse a “Sea of Waters”:

Then God said, “Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, that there may be a distinction between waters and waters.” So God made the expanse so that it would make a distinction between the waters that were beneath the expanse and the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so. Then God called the expanse “a Sea of Waters,” and there was an evening and there was a morning—a second day.

(Genesis 1:6–8)—my interim translation

Once the waters of the Earth were distinct from those of the “Sea of Waters,” that is, from the waters of Heaven, God set to work making the Earth an inhabitable place. The alert reader will notice that Moses pointedly says nothing about what God did in Heaven:

Then God said, “Let the waters beneath the Sea of Waters be gathered to one place and let the dry land appear!” And it was so. Then God called the dry land “Earth,” and He called the gathering of the waters “Seas.” And God saw—that it was good. Then God said, “Let the Earth produce vegetation—green plants seeding seeds, fruit trees making fruit according to its kind, with its seed in it, on the Earth!” And it was so. Then the Earth sent forth vegetation—green plants seeding seeds according to their kind and trees making fruit in which was its seed according to its kind. And God saw—that it was good. And there was an evening and there was a morning—a third day.

(Genesis 1:9–13)—my interim translation

After the Earth’s vegetation was in full bloom, God then put in place the artificial light that would be needed to keep it growing:

Then God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the Sea of Waters to make a distinction between the day and the night; and let them be for signs and for appointed times and for days and years; and let them be for lights in the expanse of the Sea of Waters to give light on the Earth.” And it was so. Then God made the two large lights (the larger light to govern the day and the smaller light to govern the night) and the stars. Then God put them in the expanse of the Sea of Waters to give light on the Earth and to govern the day and the night and to

make a distinction between *the light and the darkness*. And God saw—that it was good. And there was an evening and a morning—a fourth day. (Genesis 1:14–19)—my interim translation

Moses undoubtedly had a chuckle or two when he deliberately obscured the *meaning and significance* of that passage. He has just told those who know the Truth about “*The Man*” that “the expanse” and “the Sea of Waters” are not the same thing. Yet he intentionally misled the uninformed reader into thinking they were by saying “God called the expanse ‘a Sea of Waters’” in verse 8.

If you carefully read the last passage quoted above, you already know that the sun, moon, and stars are not in Heaven—that is, they are not in the “Sea of Waters.” They are in the expanse that lies between Heaven (the “Sea of Waters”) and Earth. That *means* the world view of Moses and the Prophets leaves no room at all for a cosmic mountain whose top, LIKE the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:4), was thought to reach into Heaven. But in their biting ridicule of the pompously pious, religious lamebrains in every generation to come, these men of God cryptically explained how the Truth is *parabolically* LIKE that.

Pardon Again—Which Way Is “North”?

I have already told you the Canaanites believed that their god Baal lived in a “house” that had been “built” for him on the *mythological* cosmic mountain called *Zaphon*, which they thought was located somewhere far to the north of Canaan. For obvious reasons, when they referred to the direction that we call “north,” they used Baal’s mountain as a point of reference. That is, to the Canaanites (and the consistently backslidden sons of Israel), “north” was simply *Zaphon*.

Needless to say, the Prophets rejected any notion that the god Baal even existed. And they certainly would never admit that a cosmic mountain called *Zaphon* lay somewhere far to the north of Canaan. But they were more than willing to admit—for the sake of ridicule—that spiritual reality is *parabolically* LIKE what the Canaanites believed concerning Baal and the *mythological* mountain on which he had his “house” “built.” Therefore, they cryptically *talk about a parabolic* mountain they call *Zaphon* on numerous occasions. And in every case, they have in mind the fact that God

has decreed a “house” must be “built” on that *parabolic* mountain for the God “He will become,” just LIKE the Canaanites believed their god El had decreed for Baal.

On other occasions, the Prophets use the Hebrew/Canaanite term *zaphon* with exactly the same *meaning* it held for their contemporaries. That is, it *means* nothing more than “north.” But then again, when they use it to describe historical events which they see as part of a *parabolic pantomime* depicting a far greater spiritual reality, their not-so-subtle allusion to that *parabolic* Mountain of God again comes through loud and clear.

As the Prophets knew full well, the Mountain on which the God “He will become” dwells stands proud and tall in that place called “Heaven,” where the crown on its “head” is none other than the Heavenly Jerusalem. That’s the *parabolic image* the Apostle Paul had in mind when he wrote this:

Tell me, you who want to be under law, do you not listen to the law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the bondwoman and one by the free woman. But the son by the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and the son by the free woman through the promise. This is allegorically speaking: for these {women} are two covenants, one {proceeding} from Mount Sinai bearing children who are to be slaves; she is Hagar. Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother. For it is written,

“REJOICE, BARREN WOMAN WHO DOES NOT BEAR; BREAK FORTH AND SHOUT, YOU WHO ARE NOT IN LABOR; FOR MORE ARE THE CHILDREN OF THE DESOLATE THAN OF THE ONE WHO HAS A HUSBAND.”

And you brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise. (Galatians 4:21–28)

It is easy to miss the point of that passage since Paul only mentions the earthly Mountain of God—Mt. Sinai. Nevertheless, he clearly alludes to the heavenly Mountain of God when he tells us there are two women who are two covenants, which allegorically—*parabolically*—represent two mountains. But he says no more about the heavenly Mountain of God or what it is called. So if you are not aware that God used Mt. Sinai (as well as the mountain on which the earthly Jerusalem sits) as a *parabolic* representation of the

Mountain of God that exists in Heaven, you cannot possibly understand what Paul *meant* by what he said.

Even if you understand those things, you will still not comprehend fully what Paul had in mind until you are able to “see” that the Mountain of God in Heaven is nothing more than a mocking, taunting *parabolic image* that was *meant* to ridicule the Canaanite notion that the *mythological* mountain of Baal existed somewhere to the far north of Canaan.

If you want to understand the Truth, it is essential that you keep in mind that Moses and the Prophets of Israel used the *parabolic image* of the Mountain of God to describe a reality that is far beyond the mundane elements of this universe. The Heavenly Jerusalem that sits atop the *parabolic* Mountain of God in Heaven is, in fact, the *parabolic* Woman that God “took” for Himself that the Two might become One and bear children in their Own image and likeness. That is *why* Paul quotes Isaiah 54:1 in the passage above. If you do not know Who that *parabolic* Woman is, let me give you a clue: Read Isaiah 49; it precedes Isaiah 54. Better yet, start reading in Isaiah 47 and read consecutively through Isaiah 55. But be sure to think in terms of the *parabolic image* of a “harlot” bearing children for God. Otherwise, you will miss Isaiah’s point as well.

As Strange as It May Seem ...

Before we look at what the Prophet Jeremiah has said about the *parabolic pantomime* in which a foolish shepherd sold the Lamb of God as a Passover sacrifice and used the proceeds to buy a field from a potter, we need to make sure we are all thinking in terms of the same *parabolic imagery*. So let me take time here to review another bit of pertinent information.

In the article “That’s Why He’s Called AntiChrist!” (*The Voice of Elijah*®, April 1992) and in *The Advent of Christ and AntiChrist* (a copy of which is sent to every new Monthly Contributor), I have provided ample evidence that the Early Church held an entirely different view of the Antichrist than is currently held in the Church today. The following excerpt from a work attributed to the Early Church Father Hippolytus summarizes the orthodox view of the Early Church:

And as our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was spoken of in prophecy as a lion on account of His royalty and glory, in the same manner also has

the Scripture prophetically described the accuser as a lion, on account of his tyranny and violence. For in every respect that deceiver seeks to make himself appear like the Son of God:

1. Christ is a lion, and Antichrist is a lion.
2. Christ is King of things celestial and things terrestrial, and Antichrist will be king upon earth.
3. The Saviour was manifested as a lamb; and he, too, will appear as a lamb, while he is a wolf within.
4. The Saviour was circumcised, and he in like manner will appear in circumcision.
5. The Saviour sent the apostles unto all the nations, and he in like manner will send false apostles.
6. Christ gathered together the dispersed sheep, and he in like manner will gather together the dispersed people of the Hebrews.
7. Christ gave to those who believed on Him the honourable and lifegiving cross, and he in like manner will give his own sign.
8. Christ appeared in the form of man, and he in like manner will come forth in the form of man.
9. Christ arose from among the Hebrews, and he will spring from among the Jews.
10. Christ displayed His flesh like a temple, and raised it up on the third day; and he too will raise up again the temple of stone in Jerusalem.

And these deceits fabricated by him will become quite intelligible to those who listen to us attentively, from what shall be set forth next in order. For through the Scriptures we are instructed in two advents of the Christ and Saviour. And the first after the flesh was in humiliation, because He was manifested in lowly estate. So then His second advent is declared to be in glory; for He comes from heaven with power, and angels, and the glory of His Father....

But as, in accordance with the train of our discussion, we have been constrained to come to the matter of the days of the dominion of the adversary, it is necessary to state in the first place what concerns his nativity and growth; and then we must turn our discourse, as we have said before, to the expounding of this matter, viz., that in all respects the accuser and son of lawlessness is to make himself like our Saviour. Thus also the demonstration makes the matter clear to us. Since the Saviour of the world, with the purpose of saving the race of men, was born of the immaculate and virgin Mary, and in the form of the flesh trod the enemy under foot, in the exercise of the power of His own

proper divinity; in the same manner also will the accuser come forth from an impure woman upon the earth, but shall be born of a virgin spuriously. For our God sojourned with us in the flesh, after that very flesh of ours which He made for Adam and all Adam's posterity, yet without sin. But the accuser, though he take up the flesh, will do it only in appearance; for how should we wear that flesh which he did not make himself, but against which he warreth daily? And it is my opinion, beloved, that he will assume this phenomenal kind of flesh as an instrument....

And even as Christ chose His apostles, so will he too assume a whole people of disciples like himself in wickedness. Above all, moreover, he will love the nation of the Jews. And with all these he will work signs and terrible wonders, false wonders and not true, in order to deceive his impious equals. For if it were possible, he would seduce even the elect from the love of Christ. But in his first steps he will be gentle, loveable, quiet, pious, pacific, hating injustice, detesting gifts, not allowing idolatry; loving, says he, the Scriptures, reverencing priests, honouring his elders, repudiating fornication, detesting adultery, giving no heed to slanders, not admitting oaths, kind to strangers, kind to the poor, compassionate. And then he will work wonders, cleansing lepers, raising paralytics, expelling demons, proclaiming things remote just as things present, raising the dead, helping widows, defending orphans, loving all, reconciling in love men who contend, and saying to such, "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath;" and he will not acquire gold, nor love silver, nor seek riches. And all this he will do corruptly and deceitfully, and with the purpose of deluding all to make him king. For when the peoples and tribes see so great virtues and so great powers in him, they will all with one mind meet together to make him king. And above all others shall the nation of the Hebrews be dear to the tyrant himself, while they say one to another, Is there found indeed in our generation such a man, so good and just? That shall be the way with the race of the Jews pre-eminently, as I said before, who, thinking, as they do, that they shall behold the king himself in such power, will approach him to say, We all confide in thee, and acknowledge thee to be just upon the whole earth; we all hope to be saved by thee; and by thy mouth we have received just and incorruptible judgment. And at first, indeed, that deceitful and lawless one, with crafty deceitfulness, will refuse such glory; but the men persisting, and holding by him, will declare him king. And thereafter he will be lifted up in heart, and he who was formerly gentle will become violent,

and he who pursued love will become pitiless, and the humble in heart will become haughty and inhuman, and the hater of unrighteousness will persecute the righteous. Then, when he is elevated to his kingdom, he will marshal war; and in his wrath he will smite three mighty kings,—those, namely, of Egypt, Libya, and Ethiopia. **And after that he will build the temple in Jerusalem, and will restore it again speedily, and give it over to the Jews. And then he will be lifted up in heart against every man; yea, he will speak blasphemy also against God, thinking in his deceit that he shall be king upon the earth hereafter forever;** not knowing, miserable wretch, that his kingdom is to be quickly brought to nought, and that he will quickly have to meet the fire which is prepared for him, along with all who trust him and serve him. For when Daniel said, "I shall make my covenant for one week," he indicated seven years; and the one half of the week is for the preaching of the prophets, and for the other half of the week—that is to say, for three years and a half—Antichrist will reign upon the earth. And after this his kingdom and his glory shall be taken away. Behold, ye who love God, what manner of tribulation there shall rise in those days, such as has not been from the foundation of the world, no, nor ever shall be, except in those days alone. Then the lawless one, being lifted up in heart, will gather together his demons in man's form, and will abominate those who call him to the kingdom, and will pollute many souls. For he will appoint princes over them from among the demons. And he will no longer seem to be pious, but altogether and in all things he will be harsh, severe, passionate, wrathful, terrible, inconstant, dread, morose, hateful, abominable, savage, vengeful, iniquitous. And, bent on casting the whole race of men into the pit of perdition, he will multiply false signs. For when all the people greet him with their acclamations at his displays, he will shout with a strong voice, so that the place shall be shaken in which the multitudes stand by him: "Ye peoples, and tribes, and nations, acquaint yourselves with my mighty authority and power, and the strength of my kingdom. What prince is there so great as I am? What great God is there but I? Who will stand up against my authority?" Under the eye of the spectators he will remove mountains from their places, he will walk on the sea with dry feet, he will bring down fire from heaven, he will turn the day into darkness and the night into day, he will turn the sun about wheresoever he pleases; and, in short, in the presence of those who behold him, he will show all the elements of earth and sea to be subject to him in the power of

his specious manifestation. For if, while as yet he does not exhibit himself as the son of perdition, he raises and excites against us open war even to battles and slaughters, at that time when he shall come in his own proper person, and men shall see him as he is in reality, what machinations and deceits and delusions will he not bring into play, with the purpose of seducing all men, and leading them off from the way of truth, and from the gate of the kingdom? Then, after all these things, the heavens will not give their dew, the clouds will not give their rain, the earth will refuse to yield its fruits, the sea shall be filled with stench, the rivers shall be dried up, the fish of the sea shall die, men shall perish of hunger and thirst; and father embracing son, and mother embracing daughter, will die together, and there will be none to bury them. But the whole earth will be filled with the stench arising from the dead bodies cast forth. And the sea, not receiving the floods of the rivers, will become like mire, and will be filled with an unlimited smell and stench. Then there will be a mighty pestilence upon the whole earth, and then, too, inconsolable lamentation, and measureless weeping, and unceasing mourning. Then men will deem those happy who are dead before them, and will say to them, "Open your sepulchres, and take us miserable beings in; open your receptacles for the reception of your wretched kinsmen and acquaintances. Happy are ye, in that ye have not seen our days. Happy are ye, in that ye have not had to witness this painful life of ours, nor this irremediable pestilence, nor these straits that possess our souls." Then that abominable one will send his commands throughout every government by the hand at once of demons and of visible men, who shall say, "A mighty king has arisen upon the earth; come ye all to worship him; come ye all to see the strength of his kingdom: for, behold, he will give you corn; and he will bestow upon you wine, and great riches, and lofty honours. For the whole earth and sea obeys his command. Come ye all to him." And by reason of the scarcity of food, all will go to him and worship him; and he will put his mark on their right hand and on their forehead, that no one may put the sign of the honourable cross upon his forehead with his right hand; but his hand is bound. And from that time he shall not have power to seal any one of his members, but he shall be attached to the deceiver, and shall serve him; and in him there is no repentance. But such an one is lost at once to God and to men, and the deceiver will give them scanty food by reason of his abominable seal. And his seal upon the forehead and upon the right hand is the number, "Six hundred

threescore and six." And I have an opinion as to this number, though I do not know the matter for certain; for many names have been found in this number when it is expressed in writing. Still we say that perhaps the scription of this same seal will give us the word I deny. For even in recent days, by means of his ministers—that is to say, the idolaters—that bitter adversary took up the word deny, when the lawless pressed upon the witnesses of Christ, with the adjuration, "Deny thy God, the crucified One." Of such kind, in the time of that hater of all good, will be the seal, the tenor of which will be this: I deny the Maker of heaven and earth, I deny the baptism, I deny my (former) service, and attach myself to thee, and I believe in thee....

Behold the deceit of the enemy, know the machinations of the beguiler, how he seeks to darken the mind of men utterly. For he will show forth his demons brilliant like angels, and he will bring in hosts of the incorporeal without number. And in the presence of all he exhibits himself as taken up into heaven with trumpets and sounds, and the mighty shouting of those who hail him with indescribable hymns; the heir of darkness himself shining like light, and at one time soaring to the heavens, and at another descending to the earth with great glory, and again charging the demons, like angels, to execute his behests with much fear and trembling. Then will he send the cohorts of the demons among mountains and caves and dens of the earth, to track out those who have been concealed from his eyes, and to bring them forward to worship him. And those who yield to him he will seal with his seal; but those who refuse to submit to him he will consume with incomparable pains and bitterest torments and machinations, such as never have been, nor have reached the ear of man, nor have been seen by the eye of mortals. Blessed shall they be who overcome the tyrant then. For they shall be set forth as more illustrious and loftier than the first witnesses; for the former witnesses overcame his minions only, but these overthrow and conquer the accuser himself, the son of perdition. With what eulogies and crowns, therefore, will they not be adorned by our King, Jesus Christ! But let us revert to the matter in hand. When men have received the seal, then, and find neither food nor water, they approach him with a voice of anguish, saying, Give us to eat and drink, for we all faint with hunger and all manner of straits; and bid the heavens yield us water, and drive off from us the beasts that devour men. Then will that crafty one make answer, mocking them with absolute inhumanity, and saying, The heavens

refuse to give rain, the earth yields not again its fruits; whence then can I give you food? Then, on hearing the words of this deceiver, these miserable men will perceive that this is the wicked accuser, and will mourn in anguish, and weep vehemently, and beat their face with their hands, and tear their hair, and lacerate their cheeks with their nails, while they say to each other: Woe for the calamity! Woe for the bitter contract! Woe for the deceitful covenant! Woe for the mighty mischance! How have we been beguiled by the deceiver! how have we been joined to him! how have we been caught in his toils! how have we been taken in his abominable net! **How have we heard the Scriptures, and understood them not!** For truly those who are engrossed with the affairs of life, and with the lust of this world, will be easily brought over to the accuser then, and sealed by him. But many who are hearers of the divine Scriptures, and have them in their hand, and keep them in mind with understanding, will escape his imposture. For they will see clearly through his insidious appearance and his deceitful imposture, and will flee from his hands, and betake themselves to the mountains, and hide themselves in the caves of the earth; and they will seek after the Friend of man with tears and a contrite heart; and He will deliver them out of his toils, and with His right hand He will save those from his snares who in a worthy and righteous manner make their supplication to Him. You see in what manner of fasting and prayer the saints will exercise themselves at that time. Observe, also, how hard the season and the times will be that are to come upon those in city and country alike. At that time they will be brought from the east even unto the west; and they will come up from the west even unto the east, and will weep greatly and wail vehemently. And when the day begins to dawn they will long for the night, in order that they may find rest from their labours; and when the night descends upon them, by reason of the continuous earthquakes and the tempests in the air, they will desire even to behold the light of the day, and will seek how they may hereafter meet a bitter death. At that time the whole earth will bewail the life of anguish, and the sea and air in like manner will bewail it; and the sun, too, will wail; and the wild beasts, together with the fowls, will wail; mountains and hills, and the trees of the plain, will wail on account of the race of man, because all have turned aside from the holy God, and obeyed the deceiver, and received the mark of that abominable one, the enemy of God, instead of the quickening cross of the Saviour. And the churches, too, will wail with a mighty lamentation, because neither

“oblation nor incense” is attended to, nor a service acceptable to God; but the sanctuaries of the churches will become like a garden-watcher’s hut, and the holy body and blood of Christ will not be shown in those days. The public service of God shall be extinguished, psalmody shall cease, the reading of the Scriptures shall not be heard; but for men there shall be darkness, and lamentation on lamentation, and woe on woe. At that time silver and gold shall be cast out in the streets, and none shall gather them; but all things shall be held an offence. For all shall be eager to escape and to hide themselves, and they shall not be able anywhere to find concealment from the woes of the adversary; but as they carry his mark about them, they shall be readily recognized and declared to be his. Without there shall be fear, and within trembling, both by night and by day. In the street and in the houses there shall be the dead; in the streets and in the houses there shall be hunger and thirst; in the streets there shall be tumults, and in the houses lamentations. And beauty of countenance shall be withered, for their forms shall be like those of the dead; and the beauty of women shall fade, and the desire of all men shall vanish. Notwithstanding, not even then will the merciful and benignant God leave the race of men without all comfort; but He will shorten even those days and the period of three years and a half, and He will curtail those times on account of the remnant of those who hide themselves in the mountains and caves, that the phalanx of all those saints fail not utterly. But these days shall run their course rapidly; and the kingdom of the deceiver and Antichrist shall be speedily removed. And then, in fine, in the glance of an eye shall the fashion of this world pass away, and the power of men shall be brought to nought, and all these visible things shall be destroyed. As these things, therefore, of which we have spoken before are in the future, beloved, when the one week is divided into parts, and the abomination of desolation has arisen then, and the forerunners of the Lord have finished their proper course, and the whole world, in fine, comes to the consummation, what remains but the manifestation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of God, from heaven, for whom we have hoped; who shall bring forth fire and all just judgment against those who have refused to believe in Him? ...

For at that time the trumpet shall sound, and awake those that sleep from the lowest parts of the earth, righteous and sinners alike. And every kindred, and tongue, and nation, and tribe shall be raised in the twinkling of an eye; and they shall stand upon the face of the

earth, waiting for the coming of the righteous and terrible Judge, in fear and trembling unutterable. For the river of fire shall come forth in fury like an angry sea, and shall burn up mountains and hills, and shall make the sea vanish, and shall dissolve the atmosphere with its heat like wax. The stars of heaven shall fall, the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood. The heaven shall be rolled together like a scroll: the whole earth shall be burnt up by reason of the deeds done in it, which men did corruptly, in fornications, in adulteries, and in lies and uncleanness, and in idolatries, and in murders, and in battles.

(Hippolytus, "On the Day of the Consummation," The Ante-Nicene Fathers [Roberts & Donaldson, 1886], Vol. 5, Chaps. xix–xxxvii)

That is not the only text I could have used to give you the orthodox view, nor is it necessarily even the best text for that purpose, since its authenticity has been questioned by some. I used it in spite of that, however, because it is the most concise presentation of all the salient points and because unquestionably authentic texts by the Early Church Fathers Irenæus and Hippolytus say essentially the same thing. Therefore, if you choose to believe something other concerning the Antichrist, you have deliberately chosen to place yourself outside the bounds of orthodox Christianity. I did not say that; Irenæus did. He says much the same thing about the Antichrist in his work "Against Heresies," which is still the definitive work on who is and who is not a heretic. So don't feel you have to explain your heretical beliefs to me; argue your case with him. That seems more appropriate somehow: the dead arguing with the dead. But you had better hurry; unlike your soul, his body won't remain dead for long.

Hark! The Feral Angel's Wings

In the first part of this series, I quoted the New American Standard translation of Isaiah 14:3–21 and told you Isaiah is speaking *parabolically* in that passage. I explained that he is using the *parabolic image* of the king of Babylon to *talk about* what will happen when Satan comes in the person of the Antichrist. I am now going to give you my own translation of that text; not because I think it is necessarily any better, but because it allows you to see that the text plainly says it is speaking *parabolically*. You should also be able to "see" a little

better the *parabolic image* in which the "tent of meeting" sits atop Mt. *Zaphon*, the Mountain of God in Heaven, that is, in the "Sea of Waters," which Isaiah knows lies somewhere beyond the stars:

In that day, when His Majesty gives you rest from your grief, from your stress, and from the hard work that's been done by you, you will take up this parable against the King of Babylon and say:

"My!

How an oppressor keeps Sabbath!

A storm keeps Sabbath!

His Majesty has broken the staff of those who are wicked!

The scepter of those who are ruling!

Striking peoples in a fury!

(an unrelenting plague!)

Dominating nations in anger!

(an unrestrained persecution!)

All the Earth is resting—is quiet.

They have broken out in joyous shouting!

Even cypress trees rejoice against you!

(the cedars of Lebanon):

'Since you have laid down {to sleep},

The one who cuts off has not come up against us!

The Sea of El below is turbulent against you,

So as to meet you when you enter,

*Arousing against you **Rephaim!***

—all the he-goat leaders of Earth!

All the kings of the nations have arisen from their thrones.

All of them will respond and say to you:

'Even you have become weak like us!

You are just like us!

The Sea of El has brought down your exaltation!

The music of your harps!

Beneath you, a maggot becomes your bed!

Your cover is a worm!

Oh! How you have fallen from the Sea of Waters!

O Luminary!

Son of Dawn!

You have been hewn down to the Earth!

{You are} lying prostrate because of nations!

But you, you said in your heart:

'I will ascend to the Sea of Waters!

I will establish my throne above the stars of El,

So that I can sit on the mountain of meeting,

On the side of Zaphon!

I will ascend to the high places of a cloud!

I will be {just} like Elyon!'

On the contrary! You will descend to the Sea of El!
 To the side of the pit!
 Those who see you will gaze upon you!
 They will pay close attention to you:
 'Is this the man who threw the Earth into turmoil?
 Who caused kingdoms to quake?
 Who made productive Earth like a wilderness,
 And tore down its cities?
 He did not release his prisoners to a house!
 All the kings of the nations—all of them—
 have laid down in glory!
 Each one in his {own} house!
 But you! You have been cast out of your grave
 Like a rejected branch,
 Clothed with the slain!
 (Those pierced by a sword!
 Those going down to the stones of the pit!
 Like a trampled corpse.)
 You will not be joined with them in burial,
 Because you destroyed your land!
 You killed your people!
 The seed of those who do evil will not be named forever!
 They prepared for his sons a slaughtering place
 (according to the iniquity of their fathers)!
 They will not arise to **inherit** the Earth or
 To fill the surface of the Earth with cities."
 (Isaiah 14:3–21) —my interim translation

Isaiah is *talking about* how God plans to thwart the purpose Satan has in taking on the form of a man. But did you see what Satan intends to accomplish by his deception of mankind? Isaiah states it plainly:

"But you, you said in your heart:
 'I will ascend to the Sea of Waters!
 I will establish my throne above the stars of El,
 So that I can sit in the mountain of meeting,
 On the side of **Zaphon!**
 I will ascend to the high places of a cloud!
 I will be {just} like **Elyon!**'"
 (Isaiah 14:13–14) —my interim translation

When Satan appears on Earth as the Antichrist, he will hide his identity by pretending to be Jesus Christ. But that is just the first step in his planned assault on Heaven itself. Isaiah says he intends to reign as king in place of God! It is important to remember that. If you do not know Satan's purpose in posing as Jesus Christ, you

cannot possibly understand all of the *parabolic statements* the Prophets have made concerning him.

Now that we know what Isaiah says about the Antichrist—the cynical little man who is going to pretend to be "*The Man*" that Moses describes in *The Teaching of Moses*—let's take a look at what the Prophet Ezekiel says. Whereas Isaiah uses the *parabolic image* of the king of Babylon to describe the activity of the Antichrist, Ezekiel does the same thing with the king of Tyre.

The *significance* of Babylon as a *parabolic image* derives from the fact that the Tower of Babel was the last time the whole world was united in the person of a Pretender whom everyone embraced as *the fulfillment of the promise*. Tyre is *significant* as a *parabolic image* because at the time Ezekiel prophesied, it was an island that stood—LIKE the *mythical* Mt. *Zaphon*—just off the coast of Canaan. From there, the king of Tyre ruled as a son of god, just LIKE God rules from the *parabolic* Mt. *Zaphon* in Heaven. But there is much more to the *parabolic image* of Tyre than that.

The inhabitants of Tyre were a seafaring bunch, and they accumulated a sizeable fortune for the king of Tyre by hauling valuable cargo to and from the colonies his subjects had established around the rim of the Mediterranean Sea. That *parabolic imagery* holds no *significance* at all to one who is not thinking in terms of the universe as two seas separated by a vast expanse that is also called a "Sea of Waters." Needless to say, Satan and his band of seafaring demons have long plied their trade on that great ocean.

The *parabolic imagery* related to Tyre and Babylon is brought together in Revelation 18, where John says this:

"And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn over her, because no one buys their cargoes any more; cargoes of gold and silver and precious stones and pearls and fine linen and purple and silk and scarlet, and every {kind of} citron wood and every article of ivory and every article {made} from very costly wood and bronze and iron and marble, and cinnamon and spice and incense and perfume and frankincense and wine and olive oil and fine flour and wheat and cattle and sheep, and {cargoes} of horses and chariots and slaves and human lives. And the fruit you long for has gone from you, and all things that were luxurious and splendid have passed away from you and {men} will no longer find them. The merchants of these things,

who became rich from her, will stand at a distance because of the fear of her torment, weeping and mourning, saying, 'Woe, woe, the great city, she who was clothed in fine linen and purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls; for in one hour such great wealth has been laid waste!' And every shipmaster and every passenger and sailor, and as many as make their living by the sea, stood at a distance, and were crying out as they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, 'What {city} is like the great city?' And they threw dust on their heads and were crying out, weeping and mourning, saying, 'Woe, woe, the great city, in which all who had ships at sea became rich by her wealth, for in one hour she has been laid waste!' Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, because God has pronounced judgment for you against her." And a strong angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "Thus will Babylon, the great city, be thrown down with violence, and will not be found any longer." (Revelation 18:11–21)

That passage doesn't make a whole lot of sense to those who are thinking *literally*. That's because it is filled with *parabolic imagery* that tells us what the End of the Age will be *LIKE* for the "harlot" Babylon. Jeremiah and John agree that catastrophe is unavoidable. It will be brought about by a crafty little man who claims to be Jesus Christ so that he can con religious ignoramuses who choose to remain blissfully unaware of the Truth. If you don't believe that, don't worry your vacuous cranium overly much about it. The End will not begin until that venomous little man who is the embodiment of all the ignorant things you have *chosen* to believe sits down in the rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem, pretending to establish the 1000-year reign of Christ. Therefore, you still have plenty of time to figure out whether I am telling you the Truth. But enough sarcasm from me; you need to know what Ezekiel said.

Ezekiel not only tells us exactly what led Satan to do what he is going to do, he also tells us what the fate of the Antichrist will be. The Prophet does so by telling us what God says to Satan after he sits down in the rebuilt Temple, pretending to be Jesus Christ:

*The Word of His Majesty came to me saying:
"Son of man, say to the prince of Tyre,
'This is what my Master, His Majesty, has said:
'Because your heart has become exalted*

*And you have said: 'I am God. I sit in God's seat,
In the heart of two seas.'*

*Even though you are a man and not God,
You have given {yourself} your heart,
{Which is} like the heart of God.*

Look! You are wiser than Daniel!

No secret is equal to you!

*By your wisdom and by your understanding,
You have made **hayil** for yourself.*

You made gold and silver for your treasures.

By the abundance of your wisdom—by your trade—

*You increased your **hayil**.*

*Then your heart became exalted by your **hayil**."*

Therefore, this is what my Master, His Majesty, has said:

"Because you have given yourself your heart

{Which is} like the heart of God,

Therefore, look!

I am bringing strangers against you—

The most ruthless of nations.

They will draw their swords against

The beauty of your wisdom,

And they will profane your illumination.

They will make you descend to the Pit,

And you will die the death of the one slain

In the heart of the two seas.

Will you continue to say, 'I am God,'

Before the one who kills you?

You are a man and not God.

By the hand of those who slay you,

You will die the death of those who are uncircumcised—

By the hand of strangers;

Because I Myself have spoken,"" declares my Master, His Majesty.

(Ezekiel 28:1–10) —my interim translation

From a quick reading of that passage, you should be able to see that Ezekiel agrees with the Prophet Isaiah: Satan's fate will be sealed when, as the Antichrist, he is killed "by the hand of strangers." But the Prophet goes on to tell us more about the life and times of this insane little man who somehow came to believe he could defeat God. Listen to what Ezekiel says after God tells him to conduct a *parabolic pantomime* in which he gives the eulogy on the occasion of the Antichrist's death:

Then the Word of His Majesty came to me saying, "Son of man, take up a dirge concerning the king of Tyre, and say

to him, "This is what my Master, His Majesty, has said:
**"You were the seal of perfection,
 Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.
 You were in Eden—the Garden of God.
 Every rare stone was your covering—
 Ruby, topaz, and diamond;
 Beryl, onyx, and jasper;
 Lapis lazuli, turquoise, and emerald.
 And gold—the work of your nooks and crannies—
 was in you.
 In the day you were created, they were established.
 You were the anointed cherub—the one who covers—
 And I put you on the holy Mountain of God.
 You were {there};
 You walked in the midst of stones of fire.
 You were blameless in your ways
 From the day you were created
 Until injustice was found in you.
 By the abundance of your trade,
 They filled you with violence.
 Then you sinned,
 And I banned you from the Mountain of God;
 But the covering cherub will destroy you
 From the midst of the stones of fire.
 Your heart was exalted by your beauty.
 You perverted your wisdom because of your illumination.
 I cast you to Earth;
 I put you before kings so that they may see you.
 From the abundance of your iniquities—
 In the injustice of your trade—
 You defiled your sanctuaries.
 So I brought forth fire from your midst.
 She consumed you,
 And I turned you into ashes on the Earth
 Before the eyes of all who see you.
 All who knew you among the peoples were devastated
 because of you.
 You were a calamity, and you will not exist forever."'"**
 (Ezekiel 28:11–19) —my interim translation

Orthodoxy Is Best in Large Doses

It would not be fair for me to leave skeptics and scoffers with the notion that my understanding of Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 is some new doctrine. After all, how could they be held accountable by God for not believing something espoused by a totally insignificant fount of sarcasm such as I? They can only be indicted

for not believing what the Apostles *handed down* to the Early Church Fathers. Therefore, I shall dutifully proceed to hammer some very lo-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-ong nails into their extremely short coffin.

You see, I have understood for some time now that my calling is not only to explain *what* the Prophets have said but also to show *how* they intentionally sealed up the Truth through their use of Hebrew idioms and *parabolic imagery*. To achieve the first part of my calling, I can easily rely on evidence taken from the Early Church Fathers to show that what I teach is orthodox to the core. In accomplishing the second, however, I must try to explain as simply as possible what the Prophets have done so that their methods can be understood by anyone on the basis of logic and common sense alone. If I succeed in my calling—which I will—fools will be left with absolutely no excuse for rejecting the Truth of *The Teaching*. Because once I have finished my task, it will be up to each individual as to whether or not they *want* to believe the Truth.

With that in mind, let me show you what the orthodox Church Father Hippolytus—the Hippolytus who came within a hair's breadth of assuming worldwide leadership of the orthodox Christian Church shortly after the turn of the third century—wrote in his "Treatise on Christ and Antichrist." Then you can believe what I just told you about Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 if you care to, or you can disbelieve it if you dare to. I don't really care what you do one way or the other. I'm just doing what God called me to do. Listen to what Hippolytus says about the Antichrist:

In those times, then, he shall arise and meet them. And when he has overmastered three horns out of the ten in the array of war, and has rooted these out, viz., Egypt, and Libya, and Ethiopia, and has got their spoils and trappings, and has brought the remaining horns which suffer into subjection, he will begin to be lifted up in heart, and to exalt himself against God as master of the whole world. And his first expedition will be against Tyre and Berytus, and the circumjacent territory. For by storming these cities first he will strike terror into the others, as Isaiah says,

"Be thou ashamed, O Sidon; the sea hath spoken, even the strength of the sea hath spoken, saying, I travailed not, nor brought forth children; neither did I nurse up young men, nor bring up virgins. But when the

report comes to Egypt, pain shall seize them for Tyre.”
(Isaiah 23:4–5)

These things, then, shall be in the future, beloved; and when the three horns are cut off, he will begin to show himself as God, as Ezekiel has said aforetime:

*“Because thy heart has been lifted up, and thou hast said, I am God.”
(Ezekiel 28:2b)*

And to the like effect Isaiah says:

*“For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of heaven: I will be like the Most High. Yet now thou shall be brought down to hell (Hades), to the foundations of the earth.”
(Isaiah 14:13–15)*

In like manner also Ezekiel:

*“Wilt thou yet say to those who slay thee, I am God? But thou (shalt be) a man, and no God.”
(Ezekiel 28:9a)*

As his tribe, then, and his manifestation, and his destruction, have been set forth in these words, and as his name has also been indicated mystically, let us look also at his action. For he will call together all the people to himself, out of every country of the dispersion, making them his own, as though they were his own children, and promising to restore their country, and establish again their kingdom and nation, in order that he may be worshipped by them as God, as the prophet says: “He will collect his whole kingdom, from the rising of the sun even to its setting. They whom he summons and they whom he does not summon shall march with him.” And Jeremiah speaks of him thus in a parable:

*“The partridge cried, (and) gathered what he did not hatch, making himself rich without judgment: in the midst of his days they shall leave him, and at his end he shall be a fool.”
(Jeremiah 17:11)*

It will not be detrimental, therefore, to the course of our present argument, if we explain the art of that creature,

and show that the prophet has not spoken without a purpose in using the parable (or similitude) of the creature. For as the partridge is a vainglorious creature, when it sees near at hand the nest of another partridge with young in it, and with the parent-bird away on the wing in quest of food, it imitates the cry of the other bird, and calls the young to itself; and they, taking it to be their own parent, run to it. And it delights itself proudly in the alien pullets as in its own. But when the real parent-bird returns, and calls them with its own familiar cry, the young recognise it, and forsake the deceiver, and betake themselves to the real parent. This thing, then, the prophet has adopted as a simile, applying it in a similar manner to Antichrist. For he will allure mankind to himself, wishing to gain possession of those who are not his own and promising deliverance to all, while he is unable to save himself.

(Hippolytus, “Treatise on Christ and Antichrist,” The Ante-Nicene Fathers [Roberts & Donaldson, 1886], Vol. 5, Chaps. lii–lx)

Outside of Jesus’ mention of the Antichrist as the “abomination of desolation” in Matthew 24:15 (Mark 13:14), Paul is the only Apostle other than John (in the Book of Revelation) from which we learn much of anything at all about the Antichrist. But have you ever wondered where Paul got his understanding of the things he mentions in 2 Thessalonians? Take a close look at what he says there:

*Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to Him, that you may not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. Let no one in any way deceive you, for {it will not come} unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. **Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things?** And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he may be revealed. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains {will do so} until he is taken out of the way. And then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the*

appearance of His coming; {that is,} the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. And for this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they might believe what is false, in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.

(2 Thessalonians 2:1–12)

Most folks overlook the obvious implications of this rather straightforward statement:

Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things?

(2 Thessalonians 2:5)

It would be pure folly to assume that Paul had explained no more concerning the Antichrist than what one finds in the Book of Daniel. Where do you suppose he got his *specific* understanding that it was part of God's plan that the Antichrist would deceive those who have no interest in knowing the Truth? I realize the fool will quickly point out that John says the same thing in the Book of Revelation (Rev. 12:9; 13:14; 18:23; 19:20; 20:3, 8, 10). But why would anyone pay attention to a fool? He opens his mouth only to insert his foot.

Paul could not have gotten what he knew about the Antichrist from what John says in the Book of Revelation. John wrote that work several years *after* Paul died. The Truth is, Paul attained his knowledge from the *massive* amount of information the Prophets have concealed in their works. They explain *everything* you need to know about that perverted little man and his cynical manipulation of those who, in their stubbornness and total ignorance of the Truth, insist on mindlessly holding to whatever religious *tradition* was *handed down* to them. As the orthodox Hippolytus plainly tells us, the Prophets explained it all long before Paul and John came along:

And all the prophets, as we have already said, have clearly signified the things that are to come to pass in the last times, just as they also have declared things of old.

(Hippolytus, "On the Day of the Consummation," The Ante-Nicene Fathers [Roberts & Donaldson, 1886], Vol. 5, Chaps. xix–xxxvii)

I am going to show you that Paul got some of what he understood about the Antichrist from the Prophet Jeremiah. I will, in the process, challenge you to view the Prophets from a completely different perspective than that to which you are accustomed. If I am successful, you should begin to see that the Prophets have concealed a wealth of *specific* information in what appear to be rambling, disconnected discourses.

Whence Cometh the Invading Hordes?

Now that you know Isaiah and Ezekiel have said Satan is going to come from the *parabolic* Mountain of God in Heaven and take his seat in the Temple so that he can reign as God, we are prepared to look at what Jeremiah has said about his appearance here on Earth. The place to begin unraveling what the Prophet Jeremiah said is with his calling. I have already given you the New American Standard version of that text in the first part of this series. Now I will give you my own translation so that you can see how an understanding of *parabolic imagery* makes a difference in the perceived *meaning* and *significance* of the passage:

The words of Jeremiah, the son of Hilkiyah, {one} of the priests who are in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin, to whom the Word of His Majesty came in the days of Josiah, son of Amon, king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign. Then it came in the days of Jehoiakim, son of Josiah, king of Judah, until the completion of the eleventh year of Zedekiah, son of Josiah, king of Judah—until the exile of Jerusalem in the fifth month.

(Jeremiah 1:1–3) —my interim translation

In that brief introduction, Jeremiah provides all the information one needs to put his prophecies in their proper historical context. On the basis of various extrabiblical sources, we know that God called him shortly before an obscure general in the Assyrian army, a Babylonian gent by the name of Nabopolassar, rose up in revolt against the tyranny of the Assyrians. Within a year or two after God called Jeremiah, Nabopolassar had become king of Babylon. He then began his inexorable conquest of the Assyrian Empire. After the death of Nabopolassar in 605 B.C., his son Nebuchadnezzar completed the task.

Jeremiah's time was not a peaceful age for those who chose to stand against Nabopolassar or his son

Nebuchadnezzar. Over the course of more than forty years, from 626 B.C. on, the Babylonian army marched out of Babylon every spring to impose the will of the king of Babylon on the inhabitants of the Fertile Crescent. God called the Prophet Jeremiah to speak in the context of this swirling maelstrom to give His Own slant on the *significance* of these historical events.

If you think that I am overreaching in making the claim that Jeremiah speaks concerning more than the parochial history of the “Jews” who were living in Judah at that time, you should carefully read what God said to Jeremiah when He called him:

*The Word of His Majesty came to me saying:
“Before I formed you in the belly,
I knew you.
And before you came out of the womb,
I set you apart as holy.
I have given you as a Prophet to the nations.”
(Jeremiah 1:4–5) —my interim translation*

Why do you suppose God would have told Jeremiah “I have given you as a prophet to the nations” if His intent was that Jeremiah speak only to the Jews, that is, to the sons of Israel who were living in Judah? He would not, and He did not. Jeremiah’s ministry as “a prophet to the nations” far exceeded the boundaries of that little backwater eddy, and Jeremiah knew it. That is why he had more than a little fear and trepidation about answering the call:

*But I said: “Oh! My Master, Your Majesty!
Look!
I do not know anything because I am {but} a lad.”
But His Majesty said to me:
“You must not say, ‘I am {but} a lad,’
Because wherever I send you, you will go;
And whatever I command you, you will speak.
You must not be afraid of them,
Because I am with you to deliver you,”
declares His Majesty.
(Jeremiah 1:6–8) —my interim translation*

Following that brief admonition, God got down to the specifics concerning what He wanted Jeremiah to do. Read the following passage carefully or you will overlook the obvious (I’ll give you a hint by boldfacing it):

*Then His Majesty stretched out His hand and touched my mouth, and His Majesty said to me:
“Look! I have put My Word in your mouth.
See! I have appointed you this day
over the nations and over the kingdoms:
To uproot, and to pull down,
And to destroy, and to tear down,
To build and to plant.”
(Jeremiah 1:9–10) —my interim translation*

I have looked high, low, front, back, upside down, and sideways but I have never been able to find any mention of Judah or the sons of Israel in that passage. Did you? Not likely, but I had to ask because one never knows what some folks will read into the text of the Scriptures. Perhaps they could do so more easily here since the sentence “I have appointed you this day over the nations and over the kingdoms,” is a bit difficult to translate. The Hebrew language has no precise English equivalent because the sentence contains an idiom. It actually *means* something like, “I have charged you to the nations and to the kingdoms.” I say that because it contains exactly the same idiom as the familiar phrase “visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children” (Ex. 20:5; 34:7; Num. 14:18; Deut. 5:9). But since we are not here to discuss the finer points of Hebrew idiomatic expressions, it is best that we move on.

Why do you suppose God would call Jeremiah to prophesy to all the nations of the Earth instead of just those relatively few backward hillbillies living in and around Jerusalem circa 600 B.C.? While you ponder how you might cleverly answer that question, take a look at what Jeremiah says next. I have set the *parabolic image* of the Word of God off in bold relief because the staff made from the branch of an almond tree has no *meaning* or *significance* outside of what the Prophets have said about *The Branch*. But I should tell you—for the benefit (or detriment) of all those who dearly love the *literal* theory of interpretation—that all I have done is translate the text *literally*:

*Then the Word of His Majesty came to me saying, “What are you seeing, Jeremiah?” And I said, “I am seeing a staff {made from} an almond tree.” And His Majesty said to me, “You have seen well, because I am watching over My Word to make Him.”
(Jeremiah 1:11–12) —my interim translation*

The Hebrew verb in verse 12 that I translated “make” often has the sense of “create.” Yet even that nuanced *meaning* doesn’t make a whole lot of sense if you are not thinking *parabolically* in terms of how the Canaanites went through a rather convoluted ritual to “make” a god out of a tree. The Prophet Isaiah even mocks them for their stupidity in Isaiah 44, where he is *talking about* how God is going to *make* His Son Israel into just such a God. I felt I should tell you that since my translation may be a bit too *literal* for some.

After Jeremiah has demonstrated his ability to “see” what God would have him see concerning the future of Israel, His Firstborn Son, He asks him to demonstrate the same ability in regard to the Antichrist:

Then the Word of His Majesty came a second {time} saying, “What are you seeing?” And I said, “I am seeing a red-hot pot, and his face is {looking} away from Zaphon.” Then His Majesty said to me, “From Zaphon the evil will be loosed on all the inhabitants of the Earth. Because look! I am summoning all the families of the kingdoms of Zaphon,” declares His Majesty; “and they will come, and they will put—each one—his throne at the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem, and beside her walls all around, and beside all the cities of Judah. Then I will declare My judgment against them concerning all their evil, because they abandoned Me; and they offered incense to other gods, and they worshiped the works of their hands. But you, you must gird your loins; and you must stand up, and you must speak to them whatever I command you. You must not be dismayed out of their presence, lest I dismay you in their presence. Now look! I have given you today to the kings of Judah, to her princes, to her priests, and to the people of the Earth as a fortified city, and as a pillar of iron, and as walls of bronze against all the Earth. And they will fight against you, but they will not prevail over you, because I am with you,” declares His Majesty, “to deliver you.”
(Jeremiah 1:13–19) —my interim translation

Verse 18 is the third time the Lord has mentioned that Jeremiah’s ministry was to all the Earth instead of just to his own people. Therefore, if you get nothing else out of the passage, it is important that you remember that one thing. Other than my telling you that “the evil” that is coming “from *Zaphon*” is the Antichrist, there is nothing else of tremendous import to be found in the passage anyway.

The second time the Lord uses the term *zaphon* in that passage, He is speaking in terms of earthly kingdoms instead of the coming kingdom of the Antichrist. However, since Jeremiah uses the “kingdoms of the north” as a *parabolic image* later on to speak concerning the Antichrist, everything that is stated regarding the “kingdoms of the north” in some sense applies to the Antichrist as well.

There are a couple of ambiguous statements in the passage that I should mention. The first is the phrase I have translated “red-hot pot.” The text *literally* says “blown pot.” However, in light of how the term *blown* is used elsewhere with reference to bellows used by blacksmiths, Jeremiah apparently *means* the pot looks like it has been super-heated over a fire to which forced air has been supplied. In any event, a translation like “boiling pot” is misleading because it implies the contents of the pot are in view. They aren’t. The pot may or may not have anything in it.

The second instance of ambiguous phrasing is the sentence I have translated “I have given you today to the kings of Judah, to her princes, to her priests, and to the people of the Earth as a fortified city, and as a pillar of iron, and as walls of bronze against all the Earth.” One could argue that is not what Jeremiah *meant*, and I would not bother to dispute them. The grammatical construction is complex. But the only part of the sentence that needs to be clearly understood is “against all the Earth.” And the *meaning* of that prepositional phrase is clear, unless you arbitrarily want to understand “Earth” as “land” and insist that Jeremiah’s prophetic ministry was as narrow in its scope as the span of your own mind. Most folks do that, in direct contradiction of the fact that twice before (vv. 5, 10) God Himself said Jeremiah’s ministry was to the nations.

So You Want to Be a Biblical Scholar?

We can now turn our attention to what Jeremiah has said about the Antichrist. Let’s begin with a look at a method of Bible study known as word study. If you have never done a word study as part of your own personal effort to understand the Bible, you really should try it some time. You might like it. All you have to do is pick a word whose *meaning* you want to understand a little better, then use a concordance to track down and study every verse in the Bible where it is used.

Naturally, word study will contribute nothing to your knowledge of the Scriptures if you do not start with a Hebrew or Greek word. And even then you most likely won't understand all that much of what you uncover unless you have an ability to read Hebrew and Greek. But you should at least become more familiar with what the Bible has to say. After all, word study is intended to give you a better understanding of the *meaning* of the words that the authors of Scripture used. It certainly won't give you much insight into the *significance* of what they said when they used those words, and I doubt that you will have gained any greater understanding of what they are *talking about*. But it sure beats twiddling your thumbs and waiting for revelation. So I highly recommend it.

After you have a few dozen memorable word studies under your belt, you should be feeling rather confident in your ability to scratch your head in bewilderment when you discover a translator has concealed the *meaning* of some word that you consider *extremely* important in an insane attempt to make the biblical text more *readable*. That is when you know that you are ready to move up to the next level—*matrix* word study.

Matrix word study is nothing more than the study of selected *words* (note the plural) in an effort to identify passages in the Scriptures where the authors of Scripture are *talking about* the same thing. Although you may not have any better understanding of what those passages are *talking about* when you have completed your study, you will at least know where to look when you want to remind yourself just how obscure the Scriptures can be.

The process one follows in doing a matrix word study is no different than that for ordinary word study: You pick a word that you think has some great *significance* and then track its usage through the Scriptures using a concordance to show you where the word occurs. However, instead of just reading the verse where that one word occurs to better understand its *meaning*, you also scan the *context* in which that verse occurs and try to identify other words whose *meaning* appears to have some connection to the *meaning* of the first word. When you find one, you write it down so that you can do a word study on that word as well.

If you picked a really *good* word to begin with, you should have a half-dozen or more related words to study by the time you have finished studying the first word. That's when the matrix part of the word study

comes into play. To identify those passages in the Scriptures where the authors of the Scriptures are *talking about* the same thing, you must keep track of your progress by creating a matrix on graph paper. (You can even use an electronic spreadsheet if you like.)

Take the words you have concluded may have some obvious or not-so-obvious connection and list them down the left side of the graph paper, assigning one word per space. Then, across the top, write down the reference to each of the verses in which the first word occurs. Again, as you did with the words, you must assign the verse references one space each. However, you must leave extra spaces between the references so that you can fill them in with other verse references as you study the other words. The objective is to end the study with all the verse references listed consecutively as they occur in the Scriptures.

Once you have written down the verse references for the first word, go back and put a checkmark in each box that lies directly across from the first word and down from each of the verses in which that word occurs. That completes the construction of your matrix. You are now ready to begin studying the next word on your list. Pick any word; it doesn't matter. By the time you have completed your study, you will have looked at all of them anyway. So have fun; take risks; get used to the feeling of not understanding a bit of what you read. And don't forget to write down the verses at the top of your matrix and to put a checkmark in the appropriate box beneath each one. Just remember that, as you go through the Scriptures studying the *meaning* of each of the remaining terms, you must do exactly the same thing you did with the first one: Look for other *significant* words and add them to the list.

If you picked an extremely *significant* word to begin with, and if you are able to identify all the words that have some *significant* connection to that word and its *significant* others, you might easily study two dozen words before you complete your investigation. That is when you take your matrix and use it to try to identify specific passages (not verses) where several of the words occur together. Those are the passages where the authors of the Scriptures are most likely *talking about* the same thing. You may only identify three or four such passages when you finish a matrix word study, but more than likely, you will find six or seven, maybe even a dozen.

After you have done several dozen matrix word studies and have honestly tried to understand what the authors of the Scriptures are *talking about*, you should be ready to move up to the next level, which is using the matrix methodology to track the use of phrases through the Scriptures. At that point, you might also want to consider finding yourself a good psychiatrist or else get someone who was called to the task to do all the work and explain things for you. Your choice.

When You Hear the Trumpet Sound ...

If one begins with the Hebrew word *zaphon* and applies the matrix method of word study to the Book of Jeremiah, curiously confounding conclusions start suddenly seeping from the cloak-concealed content of Jeremiah's puzzling prophecies. They curl and coil through the text somewhat similarly to the serpents on Hermes' caduceus. (Okay, the alliteration is a bit much. But hey, I didn't ask for this job, and writing something coherent is sometimes nigh on to impossible. So if this bit of goofiness remains in the final draft, let it be known I was having a hard time getting anything written, so I started playing with *parabolic imagery*. For some reason I find the *parabolic image* of the Serpent impaled on a pole tremendously satisfying.)

There are three passages in the Book of Jeremiah where the matrix method of word study quickly reveals that Jeremiah is obviously *talking about* the same thing. I will show you each of those three passages and briefly explain what the Prophet is *talking about*. However, I have no intention of explaining the *meaning* or *significance* of what he said. An accurate understanding of those things is dependent on your knowing what Moses explains *parabolically* in "The Song of Moses" (Deut. 32). Since this is not the time to get into those things, I will say no more in that regard. In Chapter 4 of the Book of Jeremiah, Jeremiah says this:

Proclaim in Judah, and make {it} heard in Jerusalem, and say:

"Blow a ram's horn in the Earth!

Cry out! Be filled and say, 'Gather together and let's go into the fortified cities!'

Lift up an ensign toward Zion!

Take cover!

Don't stand up,

Because I am bringing an evil from Zaphon,

Along with a great destruction.

A lion has come up from his thicket,

And a destroyer of nations has set out;

He has gone out of his maqom

To make your Earth a desolation.

Your cities will be vacant, without any inhabitant.

Therefore, gird yourselves with sackcloth,

Mourn and wail,

Because the burning anger of His Majesty

has not turned away from us."

(Jeremiah 4:5-8) —my interim translation

First, let me explain that Jeremiah is *talking about* the coming of the Antichrist. I won't bother trying to "prove" that because, as I have told you before, *evidence* is objective; *proof* is subjective. That is, proof resides in the subjective opinion of the one who *chooses* to believe whatever objective evidence has been presented. [See "The Demons Also Believe (Poor Devils!)" *The Voice of Elijah*®, October 1991.] Proof is the bane of all hung juries as well as those who voluntarily *choose* to go to Hell by *refusing* to believe the Truth. Therefore, all I intend to do is provide evidence. You may or may not find my explanation of the evidence convincing. I don't care whether you do or you don't. If you don't, it's not my problem; it's yours. You just don't know it—yet.

Five key words in the passage above deserve our attention. The first is *Zaphon* in verse 6. I have already told you that Jeremiah sometimes uses the Hebrew term *zaphon* to speak *parabolically* concerning the *parabolic* Mountain of God in Heaven instead of using it to speak generally concerning the direction "north." That is what he is doing here. He is *talking about* the fact that Satan will come from *Zaphon*—the Mountain of God in Heaven—when he is finally cast out of Heaven. If you are wondering how I know that, that is good. I am eventually going to show you. If you already have doubts, that is bad. You will never "see" the big picture.

The second key word in the passage above is actually a phrase. It is the noun-adjective combination "great destruction" mentioned in verse 6. Jeremiah uses that phrase to describe the state of Planet Earth after the Antichrist has accomplished his purpose here. The only *significance* the phrase holds for us is that it consistently turns up in contexts where Jeremiah uses the four other *significant* words that we have chosen. Thus, it serves only to confirm that Jeremiah is *talking about* the same thing in those contexts.

The third key word in the passage is the “lion” mentioned in verse 7. Jeremiah uses that *parabolic image* to depict the animalistic nature and cunning of the Antichrist. I don’t have time to get into the whys and wherefores of that particular *parabolic image*, but the key word *lion* is, in other passages, connected with another word, *Dan*, which we will not investigate. However, Hippolytus explained the basic relationship between the two terms nearly 1800 years ago:

Now, as our Lord Jesus Christ, who is also God, was prophesied of under the figure of a lion, on account of His royalty and glory, in the same way have the Scriptures also aforesaid spoken of Antichrist as a lion, on account of his tyranny and violence. For the deceiver seeks to liken himself in all things to the Son of God.

(Hippolytus, “Treatise on Christ and Antichrist,” The Ante-Nicene Fathers [Roberts & Donaldson, 1886], Vol. 5, Chap. v)

Thus did the Scriptures preach beforetime of this lion and lion’s whelp. And in like manner also we find it written regarding Antichrist. For Moses speaks thus:

*“Dan is a lion’s whelp, and he shall leap from Bashan.”
(Deuteronomy 33:22b)*

But that no one may err by supposing that this is said of the Saviour, let him attend carefully to the matter. “Dan,” he says, “is a lion’s whelp;” and in naming the tribe of Dan, he declared clearly the tribe from which Antichrist is destined to spring. For as Christ springs from the tribe of Judah, so Antichrist is to spring from the tribe of Dan.

(Hippolytus, “Treatise on Christ and Antichrist,” The Ante-Nicene Fathers [Roberts & Donaldson, 1886], Vol. 5, Chap. xiv)

Mark these words of Jacob which were spoken to Judah, and are fulfilled in the Lord. To the same effect, moreover, does the patriarch express himself regarding Antichrist. Wherefore, as he prophesied with respect to Judah, so did he also with respect to his son Dan. For Judah was his fourth son; and Dan, again, was his seventh son. And what, then, did he say of him?

*“Let Dan be a serpent sitting by the way, that biteth the horse’s heel?”
(Genesis 49:17a)*

And what serpent was there but the deceiver from the beginning, he who is named in Genesis, he who deceived Eve, and bruised Adam in the heel? But seeing now that we must make proof of what is alleged at greater length, we shall not shrink from the task. For it is certain that he is destined to spring from the tribe of Dan, and to range himself in opposition like a princely tyrant, a terrible judge and accuser, as the prophet testifies when he says,

*“Dan shall judge his people, as one tribe in Israel.”
(Genesis 49:16)*

But someone may say that this was meant of Samson, who sprang from the tribe of Dan, and judged his people for twenty years. That, however, was only partially made good in the case of Samson; but this shall be fulfilled completely in the case of Antichrist. For Jeremiah, too, speaks in this manner:

*“From Dan we shall hear the sound of the sharpness of his horses; at the sound of the neighing of his horses the whole land trembled.”
(Jeremiah 8:16a)*

And again, Moses says:

*“Dan is a lion’s whelp, and he shall leap from Bashan.”
(Deuteronomy 33:22)*

And that no one may fall into the mistake of thinking that this is spoken of the Saviour, let him attend to this. “Dan,” says he, “is a lion’s whelp;” and by thus naming the tribe of Dan as the one whence the accuser is destined to spring, he made the matter in hand quite clear. For as Christ is born of the tribe of Judah, so Antichrist shall be born of the tribe of Dan. And as our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was spoken of in prophecy as a lion on account of His royalty and glory, in the same manner also has the Scripture prophetically described the accuser as a lion, on account of his tyranny and violence. For in every respect that deceiver seeks to make himself appear like the Son of God.

(Hippolytus, “On the Day of the Consummation,” The Ante-Nicene Fathers [Roberts & Donaldson, 1886], Vol. 5)

You may have noticed that Hippolytus quotes Jeremiah 8:16. We could go into that passage as well if we expanded the scope of our matrix word study to

include the word *Dan*, which, incidentally, occurs in this passage as well (v. 15), but we won't. You can do this exercise as homework, however: After you finish reading this article, read the context in which Jeremiah 8:16 occurs, paying special attention to verse 17. You might be pleasantly surprised to find you can actually better understand what Jeremiah is *talking about*.

The fourth key word in Jeremiah 4:5–8 is the Hebrew term *shophar* in verse 5. The term *means* “ram’s horn” and refers to nothing else. We will be discussing the *significance* of that horn after we look at what Jeremiah says about it. However, those who can’t tell the difference between the sound of a french horn and that of a tuba need not even continue. They would never understand anyway.

The fifth, and final, key word in the passage above is the word I have translated “ensign” in verse 6. That translation does not do justice to the *meaning* and *significance* of the original Hebrew term, but there seems to be no better word in the English language. We will use this term to tie things up all neat and tidy at the conclusion of our study—for those of you who have eyes to “see” and ears to “hear.” Those other poor folk will continue to think I am just rambling.

If You Only Knew the Truth, ...

I intentionally chose to limit this investigation to just the five terms I listed above. To expand it by even two or three terms would have created a monster research project whose tentacles would spread out into every last one of the Prophets. Perhaps we will do that some other time. For now, my purpose is much more restricted. I seek only to show you what Jeremiah has said about the *parabolic pantomime* in which Judas *parabolically* sold the Lamb of God as a Passover sacrifice and used the money to buy a field from the Potter. With that in mind, let’s look at one of the places where Paul got his understanding that the Antichrist will deceive the world. Jeremiah continues with this:

“And in that day,” declares His Majesty, “the heart of the king and the heart of the princes will stray; and the priests will be devastated, and the prophets will be dumb-founded.”

Then I said, “Ah! My Master, Your Majesty!

You certainly have deceived this people and Jerusalem, saying:

‘You will have peace.’

But a sword is touching the soul.”

In that time it will be said to this people and to Jerusalem, “The way of the daughter of My people is a spirit/wind—not for winnowing and not for purifying—scorching bare heights in the wilderness.

A spirit/wind too strong for these will come from Me.

Now even I will pronounce judgments against them:

‘Look! He will ascend like the clouds!

And his chariots are like a hurricane!

His horses are swifter than eagles.

Woe to us, because we have been devastated!”

(Jeremiah 4:9–13) —my interim translation

If you don’t know what a “spirit” is, I doubt you can even understand what Jeremiah had in mind. Since I explained that bit of information several years ago to the participants in The Next Step program, I see no need to cover the same ground here. The Prophet is explaining how the deception of the Antichrist will be made possible: A “spirit” or “wind”—which is “the way of the daughter of My people”—will blow folks in that direction. But he also says God is going to bring an even stronger “spirit” or “wind” on them, which will blow them around LIKE a “hurricane.” “Hurricane” is not an entirely appropriate translation of that word either, but it gets the basic point across: Not many will hold on to the Truth at that time.

Jeremiah then mentions “Dan” in response to a rhetorical question as to how long it will be until the Antichrist appears:

“Wash your heart from evil, Jerusalem,

So that you may be saved.

Until when will the thoughts of your wickedness

Stay the night within you?

{Until} when a voice is declaring from Dan,

And wickedness is making {itself} heard

from Mt. Ephraim.

Remind the nations!

Look! Make {it} heard to Jerusalem:

‘Guards are coming from a distant country,

And they have contributed their voices

against the cities of Judah.

Like the watchmen of the Almighty,

They are against her round about,

Because she has rebelled against Me,’

declares His Majesty.

Your way and your deeds have made these for you.
This is your evil.
{Until} when bitterness has touched your heart!"
(Jeremiah 4:14–18) —my interim translation

It isn't obvious to the casual reader of these five verses, but Jeremiah is pointing his reader to what Isaiah said about God's intentional use of the deception of the Antichrist:

Then He said:
"Go! And say to this people,
'Listen carefully, but don't understand!
Watch closely, but don't gain knowledge!
Make the heart of this people fat!
Make his ears dull and
Blind his eyes!
Lest he see with his eyes, or
hear with his ears, or
understand with his heart, and repent.
Then He would heal him."
Then I said,
"Until when, My Master?"
And He said:
"Until cities lie desolate, without inhabitant, and
houses, without a man, and
the ground lies desolate—a devastation."
(Isaiah 6:9–11) —my interim translation

Isaiah and Jeremiah were well aware of just how devastating the wrath of God will ultimately prove to be. But pity the poor bonehead who is completely invested in the notion that God is nothing but a god of unconditional love. Jeremiah could teach him a thing or two about putting all his eggs in one basket, but it is doubtful he would listen. Jeremiah "saw" it all in *parabolic imagery*, and it scared the living daylight out of him. Listen as he begins to *talk about* what he saw:

My insides!
My insides!
I am in anguish!
The walls of my heart are murmuring to me!
My heart!
I cannot be silent because you, my soul,
Have heard the sound of a ram's horn
—a *teruah* of war.
One crash after another has been announced,

Because all the Earth has been devastated.
My tents were suddenly devastated,
My curtains instantly.
(Jeremiah 4:19–20) —my interim translation

Several years ago (see "When the Trumpet Sounds," *The Voice of Elijah*®, April 1992), I explained a few things you need to know in regard to the distinctive sound the Scriptures call a *teruah*. As I told you at that time, a *teruah* could be sounded on a musical instrument or by the human voice. I also told you that sound had a particular *significance* in connection with God's sacred calendar of events. If you have not read those things recently or at all, I suggest you do so immediately. I'll wait right here until you return. It is important that you have them in mind because they pertain directly to what I am going to tell you now.

Moses established two distinct *parabolic pantomimes* in which the sound of a *teruah* played a part. The first was the *parabolic pantomime* in which Israel broke camp and marched out to vanquish the enemies of God after a *teruah* had been sounded on two silver horns. You can find that *parabolic pantomime* mentioned in Numbers 10:1–10 and 31:1–12. The second *parabolic pantomime*, however, involved the sounding of a *teruah* on a ram's horn on the first day of the seventh month and again on the tenth day of that same month. Moses describes this *parabolic pantomime* in Leviticus 23:23–32, 25:8–12, and Numbers 29:1–11. The *meaning* and *significance* of this second *parabolic pantomime* are directly connected to the *meaning* and *significance* of the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:1–34).

Now, if you were paying attention—as I am sure you were—you already know that Jeremiah heard a "*teruah* of war" sounded on a ram's horn (v. 19). That's your first clue as to what he is *talking about*: Israel's call to arms was to be sounded on two *silver horns*, not on a single *ram's horn*. And the *teruah* sounded on the Day of Atonement was a call to assembly, not a call to war. So the *teruah* that Jeremiah heard must have been sounded for some other purpose. Indeed, it was. It gains its *meaning* and *significance* from yet a third *parabolic pantomime*. If you are interested, you can find the *parabolic imagery* set forth in Joshua 6:1–21. In the Passover Parable, the destruction of the walls of Jericho mark the beginning of Israel's *inheritance* of *what was promised*.

The *teruah* Jeremiah heard was but the first of seven trumpets—seven ram's horns—that will sound

when the time comes for the walls of the *harlot* Babylon to fall before the army of the Lord. At that time, it will be just LIKE the walls of Jericho falling in the *parabolic pantomime* which God ordained when He brought His Firstborn Son, Israel, out of Egypt and up to the Promised Land. Jeremiah understood that. That is *why* he addresses the *harlot* in this verse:

*And you, O desolate one, what will you do?
Although you dress in scarlet,
Although you decorate {yourself with} ornaments of gold,
Although you enlarge your eyes with paint,
In vain you make yourself beautiful;
{Your} lovers despise you;
They seek your life.
(Jeremiah 4:30)*

That verse doesn't make a whole lot of sense if you don't know how the Apostle John has described the *harlot* Babylon in Revelation 17:4 and 18:16. In case you are interested, John also *talks about* the *parabolic imagery* of the seven trumpets that will sound to bring about the destruction of the *harlot* Babylon in Revelation 8:1–11:15. It might also interest you to know that Isaiah *talks about* the results of those seven blasts in Isaiah 25. Yet that *parabolic imagery* tells you nothing at all about the physical reality of those events. It merely tells you what it is going to be LIKE when the *harlot* Babylon becomes the immediate focus of God's wrath. That is why Jeremiah goes on to ask God for physical signs that will indicate when these things are about to occur. He then records God's response:

*Until when will I see an ensign?
{Until when} will I hear the sound of a ram's horn?
"When My people are foolish,
They do not know Me;
They are stupid sons,
And they do not understand.
They are wise to do evil,
And they do not know to do good."
(Jeremiah 4:21–22) —my interim translation*

That passage tells you everything you need to know about the cause of God's burning anger. If you take a good look at God's People—the Church—can you honestly say they understand the Truth? Maybe so—if you have an IQ with nothing but zeroes to the

left of the decimal point. The Truth is, "Christians" today are as much in the dark as Muslims, Jews, and the adherents of every other non-Christian religion. That is because the Church has gradually given up the Truth of the Gospel over the past century and a half. So I suggest that you, in turn, give up her platitudes, clichés, and meaningless rhetoric for something that, although it may not tickle your ears or give you a good strong case of the warm fuzzies, has more of the ring of Truth to it. Otherwise, you are hell-bent for disaster without benefit of brakes or a seat belt. Believe it if you care to, disbelieve it if you dare to; why should I care what you *choose* to do? If I show you that Jeremiah and his compatriots in sarcasm saw the disaster bearing down on us more than 2500 years ago, I've fulfilled my calling:

*I saw the Earth, and look!
Formless and void!
And the Sea of Waters,
And their light was not.
I saw the mountains, and look!
Quaking!
And all the hills were shaking!
I looked, and look!
The man was not!
And all the birds of the Sea of Waters had fled!
I looked, and look!
The Garden was the wilderness!
And all His cities had been pulled down
before His Majesty—before His burning anger.
Because this is what His Majesty has said:
"All the Earth will be devastated,
But I will not make {it} complete.
Therefore, the Earth will mourn.
And the Sea of Waters above will be dark,
Because I have spoken.
I have considered, and I will not relent.
And I will not turn back from it."
(Jeremiah 4:23–28) —my interim translation*

There are a couple of things you need to know about my translation of that passage. The first concerns "the man" mentioned in verse 25. Jeremiah is *talking about* the descendants of the first Adam. Most translators understand that and so translate the definite noun as though it were indefinite—"man." But you need to know that Moses and the other Prophets of Israel concealed what they said about "The Man"—that is, about

Jesus Christ, the Second Adam—by referring to the first Adam *and all of his descendants* as “the man” as well. That technique was tremendously effective, as Isaiah was well aware. He was particularly adept at using it to instill confusion in anyone trying to see past the veil he draped over his prophecies. But that’s another story.

Jeremiah is telling us civilization will be wiped off the face of the Earth by the time the Antichrist has accomplished the purpose God has in mind. Zephaniah is *talking about* the same thing in the following passage, where he uses “the man” technique to openly mock those who can’t understand what he and his cohorts were up to:

*“I will completely remove all {things}
From the face of the Earth,” declares the LORD.
“I will remove man and beast;
I will remove the birds of the sky
And the fish of the sea,
And the ruins along with the wicked;
And I will cut off man from the face of the Earth,”
declares the LORD.
(Zephaniah 1:2–3)*

The second thing you need to notice in the passage above (Jer. 4:23–28) is the Hebrew verb translated “pulled down” in verse 26. That is the same verb that God uses in Jeremiah 1:10, where he defines the purpose of Jeremiah’s calling. So now you know what “pulling down” God had in mind when He ordained the Prophet. Now, if you only knew what the *parabolic images* of “building” and “planting” represent, ...

Some Folks Are Too Dumb to Shut Up

Jeremiah does not suddenly stop *talking about* the appearance of the Antichrist in Jeremiah 4:28. He continues rambling on about the horrible destruction he has seen and rather obscurely explains why God is going to destroy civilization. Then, in the following passage, he concisely brings together four of the five key words we have chosen to track:

*“A devastating and horrible thing has happened
in the Earth:
The prophets have prophesied deception,
And the priests have gone down on their hands,
And My people love it thus.*

But what will you do when it ends?

Sons of Benjamin,

seek refuge away from the midst of Jerusalem!

But blow a ram’s horn in Tekoa,

And lift up a signal toward the House of the Vineyard,

Because an evil is looking down from Zaphon,

Along with a great destruction.”

(Jeremiah 5:30–6:1) —my interim translation

Now you know why Jesus warned us to flee into the wilderness when we see that petty little man sitting in the rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem pretending to be Jesus Christ (Matt. 24:15–21). Unlike some folks, Jesus read—and understood—the Scriptures. Jeremiah does not actually use the key word *ensign* in 6:1, but it is clearly in view since he uses a synonym for it along with three of the four other key terms. So we know that he is *talking about* the same thing he *talked about* earlier. That allows us to better understand what he says immediately after this passage. First, he tells us God is going to “cut off” the daughter of Zion (6:2–8). Then he says God will silently glean “*The Remnant*” of Israel (6:9–15) without giving warning to anyone else because:

*“And they have healed the brokenness of My people
superficially,
Saying, ‘Peace, peace,’
But there is no peace.”
(Jeremiah 6:14)*

If that verse seems strangely familiar to you, you may be thinking of something the Apostle Paul wrote concerning the Time of the End:

*Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. 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 5:1–3)*

As strange as it may seem to skeptics and scoffers, Paul is *talking about* the same thing as Jeremiah. But Jeremiah has a whole lot more to say about the totally unmitigated disaster that lies due north from here. He goes on to say that the wrath of God was provoked

against all mankind because His People just couldn't seem to hold on to the simple Truth of *The Teaching*, in which He has *parabolically* explained everything they need to know to avoid falling prey to the deception of the Antichrist. Therefore, because of their stupidity in exchanging the Truth of *The Teaching* for a lie, God decided to intentionally mislead them. If you understand what I have explained about "*The Way*" (see *The Way, The Truth, The Life*), you should be able to understand how he says that:

*This is what His Majesty said:
 "Stand beside ways and look.
 And ask for the pathways of eternity:
 'Where is this Way—the Good One?'
 And walk in it,
 And attain rest for your souls.
 But they said, 'We will not walk.'
 Then I raised up watchmen over you:
 'Listen for the sound of the ram's horn.'
 But they said, 'We will not listen.'
 Therefore, hear, nations,
 And know, assembly,
 What is in them.
 Hear, Earth:
 Look! I am going to bring an evil to this people,
 —the fruit of their thoughts—
 Because they did not listen to My Word.
 And as for My Teaching, they rejected her.
 Why is this?
 You bring frankincense to Me from Sheba,
 And the best sweet flag from a distant land.
 {Yet} your burnt offerings are not acceptable,
 And your peace offerings are not pleasing to Me."
 Therefore, this is what His Majesty has said:
 "I am giving this people stumbling blocks.
 And fathers and sons together will stumble over them,
 Friend and neighbor will perish."
 (Jeremiah 6:16–21) —my interim translation*

When Jeremiah finally gets back around to *talking about* the coming of the Antichrist (Jer. 6:22–26), we find the source from which Paul got the *parabolic image* of the End of the Age coming on the Earth suddenly LIKE a woman going into labor:

*We have heard the report of it;
 Our hands are limp.*

*Anguish has seized us,
 Pain as of a woman in childbirth.
 (Jeremiah 6:24)*

In 1 Thessalonians 5:4, Paul goes on to *talk about* the *parabolic images* of *Light* and *darkness* and how they relate to the appearance of the Antichrist. However, he didn't get that information from Jeremiah; he got it from Isaiah 8:9 ff. If we expanded the scope of our matrix word study, we would cruise through that neighborhood as well. For now, we only want to look at a few places on Main Street.

Jeremiah rambles on, *talking about* various things that folks will need to understand if they want to avoid the deception of the Antichrist. But in one succinct statement, he warns Believers against the watershed belief that will separate those who know the Truth from those who get caught up in Satan's lie:

*"Do not trust in deceptive words, saying, 'This is the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD.'"
 (Jeremiah 7:4)*

If you don't know what that verse is *talking about*, I suggest you find out before you need to know and don't. Otherwise, you will find yourself ignorantly going along with the most asinine belief mankind has ever latched onto.

When the "Harlot" Has "Built a House"

The final passage in which we find the five key words repeatedly used is an extended passage in which Jeremiah prophesies concerning God's judgment against the nations (Jer. 45–51). The five key words we are tracking occur in various places throughout the passage. *Zaphon* (46:6, 10, 20, 24; 47:2; 50:3, 9, 41; and 51:48), *great destruction* (48:3; 50:22; and 51:54), *lion* (49:19 and 50:44), *ram's horn/teruah* (49:2 and 51:27), and *ensign* (50:2; 51:12 and 27) can all be found there. However, Jeremiah prefaces his prophecy with this:

{This is} the message which Jeremiah the prophet spoke to Baruch the son of Neriah, when he had written down these words in a book at Jeremiah's dictation, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, saying: "Thus says the LORD the God of Israel to you, O Baruch: 'You

said, "Ah, woe is me! For the LORD has added sorrow to my pain; I am weary with my groaning and have found no rest." Thus you are to say to him, "Thus says the LORD, 'Behold, what I have built I am about to tear down, and what I have planted I am about to uproot, that is, the whole land.' But you, are you seeking great things for yourself? Do not seek {them;} for behold, **I am going to bring disaster on all flesh,**' declares the LORD, 'but I will give your life to you as booty in all the places where you may go.'"

(Jeremiah 45:1–5)

God is alluding to the purpose for which He called Jeremiah when He says "what I have built I am about to tear down, and what I have planted I am about to uproot, that is, the whole land" (v. 4). You should be able to see that the translation "the whole land" is obviously a mistranslation. It should be translated "the whole Earth," considering that the Lord says "I am going to bring disaster on all flesh" in verse 5. That conclusion is rather cogently reinforced by the verse that immediately follows verse 5:

That which came as the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet concerning the nations.

(Jeremiah 46:1)

Verses 4 and 5 tell us that what follows is somehow concerned with the worldwide destruction that will be accomplished by the Antichrist. Therefore, it is not too difficult to see that Jeremiah's prophecies concerning the various peoples living around ancient Israel are *parabolically* describing the disaster wrought on the nations of the Earth when the Antichrist—the king of Babylon—deceives them. However, the central *parabolic image* that dominates the entire passage is the destruction of the *harlot* Babylon by the People of God at the End of the Age (Jer. 50–51). To understand what is said about Babylon, however, one must keep in mind that the People of God are both "The One" Who speaks and "The Many" who listen. Otherwise, the *parabolic imagery* tends to get lost behind the veil.

Just What, Exactly, Is an "Ensign"?

The foregoing is, in a nutshell, what the Prophet Jeremiah has to say about the End of the Age. But our only interest in that is how it relates to the *parabolic*

pantomime in which Judas played the foolish shepherd who sold the Lamb of God as a Passover sacrifice. Jeremiah alludes to the *meaning and significance* of that *parabolic pantomime* when he describes the destruction that lies in store for the *harlot* Babylon:

The word which the LORD spoke concerning Babylon, the land of the Chaldeans, through Jeremiah the prophet:

"Declare and proclaim among the nations.

Proclaim it and lift up a standard.

Do not conceal {it but} say,

'Babylon has been captured,

Bel has been put to shame,

Marduk has been shattered;

Her images have been put to shame,

her idols have been shattered.'

For a nation has come up against her out of the north; it will make her land an object of horror, and there will be no inhabitant in it. Both man and beast have wandered off, they have gone away! In those days and at that time," declares the LORD, "the sons of Israel will come, {both} they and the sons of Judah as well; they will go along weeping as they go, and it will be the LORD their God they will seek. They will ask for the way to Zion, {turning} their faces in its direction; they will come that they may join themselves to the LORD {in} an everlasting covenant that will not be forgotten.

My people have become lost sheep;

Their shepherds have led them astray.

They have made them turn aside {on} the mountains;

They have gone along from mountain to hill

And have forgotten their resting place.

All who came upon them have devoured them;

And their adversaries have said,

'We are not guilty,

Inasmuch as they have sinned against the LORD

{Who is} the habitation of righteousness,

Even the LORD, the hope of their fathers.'

Wander away from the midst of Babylon,

And go forth from the land of the Chaldeans;

Be also like male goats at the head of the flock.

For behold, I am going to arouse and bring up against Babylon

A horde of great nations from the land of the north,

And they will draw up {their} battle lines against her;

From there she will be taken captive.

Their arrows will be like an expert warrior

Who does not return empty-handed.

And Chaldea will become plunder;

*All who plunder her will have enough," declares the LORD.
(Jeremiah 50:1–10)*

I quoted the New American Standard translation of that passage so you could see that the translation makes little difference. The *meaning* and *significance* of the passage are clearly beyond easy comprehension. However, you need to know that the Hebrew term translated "standard" in verse 2 is the same word that I translated "ensign" in Jeremiah 4:6 and 4:21. Knowing that, you should be able to see Jeremiah is saying that "lifting up" that "ensign" is in some way a declaration that the *harlot* Babylon and her deceitful king have already been destroyed. That may not make sense to you—if you are thinking *literally*. But you need to realize Jeremiah is not speaking *literally*. He is speaking *parabolically*. He is telling us what "it" IS LIKE. Now all you need to know is what "it" is. So let me explain "it" as best as I can.

The "ensign" to which Jeremiah refers is the *parabolic image* of Jesus Christ hanging on the cross. Moses defined the *parabolic imagery* in this passage, where he twice uses the term *ensign* (translated "standard"):

*Then they set out from Mount Hor by the way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the people became impatient because of the journey. And the people spoke against God and Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this miserable food." And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. So the people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned, because we have spoken against the LORD and you; intercede with the LORD, that He may remove the serpents from us." And Moses interceded for the people. Then the LORD said to Moses, "Make a fiery {serpent,} and set it on a standard; and it shall come about, that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, he shall live." And Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on the standard; and it came about, that if a serpent bit any man, when he looked to the bronze serpent, he lived.
(Numbers 21:4–9)*

Now you know what Jeremiah and the other Prophets had in mind when they *talked about* the "ensign." But a little knowledge can sometimes be a dangerous thing. If you do not know the *meaning* and

significance of that original *parabolic pantomime*, you are left with nothing at all. So let me explain what Moses and the other Prophets had in mind. First, you need to know that Jesus Christ said the *parabolic pantomime* of the Serpent impaled on a pole was in some way pointing to His death on the cross:

*"Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak that which we know, and bear witness of that which we have seen; and you do not receive our witness. If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how shall you believe if I tell you heavenly things? And no one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven, {even} the Son of Man. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whoever believes may in Him have eternal life."
(John 3:11–15)*

It is *extremely* important that you know Jesus used the same *parabolic imagery* to connect His death on the cross with the judgment of mankind and the casting out of Satan:

*"Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify Thy name." There came therefore a voice out of heaven: "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." The multitude therefore, who stood by and heard it, were saying that it had thundered; others were saying, "An angel has spoken to Him." Jesus answered and said, "This voice has not come for My sake, but for your sakes. Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world shall be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself." But He was saying this to indicate the kind of death by which He was to die.
(John 12:27–33)*

God's statement about "glorifying" His "Name" more than once is intriguing, isn't it? Of course, if you don't know all that much about what "The Name" of God is, or to what process the verb *glorify* pertains, I doubt you even noticed. We are, after all, *talking about* the Potter re-forming His Firstborn Son into an earthenware container more to His liking, and so was Jesus. That is *why* He immediately refers back to what the Prophets have said about the Serpent being impaled on a pole. That event is a specific part of that process.

If You Can't See the Ensign, Look Again

Isaiah has quite a lot more than Jeremiah to say about the “ensign” that God “lifted up” as a signal that the “harlot” has already been judged and burned. This is one of Isaiah’s more transparent statements:

*All you inhabitants of the world and dwellers on earth,
As soon as a standard is raised on the mountains,
you will see {it,}*

*And as soon as the trumpet is blown,
you will hear {it.}*

*For thus the LORD has told me,
“I will look from My dwelling place quietly
Like dazzling heat in the sunshine,
Like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest.”
For before the harvest, as soon as the bud blossoms
And the flower becomes a ripening grape,
Then He will cut off the sprigs with pruning knives
And remove {and} cut away the spreading branches.
They will be left together for mountain birds of prey,
And for the beasts of the earth;
And the birds of prey
will spend the summer {feeding} on them,
And all the beasts of the earth
will spend harvest time on them.
(Isaiah 18:3–6)*

Did you see how Isaiah paired the “ensign” (“standard”) with the blowing of a ram’s horn? That tells us he and Jeremiah are *talking about* the same thing. However, it is not all that difficult to see that he is also *talking about* the *parabolic meaning and significance* of the death of Christ on the cross. At that time, “*The Light*” will come out of hiding and Israel will be pruned. That is, the unproductive branches will be “cut off from” “*The Man*” Israel so that they can be burned. (Notice the verbal tense. We are *talking about* a reality in which the past is yet future.)

If you do not know that the birth, life, and death of Jesus Christ are a *parabolic pantomime* of the *entire* history of the man Israel, you will undoubtedly miss Isaiah’s point. But to understand how Isaiah could be *talking about* both the death of Jesus Christ on the cross and the coming of the Antichrist, you need to realize that the man—Israel—became “*The Man*”—Israel—only after the Man Israel had died as an “ensign” for the nations. That is, the *parabolic pantomime* in which

the Man Jesus Christ died an agonizing death on the cross (in the past) is a graphic description (and warning to those who understand) of the horrific end that yet awaits the man (in the future). That should tell you the original *parabolic pantomime* in which Moses “lifted up” an “ensign” in the wilderness points to the End of the Age as well. After all, how could one *parabolic pantomime* point to nothing more than a second *parabolic pantomime* when the second is pointing to something beyond itself? Don’t be silly. The *meaning and significance* of the “ensign” that Moses “lifted up” is exactly the same as the one in which Jesus Christ was “lifted up” on the cross. Both point to what Jeremiah tells us they point—the Serpent impaled on a pole:

*The word which the LORD spoke concerning Babylon, the land of the Chaldeans, through Jeremiah the prophet:
“Declare and proclaim among the nations.
Proclaim it and lift up a standard.
Do not conceal {it but} say,
‘Babylon has been captured,
Bel has been put to shame,
Marduk has been shattered;
Her images have been put to shame, her idols have been shattered.’”
(Jeremiah 50:1–2)*

Now, if you can just put all the pieces of the big picture together in your mind, you should be able to “see” how the “lifting up” of the “ensign” of Christ on the cross *signifies* the destruction of the *harlot* Babylon. But perhaps that is too much to expect. I realize it is difficult for the modern Western mind to take on an ancient Oriental mind-set. Yet, as somebody once said, nothing is impossible with God.

Judas? Oh, he was just playing the *parabolic* role of the cynical little man who will soon become the “shepherd” of the man and sell him as a sacrifice to be slain. Then, after the fire is out, “*The Man*” will arise from the ashes to *inherit* the field of the Potter. That field will be bought with “blood money” just as God has stated in the various *parabolic pantomimes* that depict the death and Resurrection of “*The Man*”—Jesus Christ. That’s all I’m going to say about that for now. If you can see the *parabolic imagery*, that’s fine. Consider yourself fortunate. If not, be patient. It may come to you if you carefully reread both articles in this series and think outside the box of your *tradition*. ■



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

Editor: I have only one question for you in this issue because I suspect the answer may be somewhat lengthy. The question involves the three chapters (5–7) in the Book of Matthew which are commonly referred to as the Sermon on the Mount. Although this sermon is probably the best known of Christ’s public discourses, it is not necessarily the best understood. Since preachers and teachers in the Church often quote from this section of Scripture (and often misconstrue what is said), would you give our readers an overview of what Jesus is talking about in these three chapters? I know you can’t go into great detail here, but would you at least explain the central theme of Christ’s message, and then hit the high points in His sermon and explain how they tie in with the central theme?

Elijah: The key to understanding what Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount lies hidden in Matthew’s reason for including it in his Gospel. That is, you cannot understand *what* Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount or *why* He said it if you don’t understand the *context* in which Matthew has it set. Matthew provides more than enough clues to understanding that *context*, provided you carefully pay attention to *what* he has said and *why* he said it. So let’s go back and look briefly at the four chapters of the Gospel of Matthew that precede the Sermon on the Mount.

Matthew begins his Gospel with a genealogy of Jesus Christ. But if you have ever looked closely at that genealogy, you should already know that there is more to it than meets the eye. It clearly differs from the one that Luke includes in his Gospel. That is because Matthew’s purpose in writing his Gospel is significantly different than the purpose Luke had when he wrote his. Luke’s focus in writing the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts is on telling us how Jesus Christ—the *Heir of the promise*—*inherited the promise* and made it available to all who would believe *in Him*. By contrast, Matthew tells us how the *curse* of the Law fell on Jesus Christ—the Israel of God—so that those *in Christ* might *inherit the promise*. That is *why* Matthew’s genealogy begins with Abraham and ends with Jesus Christ, while Luke’s genealogy begins with Jesus Christ and ends with Adam. Since those genealogies contain specific details that relate to various aspects of *The Teaching*, I won’t say much more about them here.

You do need to know a few more things about Matthew’s genealogy, however, before you can understand the Sermon on the Mount. First, you must understand it contains the lineage of Joseph, not Mary. And the name Jeconiah (Jehoiachin), which is mentioned in Matthew 1:11–12, is *significant* in that it tells us Jesus Christ could never have *inherited the promise* had He been the *biological* son of Joseph. Jeremiah tells us God had disqualified Jeconiah and his descendants from ever being the *fulfillment of the promise* He gave to David (2 Sam. 7):

“As I live,” declares the LORD, “even though Coniah [Jehoiachin] the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah were a signet {ring} on My right hand, yet I would pull you off; and I shall give you over into the hand of those who are seeking your life, yes, into the hand of those whom you dread, even into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of the Chaldeans. I shall hurl you and your mother who bore you into another country where you were not born, and there you will die. But as for the land to which they desire to return, they will not return to it.

*Is this man Coniah a despised, shattered jar?
Or is he an undesirable vessel?*

*Why have he and his descendants been hurled out
And cast into a land that they had not known?*

*O land, land, land,
Hear the word of the LORD!*

Thus says the LORD,
 'Write this man down childless,
 A man who will not prosper in his days;
 For no man of his descendants will prosper
 Sitting on the throne of David
 Or ruling again in Judah.'"
 (Jeremiah 22:24–30)

If you were paying close attention when you read Matthew's genealogy—as you always should be when reading the Scriptures—you probably noticed he concluded the genealogy with this verse:

Therefore all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations; and from the deportation to Babylon to {the time of} Christ fourteen generations.
 (Matthew 1:17)

Matthew's fourteen-generation framework is obviously artificial. I say "obviously" because he intentionally left names out of the first two "fourteens" while making sure the last "fourteen" would *appear* to have only thirteen names. He did that so ignorant people would ask "Why?" But most don't bother. Those who do assume they already know. That's *why* they are still ignorant. If they knew *why* Matthew used the fourteen-generation framework, they would also know he used the obvious omissions in it to draw attention to four of the five names in the genealogy that one needs to consider further: Abraham, David, Jeconiah, and Christ.

Matthew did a nice job of emphasizing the name Jeconiah by diverting your attention from it, didn't he? He borrowed that technique from Moses and the Prophets. He also tweaked the noses of all who have ever bothered to count the number of "generations" he included in his list. They are all there, in spite of the fact that a fool could drive himself crazy looking for the "generation" that is missing in the final "fourteen." The missing one is the fifth name in the list of forty-two "generations" that you should note—Mary. If you did not know that *The Law of Moses* stipulates a woman could stand in such a position, don't say anything that might disclose your *incredible* ignorance. Just remind me sometime to tell you *why* a woman shows up as one "generation" in the final "fourteen." Matthew gives you a couple of really BIG clues in his "was born ... from" technique and in ALL the other women he mentions—

Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and the unmentionable one. His point has to do with how Mary negated the curse that God placed on Jeconiah so that Jesus Christ could be the *fulfillment of the promise* that God gave to David.

After Matthew gives us his genealogy of Jesus Christ, he then briefly describes how an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream, telling him not to reject Mary just because she was obviously pregnant with someone else's child. Matthew concludes his account of those events with this:

Now all this took place that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, "BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD, AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL," which translated means, "GOD WITH US."
 (Matthew 1:22–23)

If you have read and understood Isaiah 7:1–8:8, you already know that, according to the Prophet Isaiah, the One called "Immanuel" is Israel. That is precisely the reason *why* Matthew quotes Isaiah. He is intent on identifying Jesus Christ as Israel. If you have read the things I explained in *Not All Israel Is Israel*, you also know *how* Jesus Christ came to be "*The Remnant*" of Israel. Matthew just wants to make sure you have no doubt in that regard. To make his identification even more explicit, he then includes an account of how the magi almost got Jesus Christ killed. He concludes by quoting the Prophet Hosea:

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."**
 (Matthew 2:13–15)

For the benefit of the laggards reading along with us who are not aware of what Hosea said, here it is:

When Israel {was} a youth I loved him,
 And out of Egypt I called My son.
 (Hosea 11:1)

It is obvious that Hosea is *talking about* Israel. That is precisely *why* Matthew quotes him. He wants it known that Jesus Christ has *parabolically* become Israel, the Firstborn Son of God. But I should probably also tell you that Hosea is alluding to something that God told Moses to say to Pharaoh. Better yet, I'll show it to you:

"Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD, 'Israel is My son, My first-born.'"
(Exodus 4:22)

After twice reminding us that Jesus Christ was "The Remnant" of Israel, Matthew dwells at some length on the *parabolic pantomime* in which Christ reenacted the Passover Parable. That is, he gives us an extended account of Jesus' Baptism and His temptation in the wilderness. Since I have explained the *parabolic imagery* related to that *parabolic pantomime* on other occasions, I need not do so again here. Anyone who is interested can read the book *Not All Israel Is Israel* and the booklet *The Passover Parable* for more details. (See the Order Form.)

The next thing Matthew tells us may appear to be totally unrelated to his identification of Jesus Christ as Israel. But it isn't. Here is what he says:

Now when He heard that John had been taken into custody, He withdrew into Galilee; and leaving Nazareth, He came and settled in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali. {This was} to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying, "THE LAND OF ZEBULUN AND THE LAND OF NAPHTALI, BY THE WAY OF THE SEA, BEYOND THE JORDAN, GALILEE OF THE GENTILES—THE PEOPLE WHO WERE SITTING IN DARKNESS SAW A GREAT LIGHT, AND TO THOSE WHO WERE SITTING IN THE LAND AND SHADOW OF DEATH, UPON THEM A LIGHT DAWNED."
(Matthew 4:12–16)

Matthew is quoting Isaiah 9:1–2. But to understand what Isaiah said in those two verses, one needs to look at the eight chapters that precede Chapter 9. Since I don't have time to do that here, I'll show you just the four verses immediately before the verses that Matthew quotes:

*And when they say to you, "Consult the mediums and the spiritists who whisper and mutter," should not a people consult their God? {Should they consult} the dead on behalf of the living? **To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn.** And they will pass through the land hard-pressed and famished, and it will turn out that when they are hungry, they will be enraged and curse their king and their God as they face upward. Then they will look to the earth, and behold, distress and darkness, the gloom of anguish; and {they will be} driven away into darkness.*
(Isaiah 8:19–22)

I boldfaced the most important part of that passage so that you could see what Isaiah is *talking about*. He is obviously speaking *parabolically*, but what he has said cannot be understood without insight into the things I explained in the first volume of *The Mystery of Scripture*. (See Order Form.) When he says "to the law and to the testimony," he is referring to the *oral* and *written Torah* that Moses *received* from God at Mt. Sinai.

As I explained in *The Mystery of Scripture, Volume 1*, the *oral tradition* that Moses *received* is *The Teaching*. That is, *The Law of Moses* is actually *The oral Teaching of Moses*. The Hebrew Scriptures are a "witness" which confirms the Truth of *The Teaching* and thereby testifies against those who refuse to believe it. In the passage above, Isaiah uses a word—*testimony*—that is closely related to the one that Moses uses when he tells us the Hebrew Scriptures are to be a "witness" against the sons of Israel (Deut. 31:26). Knowing that, you should be able to see that Isaiah is speaking *parabolically* when he says this:

*If they do not speak according to this word, **it is because they have no dawn.***
(Isaiah 8:20b)

With that in mind, you now need to know that Isaiah has elsewhere identified Jesus Christ—that is, Israel—as "*The Light*" of *The Teaching*. If you don't understand those things, a good place to start might be the recent back issues of *The Voice of Elijah® Update*. In the June 1999 issue, I completed nearly four years of commenting on Justin Martyr's "Dialogue With the Jew Trypho." Since Justin had obviously heard someone explain Isaiah, he has quite a few things to say concerning "*The Light*." The only point I want to make here is that, from Isaiah's perspective, "*The Light*" of *The*

Teaching is Israel. Matthew knew that. That's *why* he quotes Isaiah 9:1–2. He wants to make sure the knowledgeable reader gets the point: The life of Jesus Christ from His Baptism to His Crucifixion is a *parabolic pantomime* of the history of Israel. LIKE Israel, He was called out of Egypt, baptized in the sea, tested in the wilderness, and led into "the land" as "*The Light*" that would drive out its godless "inhabitants." That's the *parabolic imagery* Matthew has in mind when he relates this:

And {Jesus} was going about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people. And the news about Him went out into all Syria; and they brought to Him all who were ill, taken with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics; and He healed them.
(Matthew 4:23–24)

Now, knowing the context in which Matthew places the Sermon on the Mount, it should be easier for you to understand *why* he includes it in his Gospel:

*And great multitudes followed Him from Galilee and Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and {from} beyond the Jordan. And when He saw the multitudes, **He went up on the mountain**; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. And opening His mouth He {began} to teach them, saying,*
"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.
Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.
Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.
Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are you when {men} cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me. Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."
(Matthew 4:25–5:12)

Matthew includes the Sermon on the Mount in his Gospel because he wants the reader to understand that it is a *parabolic pantomime* of still another event in the history of Israel. But it is impossible to fully understand the point of this particular *parabolic pantomime* unless you know *in detail* how the Old Covenant differs from the New. While I am not yet ready to explain those things openly, I can at least show you *why* Jesus conducted the *parabolic pantomime*.

In the Book of Deuteronomy, Moses tells the sons of Israel to conduct the following *parabolic pantomime*:

Then Moses and the Levitical priests spoke to all Israel, saying, "Be silent and listen, O Israel! This day you have become a people for the LORD your God. You shall therefore obey the LORD your God, and do His commandments and His statutes which I command you today." Moses also charged the people on that day, saying,
"When you cross the Jordan, these shall stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people: Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin. And for the curse, these shall stand on Mount Ebal: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali. The Levites shall then answer and say to all the men of Israel with a loud voice,
'Cursed is the man who makes an idol or a molten image, an abomination to the LORD, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and sets {it} up in secret.' And all the people shall answer and say, 'Amen.'
'Cursed is he who dishonors his father or mother.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'
'Cursed is he who moves his neighbor's boundary mark.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'
'Cursed is he who misleads a blind {person} on the road.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'
'Cursed is he who distorts the justice due an alien, orphan, and widow.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'
'Cursed is he who lies with his father's wife, because he has uncovered his father's skirt.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'
'Cursed is he who lies with any animal.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'
'Cursed is he who lies with his sister, the daughter of his father or of his mother.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'
'Cursed is he who lies with his mother-in-law.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'
'Cursed is he who strikes his neighbor in secret.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'

'Cursed is he who accepts a bribe to strike down an innocent person.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'
'Cursed is he who does not confirm the words of this law by doing them.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'
 (Deuteronomy 27:9–26)

Without going into detail concerning the *meaning* and *significance* of that *parabolic pantomime*, I should at least explain the basic point that God sought to instill in the minds of the people: Under the Old Covenant, people were cursed for *doing* or *not doing* certain things. The curses spoken by the priests—the Levites—make that fairly clear. By contrast, when the Priest of the New Covenant—Jesus Christ—conducted the corresponding *parabolic pantomime*, He did not curse, He *blessed*. That points out an essential difference between the Old and New Covenant: The Old Covenant laid *the curse* on Jesus Christ—Israel—and all those who *refuse* to believe; the New Covenant conveys *the blessing* to those who *choose* to believe.

If you paid close attention to *the blessings* Christ pronounced, you already know that He does not *bless* anyone for *doing* or *not doing*, He *blesses* them for *being*. He then describes those who will *inherit the blessing* under the terms of the New Covenant. Again, the emphasis is on who they are—internally—rather than what they have done—externally:

"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how will it be made salty {again?} It is good for nothing anymore, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do {men} light a lamp, and put it under the peck-measure, but on the lampstand; and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."
 (Matthew 5:13–16)

To counter the arguments of anyone who might charge Him with negating the external requirements of *The Law of Moses* by His emphasis on the internal requirements of *The Teaching*, Jesus says this:

"Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. 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. Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and so teaches others, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches {them,} he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say to you, that unless your righteousness surpasses {that} of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven."
 (Matthew 5:17–20)

Now is not the time to go into what Jesus *meant* by His use of the term translated "fulfill" in verse 17. But anyone who knows that righteousness comes only by belief in the Truth should be able to see that He is mocking those who want to *do* something to please God. He does that explicitly when He says "whoever keeps and teaches." That is not actually what He said. He said "anyone who *does* and teaches." But unless one knows the *meaning* and *significance* of the Hebrew idiom "keep the commandments," even the mockery inherent in that statement remains obscure.

Jesus goes on to emphasize how the external "laws" of the Old Covenant have been internalized under the terms of the New. He explains how murder, adultery, and the obligation to love one's neighbor have all become a matter of the "heart" (Matt. 5:21–47) before He makes this incredible statement:

"Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."
 (Matthew 5:48)

The proverbial fool will immediately assume that Jesus is *talking about* external behavior. The Truth is, He isn't. He intentionally uses the Greek verb *to be* with the adjective *perfect* to emphasize that one must *be* "perfect" instead of *do* "perfectly." But unless one understands the *parabolic imagery* that stands behind the Greek term that has been translated "perfect," one has no basis for understanding what Jesus *meant* by what He said. Since I have been explaining those things in The Next Step program for several years now, I will say no more about them here.

Jesus continues His discourse by admitting there are legitimate things that one *will do* under the terms of the New Covenant. But He contends that even those things are private matters that should be known only to the Believer and to God. As examples, He mentions giving alms, praying, and fasting (Matt. 6:1–18). Then

He warns Believers to beware of the two things—money (6:19–34) and pride (7:1–5)—that can easily entice them into corrupting the Truth of *The Teaching*. Finally, He warns against discussing *The Teaching* with anyone whose only desire is to refute it (7:6).

Jesus next addresses an issue that the Christian Gnostics completely distorted. It is also one that fools today twist just as easily. He admonishes those who have difficulty understanding *The Teaching* to pray that God would grant them insight into it. He says this:

“Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it shall be opened. Or what man is there among you, when his son shall ask him for a loaf, will give him a stone? Or if he shall ask for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him! Therefore, however you want people to treat you, so treat them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.”
(Matthew 7:7–12)

The Christian Gnostics took that passage to mean the Believer could attain Truth by a supernatural *internal* revelation of the Truth without the need to listen to someone explain the *oral tradition* that was being *handed down* in the Early Church. Needless to say, *orthodox* Christian leaders like Irenæus, Hippolytus, and Tertullian vehemently refuted that belief and labeled it heresy. That is exactly what it is, in spite of the fact that it has long since become the prevailing view of most “Christians.” If one bothers to think about it, the belief is not even logical. If Truth is somehow a matter of “what it means to me,” there can be no such thing as *objective Truth* that exists outside the individual. Furthermore, if God intended for everyone to gain supernatural insight or revelation when they read the Scriptures, there is no need for anyone to teach or preach. So why are they still talking?

To dissuade anyone who might be tempted to change *The Teaching* in some way, Jesus reminds them that the Truth is a narrowly defined “way” that one can only accept or reject:

“Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those

who enter by it. For the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it.”
(Matthew 7:13–14)

Jesus then issues a warning to those who seek to understand the Truth of *The Teaching*—Don’t believe everyone who claims to have been called by God:

“Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn {bushes,} nor figs from thistles, are they? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit; but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. So then, you will know them by their fruits. Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.”
(Matthew 7:15–23)

Jesus concludes with a warning concerning the ultimate deceiver—the Antichrist. I’ll leave it up to you to figure out what He *meant* by what He said. But I will tell you the *meaning* and *significance* of the parable hinges on the Hebrew idiom “build a house”:

“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.” The result was that when Jesus had finished these words, the multitudes were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as {one} having authority, and not as their scribes. And when He had come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him.
(Matthew 7:24–8:1) ■