



Parabolic Images Drive Literalists Crazy

But as our Lord is alone truly Master, so the Son of God is truly good and patient, the Word of God the Father having been made the Son of man.

For He fought and conquered; for He was man contending for the fathers, and through obedience doing away with disobedience completely: for He bound the strong man, and set free the weak, and endowed His own handiwork with salvation, by destroying sin. For He is a most holy and merciful Lord, and loves the human race.

Therefore, as I have already said, He caused man (human nature) to cleave to and to become one with God. For unless man had overcome the enemy of man, the enemy would not have been legitimately vanquished.

And again: unless it had been God who had freely given salvation, we could never have possessed it securely. And unless man had been joined to God, he could never have become a partaker of incorruptibility.

For it was incumbent upon the Mediator between God and men, by His relationship to both, to bring both to friendship and concord, and present man to God, while He revealed God to man.

For, in what way could we be partakers of the adoption of sons, unless we had received from Him through the Son that fellowship which refers to Himself, unless His Word, having been made flesh, had entered into communion with us?

Wherefore also He passed through every stage of life, restoring to all communion with God. Those, therefore, who assert that He appeared putatively, and was neither born in the flesh nor truly made man, are as yet under the old condemnation, holding out patronage to sin; for, by their showing, death has not been vanquished, which "reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression."

Continued on back cover

Continued from front cover

But the law coming, which was given by Moses, and testifying of sin that it is a sinner, did truly take away his (death's) kingdom, showing that he was no king, but a robber; and it revealed him as a murderer. It laid, however, a weighty burden upon man, who had sin in himself, showing that he was liable to death.

For as the law was spiritual, it merely made sin to stand out in relief, but did not destroy it. For sin had no dominion over the spirit, but over man.

For it behoved Him who was to destroy sin, and redeem man under the power of death, that He should Himself be made that very same thing which he was, that is, man; who had been drawn by sin into bondage, but was held by death, so that sin should be destroyed by man, and man should go forth from death.

For as by the disobedience of the one man who was originally moulded from virgin soil, the many were made sinners, and forfeited life; so was it necessary that, by the obedience of one man; who was originally born from a virgin, many should be justified and receive salvation. Thus, then, was the Word of God made man, as also Moses says: "God, true are His works." But if, not having been made flesh, He did appear as if flesh, His work was not a true one.

But what He did appear, that He also was: God recapitulated in Himself the ancient formation of man, that He might kill sin, deprive death of its power, and vivify man; and therefore His works are true.

Irenæus, "Against Heresies," Book iii, Chap. xviii, in Roberts and Donaldson (Eds.), *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (1867), Vol. 1, pp. 447-448.

Is It Time To Renew?

The Voice of Elijah
P.O. Box 2257
Rockwall, TX 75087
(972) 635-2021

Check the mailing label below. If it says, "TIME TO RENEW," your subscription expires with this issue. Don't miss a single issue! Use the order form in this issue to renew your subscription now.

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
MESQUITE, TX
PERMIT NO. 0038

www.voiceofelijah.org



Published quarterly by
Voice of Elijah, Inc.

Allen Friess, Executive Editor
Susan Clay, Managing Editor

Volume 11
Number 1
January 2000

All correspondence
should be addressed to:

Voice of Elijah, Inc.
P.O. Box 2257
Rockwall, TX 75087-2257

Subscription rates:
(1 year, U.S. Funds)

U.S. \$24.00
Canada \$30.00
Abroad \$50.00

Articles published by permission of
Larry Dee Harper
(dba The Elijah Project).

Except when otherwise noted,
Scripture taken from the
New American Standard Bible,
© 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971,
1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1987, 1988.
The Lockman Foundation.
Used by permission.

Bolded Scripture reflects
the emphasis of the author.

Copyright © 2000, 2018
by Voice of Elijah, Inc.
voiceofelijah.org
facebook.com/voiceofelijahinc

A Note From the Editor

If you are a recent subscriber to *The Voice of Elijah*[®], you may find it helpful to know that we are currently in the process of publishing a series of articles on a variety of different, yet interrelated, topics. I say “different, yet interrelated” because everything in the Scriptures is, in one way or another, linked together and therefore part of the unified message of the Scriptures. Contrary to what you may think, the Bible is not a collection of writings that deals with a variety of different subject matters. It is a divinely inspired collection of writings that uses a variety of different subjects as parabolic images for the purpose of illustrating the spiritual Truth that one needs to understand to be saved.

You may find that hard to believe, but if and when you actually begin to see what the simple, albeit complex, message of the Scriptures is all about, you will rejoice in your newfound understanding. The simple message of the Scriptures is that it is possible to overcome death and enter the Resurrection, that is, inherit eternal life, by firmly believing the content of the message found in the Scriptures. However, the details of that message are complex and multifaceted because they are tied to the mind-set—the beliefs—of the ancient cultures that influenced Israel during the span of time the Scriptures were written. That’s where the parabolic images and Hebrew idioms we continually talk about come from. God has mocked the foolishness of these ancient beliefs throughout the Scriptures while, at the same time, using the imagery and terminology (idioms) associated with these beliefs to create parables (comparisons) that teach True Believers what spiritual reality is like.

That may be a hard pill for you to swallow, but you owe it to yourself to consider the possibility that it may be true because it *is* true, which is why you should believe it. You may have doubts now, but in time you won’t if you are willing to listen, learn, study, apply logical thinking, and last but not least, if you have been born again. This last condition is especially crucial to your understanding because as the Apostle Paul said, the “natural man” cannot comprehend the things of God (1 Cor. 2:14).

What sort of things do the unregenerate find foolish and incomprehensible? The things *The Voice of Elijah*[®] has been communicating for over nine years. Although we have different ways of disseminating this information (newsletters, books, tapes, videos, seminars, and the internet) and different levels of instruction (depending on a person’s desire to learn), the newsletter is the fundamental starting point for both. Most who believe The Teaching begin to “awaken” from their slumber and start to realize things are not what they seem by reading our newsletter.

If you cannot see Truth in what you find written in *The Voice of Elijah*[®], I would advise you to seek whatever “truth” you are looking for somewhere else. You certainly won’t find anything here to tickle your ears (2 Tim. 4:3–4). On the other hand, I would encourage you not to be

Continued on page 29

Continued from inside front cover

too quick to make a final judgment on whether you believe what we teach. To make an honest evaluation, one needs to read most, if not all, of the newsletters published to date, because there is information in them that will make a lot more sense (to True Believers) when they are examined as a whole. This is especially true with regard to those articles that have been or are being written as part of a series. Here are just some of the topics currently being examined in an ongoing series of articles and the issues (to date) in which those articles can be found.

The meaning and significance of the Hebrew idioms “build a house,” “raise up a seed,” and “make a name” and how these three idioms both reveal and conceal the message of “The House” that is hidden in the Scriptures can be found in “The Sad, Sordid History of the People of God,” July 1996 and “So Why Would a Nomad ‘Build a House’ and Settle Down?” October 1997. The nature and purpose of the Hebrew Scriptures and why the authors of the Scriptures wrote what they wrote are detailed in “The Holy Bible: What Is It? What Does It *Mean*? Who Wrote It? When and Why?” April 1997; “Contrary to What You May Have Heard, Jeremiah Was No Bullfrog,” July 1997; “God Lives in a Three-Story House,” January 1998; and “Pay Close Attention to ‘The Way’ That Woman Walks,” October 1999. An explanation of the meaning of some of Jesus’ parables is in “If You Plan to Reap What You Sow, You Had Better Watch What You Plant,” April 1998 and “I Tell You What: Odds Are, You’ll Never Beat God at His Shell Game,” October 1998. The meaning and significance of Paul’s use of the Greek term for “law” is explained in “We Know the Law Is Holy. But What About the Commandment?” July 1998 and “There Is Nothing More Amazing Than Dead Men Walking (in ‘The Way’)” in this issue.

Although these four topics may appear to be unrelated to each other, such is not the case. The Truth is, they are all interrelated in one way or another because that’s how it is with the Word of God. Nothing stands alone, because in the wisdom of God, all elements of the Truth have been woven

together into a seamless whole. That’s how it is possible for the message of the Scriptures—the Word of God—to be a single message yet be comprised of many complex and multifaceted bits of information. We refer to the totality of this message as The Teaching because the Apostles Paul and John, among others, do the same in their writings (Rom. 16:17; Titus 1:9; 2 John 1:9).

The point is, there is a lot for True Believers to learn if they hope to understand The Teaching—the Word of God—that the Early Church once understood. If you consider yourself to be a born-again Believer, it’s time you admitted that you are a lot more ignorant of the Truth than you have let on. Before discarding what we teach as total nonsense, why not spend some time reading and contemplating the articles published in *The Voice of Elijah*® over the past nine years? Should you have that desire, you can purchase back newsletters using the Order Form in this issue.

Another Seminar?

The possibility exists that we will hold another seminar later this year in October. Although nothing is definite at this point, I am mentioning it now just to give you some advance notice that we are considering it. Look for more information in the April newsletter. The possibility also exists that *The Isaiah Seminar*, which was held last October, will be produced as a video series. Although this seminar was not originally videotaped, The Elijah Project is thinking about putting the information from that seminar on video because the quality of the original audiotapes is not as good as we would like it to be. At this point, nothing is definite, so the best I can do is keep you apprised of developments in future issues. If you would like to share your thoughts on any of these issues, please write us at our new mailing address: P.O. Box 2257, Rockwall, Texas 75087-2257. The mailing envelope you received with this issue reflects the change. Please do not use past mailing envelopes without making this change.

Allen Fries

There Is Nothing More Amazing Than Dead Men Walking (in “*The Way*”)

*This is the second in a series of articles explaining what the Apostle Paul meant when he talked about law. The first article in this series was published as “We Know the Law Is Holy. But What About the Commandment?” in **The Voice of Elijah**®, July 1998. In that and the current article, I have included my own translation of some of the biblical texts that are most relevant to this topic, not because I consider my translation to be completely accurate at this point, but because it makes it easier for me to explain my current understanding of the meaning of the original Greek text. I will, most likely, continue to make minor changes to my translation of the biblical text as more and more of the parabolic imagery of The Teaching of Moses comes into clearer focus. I plan to publish a complete translation of the epistles of Paul—eventually. In the articles in this series, more than in any of the other articles I have written for **The Voice of Elijah**®, I will refer to things that I have explained in The Next Step program. The reader should not take that as an encouragement to join that program, however, since those things will eventually be published in book form.*

In the first article in this series, I mentioned five things that you need to know to be able to understand what the Apostle Paul *means* when he uses the Greek term *nomos* (“law”). I told you the first thing you must recognize before you can understand what Paul has said about “law” is that since Satan has lied to us, most of what you now believe about the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures is most likely a fiction.

The second thing you must know before you can understand what Paul *means* when he *talks about* “law” (without the definite article) in general and “the Law” in specific is that when he says “law,” that is, when he uses *nomos* without the definite article, he is normally

referring to the *statutes, judgments, and commandments* that Moses established for the sons of Israel in the wilderness. However, since the Jews who translated the Septuagint (ca. 250 B.C.) used the Greek term *nomos* (“law”) to translate the Hebrew term *torah* (“teaching”), Paul uses that same Greek term to refer to *The Teaching of Moses*. But when he does, he always says “the Law.” That is, he uses *nomos* with the definite article. On occasion, however, Paul uses that same designation, as the Jews of his day did, to refer to the Pentateuch.

The third thing you need to be aware of to understand what Paul says about “law” is the *parabolic imagery* that the Prophets and Apostles used to describe the Judgment that those who have violated God’s “law” will one day face. Absent the threat of that impending Judgment, “the Law” and “law” hold no significance whatsoever.

The fourth thing that you must know about Paul’s use of the Greek term *nomos* (“law”) is closely related to the third: The Prophets of Israel sealed up *The Teaching* (“the Law”) in the Hebrew Scriptures so that it would provide testimony at the Judgment against those who refuse to believe it. And the primary reason the seven sealed messages of the Hebrew Scriptures are being unsealed at this time is so that they will provide astounding evidence that in spite of what appears to be, most people do not actually want to know the Truth—about anything.

Finally, the fifth thing you need to know about Paul’s use of the term translated “law” is that Paul uses various Greek prepositions with specific *meaning* when he *talks about* both “law” and “the Law.” So in the first article in this series, I told you a few things about the *parabolic imagery* of *The Apostolic Teaching* that Paul had in mind when he used prepositional phrases like “in

law," "from law," "from works of law," "under law," and "through law."

I started by telling you that after Paul mentions the Judgment seat of God in Romans 1:28–2:5, he goes on to explain how those who believe *The Apostolic Teaching* can gain an acquittal on that Great Day. But I also explained that in many cases, I would have to provide my own translation of the biblical text to show you how he does that. And I forewarned you that in my translation, I would substitute more understandable terms for archaic and misunderstood terms like *faith, righteousness, justification, justified, and grace*. Then I began to explain what the Apostle Paul says in the Book of Romans concerning "law" and "the Law."

Using my translation, I showed you that Paul begins his exposition by confronting the erroneous notion that something besides belief in the Truth of *The Apostolic Teaching* is necessary for one to avoid God's wrath. He insists that circumcision of the flesh is no longer what God requires. Rather than that external ritual, God demands that the True Believer "guard the requirements of the Law [*The Teaching*]" (Rom. 2:26) and thus be one of those who "fulfills the Law [*The Teaching*]" (Rom. 2:27).

Under those circumstances, Paul says, the only benefit the Jews have lies in the fact that "they were entrusted with the oracles of God [the Hebrew Scriptures]" (Rom. 3:2b). However, even that benefit accrues only to those who believe *The Teaching* that lies hidden in the Hebrew Scriptures, because as Paul says, "both Jews and Greeks are all *under sin*" (Rom. 3:9b) and "whatever the Law [*The Teaching*] says, it says to those who are *in the Law* [*The Teaching*]" (Rom. 3:19a).

I explained that Paul, in using the prepositional phrase "*in the Law*," is speaking in terms of specific *parabolic imagery* in which Jesus Christ is "the Law." That is, Christ is the Word of God—*The Apostolic Teaching*. Paul is contrasting the position of True Believers *in Christ* with that of those who are still "*under sin*" or, to put it in terms of the expression he will use later, those who are "*under law*." He goes on to explain that the only way anyone can attain a position "*in the Law*" is to believe the Truth of *The Apostolic Teaching* (which he also calls *the promise*) in the same way that Abraham did:

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

is required. For if those from law are heirs, the belief {of Abraham} has been emptied and the promise abolished.
(Romans 4:13–14) —my interim translation

I told you that when Paul says "those from law," he is speaking idiomatically. I even showed you where Jesus uses the same expression:

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

I told you that by speaking in terms of that *parabolic image*, Paul is depicting the Jews of his day as having been engendered "from" their belief in "law"—that is, "from" their belief in the benefit of external rituals—rather than by belief in "the Law" (*The Teaching*). He is also mockingly alluding to the *parabolic image* in which God has engendered True Believers by writing "the Law" on their "hearts." I then showed you that the same idiomatic use of the preposition *from* occurs three times in this verse:

For this reason, {it is} from belief, so that—in accordance with favor for the purpose of confirming the promise to all the Seed—{it is} not only to the One from the Law, but also to the one from belief—{that is,} Abraham, who is father of us all.
(Romans 4:16) —my interim translation

In that verse, Paul has in mind the fact that Jesus Christ is the only Person Who has ever been physically engendered "from the Law" (*The Teaching*). *Parabolically* speaking, one could say that every True Believer is engendered "from the Law" because we were all born again when we heard and believed the Truth of the Gospel—which is the only part of *The Teaching* that can benefit the unbeliever. However, the new birth is just a *parabolic image* that depicts a spiritual reality we have no other way of understanding. Those of us who have been born again are not physically descended "from the Law" as Christ was, but are, LIKE Abraham, spiritually descended "from belief" in "the Law," that is, "from belief" in *The Teaching*.

Paul goes on to explain how Abraham never wavered in his belief in *the promise* and thereby came to be the father of all who believe because he *handed down the promise* that we have all come to believe. Paul then explains how we have attained reconciliation with God through our belief in the Truth of *The Teaching*. In so doing, he frequently refers to "the sin," "the death," "the gift," and "the favor." I told you that "the sin" he has in mind is Adam's rejection of the Truth that he understood; "the death" is the ignorance of the Truth that came about as a result of Adam's sin; "the gift" is God's provision of the Truth; and "the favor" is God's willingness to freely forgive the transgressions of anyone who believes the Truth.

After Paul has explained how Jesus Christ freed us from "the curse" that God imposed because of "the sin" of Adam's rejection of the Truth, he says this:

For if, because of the transgression of the one, the death has reigned because of the one, much more will those who receive the abundance of the favor and the gift of what is required reign in life because of the One, Jesus Christ. Consequently then, just as because of one transgression {the verdict} was to all men for condemnation {to death}, likewise also because of one act of what is required, {the verdict} was to all men for acquittal to life. For just as because of the disobedience of the one man, the Many were made sinners, likewise also because of the obedience of the One, the Many will be made innocent. But law slips in so that the transgression might become greater. Yet where the sin became greater, the favor became more than abundant so that, just as the sin reigned in the death, likewise also the favor might reign—because of what is required—in eternal life because of Jesus Christ our Lord.

(Romans 5:17–21) —my interim translation

Having introduced the *parabolic image* in which "life"—that is, knowledge of the Truth of *The Teaching*—is the opposite of "the death," which is mankind's ignorance of the Truth of *The Teaching*, Paul then begins to speak in terms of the *parabolic imagery* that the Prophets used to describe what one's knowledge of the Truth is LIKE:

Therefore, what will we say? Should we remain in the sin so that the favor would increase? Certainly not! We who have died to the sin? How can we still live in it? Or do you not know that as many as have been baptized into

Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore, we have been buried with Him because of the baptism into the death so that just as Christ was raised from the dead because of the glory of the Father, so also we could walk in newness of life.

(Romans 6:1–4) —my interim translation

In the first article in this series, I told you that in that passage, Paul is alluding to some of the *parabolic imagery* that I have already explained in *The Passover Parable*. [See Order Form.] However, I also told you he is doing much more than just using the same *parabolic imagery* that Moses and the Prophets used to talk about "the death." His purpose in using that *parabolic imagery* is to explain how it describes the reality in which all those who are ignorant of the Truth of *The Teaching* now live. His point is, those of us who know the Truth no longer share that experience.

Speaking in terms of the Hebrew idiom "walk in *The Way*"—with "*The Way*" being the way one thinks—Paul insists that those who believe the same Truth that Abraham believed have been given a phenomenal opportunity to "walk in newness of life." I concluded the first article in this series by telling you that when Paul says that, he is *parabolically* describing what it is LIKE to know the Truth.

Keep Your Eye on "the Sin"

If you ever intend to understand what Paul says in Chapters 6–8 of the Book of Romans, you have to keep in mind what he *means* when he says "the sin." I have already told you that when Paul says that, he has in mind "the sin" that Adam sinned when he turned away from the Truth and believed Satan's lie. He is not referring to "the transgression" that Adam committed when he finally succumbed to temptation and ate of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. That was merely "the transgression" that resulted from "the sin" that Adam committed when he believed Satan's lie.

In Paul's mind, "the sin" of Adam's unbelief led to his "transgression," which was his physical act of disobedience. I remind you of that once again because Paul's mind-set is completely foreign to that of the modern Christian. Today, we ignore the inward nature of sin and view it as little more than an external, physical act. That perspective is deadly to the one who seeks to understand the Truth about "law" and "the Law"

that Paul explains in the Book of Romans. Jesus explains the situation plainly for the benefit of anyone who has ears to hear:

*And after He called the multitude to Him, He said to them, "Hear, and understand. Not what enters into the mouth defiles the man, but what proceeds out of the mouth, this defiles the man." Then the disciples came and said to Him, "Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this statement?" But He answered and said, "Every plant which My heavenly Father did not plant shall be rooted up. Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit." And Peter answered and said to Him, "Explain the parable to us." And He said, "Are you still lacking in understanding also? Do you not understand that everything that goes into the mouth passes into the stomach, and is eliminated? **But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. These are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man.**"*

(Matthew 15:10–20)

Obviously, to understand what Jesus says in that passage, one needs to know that when the ancient Greeks mentioned the "heart" of a person, they were referring to his mind. But even then, the one who seeks to know the Truth must be willing to adopt a completely different mind-set, one that is far different than the legalistic mind-set that prevails in the Church today. Contrary to what Satan would have us believe, we are not what we *do*, we are what we *believe*. And God is going to judge each of us on the basis of our actions only because we all act according to what we believe. In keeping with that Truth, the Apostles and Believers in the Early Church saw sin as essentially an inward, spiritual/mental rejection of the Truth of *The Apostolic Teaching*. Only secondarily did they identify it with the external "transgression" of God's law that manifests itself in everyone who rejects the Truth.

To understand what Paul says in the Book of Romans, you must view "the sin" from his perspective and not fall prey to your normal tendency to slip back into the modern Western mind-set. Pay close attention to what he says as he continues his explanation of the

reality of the "life" enjoyed by those who have escaped "the death":

*For if we have been planted together with {Him} in the likeness of His death, we shall certainly be in the resurrection, knowing this: that our old man was crucified with {Him} in order that **the body of the sin** would be abolished so that we would no longer be enslaved to **the sin**. For the one who has died has been acquitted from **the sin**.*

(Romans 6:5–7) —my interim translation

Let me briefly point out what Paul is alluding to when he says "we have been *planted* together with {Him}." He has in mind a *parabolic image* that Moses and the other Prophets of Israel used to describe the death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. In that *parabolic image*, the resurrected King is depicted as a "tree" that was "planted" when He was buried. Since I have already explained the basis for that *parabolic imagery* (see *The Passover Parable* and "The Image of the King as a Tree," *The Voice of Elijah*®, April 1991), I need not go into great detail here. I only mention it because Paul is going to come back to that image a bit later and *talk about* the "fruit" of that "tree."

Anyone but an absolutely mindless moron should be able to see that Paul is speaking *parabolically* in Romans 6:5–7. If that were not so, he would not have said, "we have been planted together with {Him} *in the likeness of His death*." Instead, he would have said, "we have been planted together with {Him} *in His death*." There is a BIG difference between those two statements; and if you can't see that, you obviously have a HUGE mental deficit.

The word *likeness* that Paul used in verse 5 does not *mean* "the same as." It *means* "like." That can be seen from the three other times that Paul uses the term *likeness* in the Book of Romans. The first time he uses the term, he says this:

*And they exchanged the glory of the immortal God for an image in the **likeness** of mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.*

(Romans 1:23) —my interim translation

Surely Paul did not *mean* for his reader to understand that he thought the images that those ancient folks made were exactly the same as mortal man or

birds or animals or reptiles. An image made for worship was—and still is—nothing more than a lifeless artifact that some unfortunate dupe has made in the *likeness* of some living thing. Keep that sense of the word *likeness* in mind as you read the next verse where Paul uses the term:

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

(Romans 5:14) —my interim translation

I explained the *meaning* of the phrase “in the *likeness* of the violation of Adam” in the first article in this series. From that explanation, you should be able to see that Paul does not *mean* anyone had actually committed the same act of sin as Adam, but rather that the sin of some men was *LIKE* Adam’s sin in that they had rejected the Truth in order to do what they wanted to do. That is precisely what Paul *means* when he uses the Greek term translated “likeness,” not only in that verse but also in every other instance where he uses the term. He wants to emphasize the “likeness” of two things while maintaining that some essential difference exists between them. That intentional emphasis on the fact that two things are only *LIKE* each other rather than that they are exactly the same is obviously why he uses the term *likeness* in this next instance:

*For the inability of the Law, in which it was weak because of the flesh, the {Living} God, sending His Own Son **in the likeness of sinful flesh** and on account of sin, condemned the sin in the flesh.*

(Romans 8:3) —my interim translation

The Apostle Paul knew that Jesus Christ was not *exactly* the same as “sinful flesh” when He walked among us. As Paul says in Philippians 2:5–8—where he again uses the same Greek term—Christ was only made *LIKE* us:

*Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, {and} **being made in the likeness of men**. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming*

*obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.
(Philippians 2:5–8)*

From that passage, you should be able to see why Paul said God sent Christ “in the *likeness* of sinful flesh” in Romans 8:3. His point is, although Jesus Christ was *LIKE* us, He was different from us in the only way that actually mattered. He did not have the same sinful nature that we have.

I trust that those four instances where Paul uses the Greek term translated “likeness” have made the point sufficiently clear. In Romans 6:5, Paul says “we have been planted together with {Him} in the *likeness* of His death” because he is using “life” and “death” as *parabolic images* of a spiritual reality. Nothing more. He is describing what it is *LIKE* for the True Believer to come to a knowledge of the Truth by *parabolically* becoming a member of the *resurrected* Body of Jesus Christ. It is as if the Believer’s physical body has died so that he can live in his newfound knowledge of the Truth of *The Teaching*.

Have You Ever Seen the Holy Ghost?

In the *parabolic image* that Paul has in mind, real “life” resides only in a knowledge of the Truth. “Death” is generally the result of a loss of the Truth, and “the death” is specifically the ignorance of the Truth that resulted from “the sin” of Adam’s rejection of the Truth. According to that *parabolic image*, True Believers become members of Israel—the *resurrected* Body of Jesus Christ, the Firstborn Son of God—by hearing and believing the Truth of the Gospel message. When they believe the Truth and deliberately reject the lusts of the flesh, their body *parabolically* “dies,” and they are born again in their “heart.” That is, God allows the True Believer to experience a phenomenally transforming renewal of the “heart”—the mind—that is somehow *LIKE* being resurrected from the dead. Paul *parabolically* describes the salvation experience this way:

*Our old man was crucified with {Him}, in order that **the body of the sin** would be abolished so that we would no longer be enslaved to **the sin**.*

(Romans 6:6b) —my interim translation

As I have already told you, “the sin” to which Paul refers is Adam’s rejection of the Truth. As a result

of Adam's sin, mankind was left in a state of ignorance, which according to Paul's mind-set was "the death." So Paul is merely saying that the Believer who has *received* a knowledge of the Truth of *The Teaching* has not only triumphed over "the death," which is our ignorance of the Truth, he has also been given an opportunity to rise above "the body of the sin," that is, the innate tendency that we all have—because of ignorance—to reject the Truth when we hear it.

Paul goes on to *parabolically* describe the special circumstances in which the one who has come to a knowledge of the Truth now lives:

Yet if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with Him, knowing that Christ—having been raised from the dead—is no longer mortal. Death is no longer lord over Him. For that which He died, He died to the sin once for all {time}. But that which He lives, He lives to the {Living} God.
(Romans 6:8–10) —my interim translation

It is impossible to grasp what Paul is *talking about* in that passage if one loses sight of the fact that Jesus Christ *is* what He believes in the same way that all of us *are* what we believe. Before any of us had a knowledge of the Truth of *The Teaching*, we were nothing more than the product of all the lies that Satan wanted us to believe. When we heard and believed the Truth of the Gospel, however, we gained an opportunity to become just LIKE Christ. As the Apostle John says:

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

In contrast to our limited understanding of the Truth, Jesus Christ already has perfect knowledge of it because He now is the physical and spiritual embodiment of all that is contained in *The Teaching*. Our knowledge of that same Truth differs from Christ's knowledge of the Truth in that Jesus Christ is now experiencing the spiritual reality that has been described *parabolically* in *The Teaching*, whereas we can only understand that reality in terms of the *parabolic imagery* that Moses and the Prophets use to explain it. As Paul describes our situation:

For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away. When I was a child, I used to speak as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know fully just as I also have been fully known.
(1 Corinthians 13:9–12)

The statement "now we see in a mirror dimly" would be more accurately translated *literally*—"now we see through a mirror in a riddle." In that, Paul is speaking in terms of a specific *parabolic image* which depicts Jesus Christ, the *Living Word of God*, as a mirror in which He Himself appears as the reflection of an *invisible Spirit*. To understand the riddle, it helps to know that the *parabolic image* of the *Living Word of God* that one sees reflected in the mirror of the *Living Word of God* is that of a man—the Man (Hebrew: *Adam*) Who became "The Man" Israel.

Figure out that enigma if you can. But don't strain yourself overly much trying. The mirror and the invisible Spirit reflected in it are, after all, nothing more than *parabolic imagery*. The Prophets used that *parabolic imagery* to explain what time and space are LIKE from God's perspective. However, they were also mocking ancient mythological beliefs concerning Creation by using those beliefs to describe how God has worked in history—that is, in time and space—with the man to create "The Man" in His Own image and likeness through the Incarnation and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The invisible image reflected in the mirror of the *Living Word of God* is the first part of the "riddle in a mirror." After all, it would seem to be impossible for anyone to see an invisible image. However, the solution to that riddle is fairly easy to understand. The *parabolic image* of the man Adam who became "The Man" Israel can only be seen with the "eyes" of the "heart." It is invisible to the eyes of the flesh.

The second part of the "riddle in a mirror" is this: If the *Living Word of God* IS LIKE a mirror in which He Himself appears as the reflected image of an invisible Spirit, where did the reflection of His image come from? The only solution to the conundrum must be that it came from Him standing in front of the mirror that He is. The question is, What would the *Living Word of God*—Who is the reflection of an invisible image in a mirror—see if He peered into the mirror that He is and

saw a reflection of Himself? The answer is, He would see a reflection of the invisible image of the *Living Word* of God reflected back into the mirror that He is. However, He would also see that the two mirrors together create a cascading sequence of the invisible image of the Word of God in both mirrors, with each image carefully nestled inside the other.

To get some idea of what the riddle in a mirror is describing, first hold a handheld mirror to your nose (with the mirror surface facing away from you) so that your eyes are looking just over the top of it. Then go stand in front of a larger mirror and try to get the images of the handheld mirror to nestle neatly inside each other. That will give you a general idea of what the *parabolic image* of the riddle in a mirror is all about. The images of the handheld mirror that you see when you do that will appear to curve down in a gentle arc. However, if you scrape a small hole in the coating on the back of the handheld mirror at a spot precisely in the middle of it, you can then look directly through that mirror into the other mirror. And you will find that the images do not curve downward. They recede into the distance as far as the available light will carry them.

If you imagine that you see an invisible reflection of the *parabolic image* of the man Adam who became "The Man" Israel in each of the mirrors that you see, you should have a fairly good grasp of the *parabolic image* in which the *Living Word* of God IS LIKE the riddle in a mirror. That's a good start. But understanding the *meaning* and *significance* of that *parabolic image* is something else again. Believe me. I've been trying to understand it for years, and it is just now beginning to make sense.

The *parabolic image* in which the *invisible Word* of God is a cascading series of *parabolic images* reflected in the mirror of the *Living Word* of God makes sense only if you keep in mind the fact that Moses and all the other Prophets of Israel hid the *Living Word* of God in the Scriptures. That is why, to the one who knows what he is looking at, the Scriptures, which are obviously an account of what God has done in time and space, contain a detailed history of "the man." And the *parabolic imagery* in the Scriptures that describe how the man Adam became "The Man" Israel can only be seen by Believers as long as they stand *in Christ*, peering at the reflection of the Man Jesus, Who became "The Man" in the mirror of the *Living Word* of God.

The Spirit Who has hidden Himself in the Scriptures is the same *Living Word* of God (John 1:1)

Who resides in True Believers as *The Teaching*. That *Living Spirit* enables them to see all of the *parabolic images* of the Spirit that are reflected in the Scriptures. Yet that is possible only because "the eyes" of their "heart" have been "enlightened" just as Paul said:

{I pray that} the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, ... which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly {places}, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come.
(Ephesians 1:18–21)

Incidentally, in 2 Corinthians 3:18, Paul again alludes to the *parabolic imagery* of the Prophets that I have just explained. Although he doesn't actually use the term *mirror*—as the following translation suggests—he does use a verb that implies one is looking at "the glory of the Lord" as a reflection in a mirror. He says this:

But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.
(2 Corinthians 3:18)

If you honestly desire to understand what Paul *means* by what he says in that verse, you must first understand the context in which the verse occurs. Paul has just been explaining how he has—by teaching—written the Truth of *The Apostolic Teaching* on the "hearts" of Corinthian Believers. Therefore, they can read and understand the Truth that Moses concealed in the Pentateuch, whereas unregenerate Jews cannot. Speaking *parabolically*, Paul explains how that IS LIKE a veil has been placed over the Scriptures to conceal "the glory of the Lord" that Moses saw while he was on the Mountain of God. However, True Believers are able to look into the Scriptures and see the same Truth that Moses saw on the Mountain. Unlike Moses, they do not have to put a veil over their faces to conceal the reflection of God's "glory." They can look directly into the invisible image of "the glory of the Lord" and thereby take on the very characteristics of God Himself:

But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

(2 Corinthians 3:18)

Paul is not the only Apostle who mentions the *parabolic* mirror in which the one who has insight can see a reflection of the image of the invisible Word of God. James has this to say about it:

For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for {once} he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the {law} of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man shall be blessed in what he does.

(James 1:23–25)

It may not be obvious that Paul and James are both speaking *parabolically* or that they are *talking about* the same thing. The Truth is, they are both explaining how the True Believer is supposed to grow to maturity in Christ. From what Paul says, you should be able to see that he understands that maturation process involves the Believer looking into a *parabolic* mirror of some sort and “beholding” (a reflection of) “the glory of the Lord” (whatever you understand that to be). James describes that same thing as “one who looks intently at the perfect law.”

It most likely did not occur to you that “the glory of the Lord” and “the perfect law” are one and the same thing. And you probably did not notice that James does not say “natural face.” The text *literally* says “the face of his birth.” There is a BIG difference between those two—especially since James is referring to spiritual birth instead of physical birth. But we can delve more deeply into what *The Teaching* has to say about that matter another time.

According to James, the spiritual growth process involves *listening to* and *remembering* “the word” or “the perfect law” that one has seen in the “mirror.” He is *talking about* “the word” of *The Apostolic Teaching* which he and the other Apostles taught. However, what James says is not entirely relevant to our discussion. The gist of Paul’s statement in 1 Corinthians 13:12, in

which he depicts the Word of God as a riddle that is reflected in a mirror, has to do with the fact that in *The Teaching* we do not see spiritual reality as it actually is. We only see a reflection of what it IS LIKE. Nonetheless, both men agree that if anyone listens carefully to someone explain *The Teaching* from the Scriptures and is able to see the *parabolic image* of the *Living Word* of God that is reflected there, that person can, as Paul says, be “transformed into the same image from glory to glory” (2 Cor. 3:18). But as James reminds us, that is only possible if the Believer remembers what he has seen.

In the *parabolic image* in which the Word of God is an invisible image reflected in a set of two opposing mirrors, the True Believer is expected to stand between the two mirrors and peer into the reflected image of God’s Spirit—*The Apostolic Teaching*—until he is able to see the reflection of his own “spirit” in the invisible image of the Spirit of Christ. That is what James is *talking about* when he mentions the person who forgets what he looks LIKE. A person cannot very well be “transformed into the same image from glory to glory” if he has no idea what he is supposed to *be*. (Legalistic “Christians” should take note that I said *be*, not *do*.)

The *parabolic image* in which the *Living Word* of God is both a mirror and an image in that mirror may be somewhat difficult to grasp—and even more difficult to believe. But what it has to say is actually quite simple to understand. All the Believer has to do is “see” and remember the Truth of *The Teaching* that he has heard. However, for our purposes here, that is beside the point. Our concern is to understand what Paul says about “law” and “the Law” in the Book of Romans.

Jesus Said He Didn’t Have to Die

I only mentioned the *parabolic image* of “the riddle in a mirror” because, in Romans 6, Paul is *talking about* a part of *The Apostolic Teaching* that is impossible to understand without at least some insight into the *parabolic image* in which the *Living Word* of God is a series of reflected images in a mirror. Paul is alluding to that *parabolic imagery* when he says this:

For that which He died, He died to the sin once for all {time}. But that which He lives, He lives to the {Living} God.

(Romans 6:10) —my interim translation

To understand what Paul *meant* by that, one must first keep in mind the fact that he is still *talking about* "the sin," that is, Adam's rejection of the Truth. But as I explained earlier, he has already combined the *parabolic image* of "the sin" of Adam that resulted in the Flood with the *parabolic image* of Israel's "baptism" in the Sea of Reeds. His reason for doing that is not difficult to understand since Moses and the other Prophets of Israel used the *parabolic image* of the death of the man Israel in the Sea of Reeds to describe the death of the Man Jesus Christ on the cross. Moses did the same thing with the death of the man Adam in the Flood.

Paul knows that God used all three historical events—the Flood, Israel's passage through the Sea of Reeds, and the death of Jesus Christ—to *parabolically* describe "the death" of the *Living Word* of God. Those three events reflect exactly the same *parabolic image* of yet another historical event, an event that is yet to come. Paul wants it understood that although the death of the *Living Word* of God is *parabolically* depicted numerous times in the Scriptures, Jesus Christ died but once. However, he is careful to say that "He died to the sin." That is not the same as saying "He died."

Let me give you an example to show you how insight into the *meaning* and *significance* of the *parabolic images* of *The Teaching* contribute to an understanding of statements in the Scriptures that seem paradoxical. The Apostle John tells us that Jesus Christ was the Word of God in the flesh (John 1:14). And it should be obvious to any rational person that he was speaking *parabolically* when he said that. However, John and the other Apostles say various things that indicate the Man Who died on the cross between two thieves was the antithesis of the Word of God that Jesus Christ believed. That is because they understood the *parabolic imagery* in *The Teaching* that tells us the Man Who died on the cross was (*parabolically*) not the same Man Who had lived "in the likeness of sinful flesh" up to that time. For example, Peter says this:

For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH; and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting {Himself} to Him who judges righteously; and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to

righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.
(1 Peter 2:21–24)

When Peter says, "He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness," he is speaking *parabolically*. Anyone who wants to believe otherwise has to do a few theological handstands to explain why the statement "He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross" must be taken *literally* since a person does not *literally* "die to sin and live to righteousness." But then again, maybe True Believers do *literally* die when they are born again. That would certainly explain why it is so hard to find anyone today who has actually been born again.

Enough sarcasm. Like Paul, Peter is merely describing what the death of Jesus Christ was *LIKE* and what it *IS LIKE* for a person to be born again. But in mentioning the fact that while hanging on the cross, Jesus Christ *parabolically* became sinful by taking upon Himself the sins of mankind, Peter assumes that his reader understands the *meaning* and *significance* of the various *parabolic images* that the Prophets used to describe the death of Christ. He also takes it for granted that the reader knows that Jesus died only because He had given up (not rejected, as Adam did) the Spirit of Truth that He had come to understand as a man. But maybe Peter presumes too much.

My point is, "the death" of the Word of God on the cross is nothing more than *parabolic imagery* that describes a far greater reality by telling us what that reality *IS LIKE*. Nonetheless, it explains why Jesus—the One Who was God in the flesh—declared (in *parabolic pantomime*) that God had forsaken Him:

And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "ELI, ELI, LAMA SABACHTHANI?" that is, "MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?"
(Matthew 27:46)

Obviously, if Jesus Christ was God in the flesh, God could not have forsaken Him. So there must be more to that incident than meets the eye. And there is. In desperately crying out on the cross, Christ was—in *parabolic pantomime*—indicating that "the death" of the Word of God had occurred within Him. That happened just prior to the death of His physical body. In Galatians, Paul *parabolically* explains that those things happened because Christ had "become a curse for us":

For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT ABIDE BY ALL THINGS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW, TO PERFORM THEM." Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, "THE RIGHTEOUS MAN SHALL LIVE BY FAITH." However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, "HE WHO PRACTICES THEM SHALL LIVE BY THEM." **Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE"—in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.** (Galatians 3:10–14)

Consider this: If we are what we believe, the Person Who died on the cross was (*parabolically*) not the same Person that Jesus Christ had been up to that time. How could He have been? The *Living* Word of God—the One Who God is and Jesus Christ was (John 1:1)—was no longer within Him when He died. As Jesus plainly indicates by crying out in desperation, that *Living* Word had "forsaken" Him. But to understand the meaning and significance of His declaration in that regard, one needs to understand the *parabolic imagery* of *The Teaching* which explains how the Man Jesus Christ became "The Man" Israel. That is, after all, the *parabolic image* that is reflected repeatedly in the "mirror" of the historical record that one finds in the Scriptures. Since I have already mentioned those things in the two-part series "They Got God at a Fire Sale Price (and a Whole Lot More Than They Bargained For)," *The Voice of Elijah*®, April and July 1999, we can move on to what Paul says next:

So also consider yourselves to be dead indeed to the sin but alive to the {Living} God in Christ Jesus. Therefore, do not let the sin reign in your mortal body so that you listen to its desires. And don't offer your members to the sin as tools for what is not right. Instead, offer yourselves to the {Living} God like those {who are} alive from the dead and your members to the {Living} God as tools for what is required. For sin will not be lord over you, for you are not under law but under favor. (Romans 6:11–14) —my interim translation

Did you see what Paul said? He said, "consider yourselves to be dead indeed to the sin but alive to the

{Living} God in Christ Jesus." He says, "consider yourselves to be dead" because he is speaking in terms of the *parabolic imagery* that describes what death and resurrection are LIKE. But notice what True Believers are supposed to consider themselves dead to: "the sin." That is the same "the sin" that Paul said Jesus Christ "died to." He is still speaking in terms of "the sin" of Adam's rejection of the Truth, and he is imploring True Believers not to act as Adam did by rejecting the Truth when he had full knowledge of it. Instead of acting like Adam, they should offer themselves to God "like those {who are} alive from the dead." The key word in that phrase IS LIKE. True Believers have not actually been resurrected. But the experience of knowing the Truth of *The Teaching* IS LIKE being alive from the dead.

Incidentally, "the sin" that Paul is warning against in the sixth chapter of the Book of Romans is the focus of this passage as well:

For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, and {then} have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God, and put Him to open shame. (Hebrews 6:4–6)

In Romans 6, Paul is *talking about* the spiritual reality that has been experienced by those who have heard and believed the Truth. But his emphasis is that the focus of True Believers should always be on what they choose to listen to. That is why he says, "Do not let **the sin** reign in your mortal body so that you **listen** to its desires" (Rom. 6:12). His admonition is, "Don't reject the Truth and believe a lie so that you can do what you want to do." Paul concludes his admonition by saying, "For sin will not be lord over you, for you are not *under law* but *under favor*" (Rom. 6:14).

Paul's point is, the True Believer stands under God's favor, not under His wrath. God's favor is evident in the fact that *The Teaching* requires nothing of the Believer other than honest belief. If anyone has heard the Truth of *The Teaching* and believes it, God will take care of the rest. By contrast, God's law is exactly the opposite. It requires adherence to a long list of "do this, and don't do that." If a person does not fulfill all of

the requirements of God's law, he must suffer the penalty prescribed by that law. That is, he will be condemned to eternally experience God's unmitigated wrath.

One must never lose sight of the fact that Paul is warning the Believer that God expects him to continue to listen to and believe the Truth. If he fails to do that, he will fall into sin and once again come under the jurisdiction of God's law. Therefore, the key to eternal life lies in what one chooses to listen to and believe:

What therefore? Should we sin because we are not under law but under favor? Certainly not! Do you not know that to whomever you offer yourselves to listen to as slaves, you are slaves to whomever you listen to, either {to listen} to sin into death or to listen {to The Teaching} into what is required? But thanks to the {Living} God that {although} you were slaves to the sin, you have listened from {your} heart into what was delivered to you—a form of teaching. And having been freed from the sin, you became slaves to what is required. (Romans 6:15–18) —my interim translation

Now I realize that some folks claim Paul is saying Christians will never sin. But those people do that only because they are ignorant of the Truth of *The Teaching*. The *parabolic imagery* that Paul uses in Romans 6–8 is a much more stinging indictment of their beliefs in that regard than they would ever imagine. His point is, Christians do not *have* to sin. Therefore, they have no excuse when they *do* sin. That is, those of us who know the Truth are *free not to sin* because we are no longer forced to listen to the lusts of the flesh. When those lusts start talking, making their inane demands, trying to convince us that we *must* do this or that, we no longer have to listen. That is so because we now have another Master that God expects us to listen to. That Master is Jesus Christ, the *Living Word of God*, the One Who is the embodiment of all that we have heard in *The Teaching*. That is what Paul is referring to when he says this:

But thanks to the {Living} God that {although} you were slaves to the sin, you have listened from {your} heart into what was delivered to you—a form of teaching. (Romans 6:17) —my interim translation

The Greek verb that I have translated as “listen” in that verse is an interesting word. Most translators translate it as “obey” or “become obedient” and let it go at that. Yet the verbal form has a nuance that must not be overlooked in this context. The Greek verb is ὑπακούω. It is a compound verb that comes from attaching preposition *meaning* “under” (Greek: ὑπό) to verb *meaning* “listen” (Greek: ἀκούω). The result is a verb that *literally* says “listen under.” But that verb *means* “obey” in exactly the same way that the English idiomatic expression “listen to” *means* “obey.”

For example, it would not be unusual for an English-speaking father to say to his son, “Be a good boy and *listen to* your mother.” Certainly, the *implied meaning* of that statement is “obey your mother,” but much more than blind obedience is *implied* by “listen to your mother.” If you can see that, perhaps you can understand why I have translated the Greek verb ὑπακούω as “listen” and “listen to.” Obedience begins by listening to that which one is expected to obey. Any fool who thinks otherwise obviously does not understand the importance of laying down definite rules that children are expected to obey and then making sure they clearly understand the reason for those rules.

If you can see that obedience begins with listening, you should be able to understand what Paul is *talking about* when he says this:

Do you not know that to whomever you offer yourselves to listen to as slaves, you are slaves to whomever you listen to, either {to listen} to sin into death or to listen {to The Teaching} into what is required? (Romans 6:16) —my interim translation

Paul says that because he has in mind a specific *parabolic image* that he now wants to use to describe the new-birth experience. In that *parabolic image*, the True Believer has—like everyone else—been dead, a victim of “the death” and completely enslaved to “the sin.” In his ignorance of the Truth, he has been forced to sin because “the sin” has been his master.

Paul's perspective is, because of Adam's rejection of the Truth, every unregenerate person has an innate tendency to reject the Truth because he wants to hide from God so that he can continue sinning. However, now that the True Believer has heard and believed the Truth of *The Teaching*, he has escaped from “the death” of ignorance and has gained his freedom from “the

sin"—which is the unregenerate person's tendency to reject the Truth. Therefore, he no longer has to sin because "the sin" is no longer his master.

Paul's concern in the Book of Romans is that True Believers understand the importance of continuing to listen to and believe the Truth that they have heard. That is why he warns them that they are the slaves of whichever master they choose to listen to. He tells them they can either listen to their innate desire to sin—that is, they can heed the siren call of their own ignorance—or they can listen to the Truth of *The Teaching* and thereby maintain the freedom that they have not to sin. Then he begins to elaborate on what he has just told them:

I am speaking in terms of humanity because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you offered your members as slaves to uncleanness and lawlessness for lawlessness, so now you have offered your members as slaves to what is required for holiness. For when you were slaves to the sin, you were free from what is required.

(Romans 6:19–20) —my interim translation

If you compare my translation of those two verses to existing translations, you will find that what I have translated as "so now you have offered your members as slaves to what is required for holiness" is normally translated with an imperative verb—"offer your members"—instead of a past tense verb—"you have offered your members." Either translation is possible since there is no difference between those two verbal forms in the Greek language. However, a bit of logic should tell you Paul intended to convey the sense of "you have offered" rather than "offer yourselves." If that were not so, he would not have told them this:

But thanks to the {Living} God that {although} you were slaves to the sin, you have listened from {your} heart into what was delivered to you—a form of teaching. And having been freed from the sin, you became slaves to what is required.

(Romans 6:17–18) —my interim translation

Next, Paul tells the Believers in Rome that they become slaves to whatever they listen to. Immediately thereafter he says, "when you were slaves to sin." That clearly indicates Paul understood his readers had already offered their members to "what is required for holiness." But to see that, one must first understand the

parabolic imagery that Paul had in mind. Only then does it become obvious that Believers had become free from "the sin" by believing the Truth of *The Teaching*, which is what Paul has been *talking about* all along. I will explain that *parabolic imagery* a bit later in this article.

Dead Folks Don't Talk ... or Listen

Now that I have partially pulled back the veil that obscures the *meaning* and *significance* of what Paul says in Romans 6, you need to keep in mind the *parabolic image* that he mentioned when he began his discussion of how the True Believer gained his freedom from "the sin." He says that came about because he has been united with Christ in "the death":

Therefore, what will we say? Should we remain in the sin so that the favor would increase? Certainly not! We who have died to the sin? How can we still live in it? Or do you not know that as many as have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore, we have been buried with Him because of the baptism into the death so that just as Christ was raised from the dead because of the glory of the Father, so also we could walk in newness of life.

(Romans 6:1–4) —my interim translation

After he says that, Paul then speaks in terms of the *parabolic image* in which the Believer is a member of Jesus Christ, the resurrected King, the One Whom the Prophets depict as a tree that God has "planted" on the Mountain of God:

For if we have been planted together with {Him} in the likeness of His death, we shall certainly be in the resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with {Him}, in order that the body of the sin would be abolished so that we would no longer be enslaved to the sin. For the one who has died has been acquitted from the sin.

(Romans 6:5–7) —my interim translation

Paul goes on to explain the importance of continuing to listen to *The Teaching*. But after he has explained all that, he returns briefly to the *parabolic image* in which the resurrected Body of Jesus Christ is a "tree" with many "branches" bearing "fruit." He makes his transition back to that *parabolic image* with a question:

Therefore, *what fruit did you have then from the things you are now ashamed of? For the end of those things is death. But now, having been freed from the sin and having become slaves to the {Living} God, you have your fruit in holiness. And the end is eternal life. For the wages of the sin is death. But the gift of the {Living} God is eternal life—in Christ Jesus our Lord.* (Romans 6:21–23) —my interim translation

It is a bit difficult to understand that passage if you insist on stubbornly clinging to your modern mind-set rather than taking on the mind-set of Believers in the Early Church. But once you realize that every *you* in that text is *plural*, you should be well on your way to seeing that Paul is addressing Believers *collectively* as the Body of Jesus Christ. He is not addressing them *individually* as members of that Body.

In that passage, Paul reintroduces the *parabolic image* in which the Prophets depicted the resurrected Son of God as a tree. The *parabolic image* Paul has in mind is one in which the *resurrected* Body of Jesus Christ is a tree on which every member is a branch that bears fruit. He knows that the Prophets used that *image* to explain what the death and Resurrection of the Body of Jesus Christ IS LIKE when it is viewed from one perspective. However, Paul has only a passing interest in that *parabolic image* because he knows it is concerned mainly with the subject of holiness. His primary focus is the freedom from the constraints of “law” that one gains by being *parabolically* resurrected in Christ. Therefore, he brings in yet another *parabolic image* that the Prophets used to describe the death and Resurrection of the Body of Jesus Christ:

Or do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to those who know law—that the Law is master of the man as long as he lives? For the married female is bound by law to the living male. But if the male dies, she is released from the Law of the male. So therefore, while the male is living, she will be called an adulteress if she belongs to another male. But if the male should die, she is free from the Law, so that she is not an adulteress although she belongs to another male. (Romans 7:1–3) —my interim translation

Commentators have found Paul’s explanation of the freedom that True Believers have in Christ to be cryptic, to say the least. But that is only because they

have no idea what he is *talking about*. All that Paul has been doing is expounding on the relationship that exists between the mirror images that he sees in *The Teaching*. He has been explaining how one set of historical events—the death and Resurrection of the physical body of Jesus Christ—is a mirror image of the death and Resurrection of all True Believers at the End of the Age. The first of those two events occurred 2000 years ago; the second will occur in the not-too-distant future. But both events are presented as mirror images of one and the same event in the *parabolic imagery* of *The Teaching*.

To understand Romans 7:1–3, the first thing you need to know is that Paul is explaining the *meaning* and *significance* of “the death” of the Man Jesus Christ. However, you must keep in mind that he is speaking in terms of the *parabolic imagery* of *The Teaching*, as he has been all along, telling his readers what that event was LIKE. If you are not aware of his mind-set, the *meaning* and *significance* of what he says eludes you. But just a little bit of insight into what he is *talking about* will give you a completely different perspective.

The “male” in the *parabolic image* he has in mind is *Corporate Israel*—which is the physical body, or “flesh,” of Jesus Christ. He is the One Who *parabolically* became the Man *Corporate Israel* after all other members were “cut off from” *Corporate Israel*. (See *Not All Israel Is Israel*.) Paul’s focus is on the fact that Jesus Christ is also “*The Man*” Israel in Whom all True Believers will be resurrected at the End of the Age. However, he wants to emphasize that will happen only because all Believers were *parabolically* united with the Man Jesus Christ shortly before He died. But I will explain the *significance* of that statement a bit later.

The “female” in the *parabolic image* that Paul has in mind is also Israel. However, in this case, “the female” is not *Corporate Israel*, she is all those who *collectively* make up the resurrected Body of Jesus Christ—what some folks call “the Bride of Christ.” While those folks *collectively* make up “*The Man*” *Corporate Israel*, it is important to keep in mind the fact that in the *parabolic imagery* of *The Teaching*, they are not *Corporate Israel*. They are only the *collective* members of Jesus Christ—the One Who is *Corporate Israel*.

Paul is explaining that when Jesus Christ “died to the sin,” the *collective* members of the Man *Corporate Israel*, that is, all those who had been *parabolically* united with Jesus Christ in His physical body shortly before He died, became free to be united with another “male.” The

second "male" with whom "the female" Israel was *parabolically* united is "The Man"—that is, the resurrected Body of Jesus Christ.

Another *parabolic image* that Paul has in mind is a mirror image of the one in which "the female" Israel gains her freedom when "the male" Israel dies. However, that *parabolic imagery* describes the death of the man Adam. That is, it describes the death of all mankind, those who are the "flesh" of the first Adam—of whom we are all physical members by virtue of our birth. Since I have already danced all the way around that *parabolic imagery* without saying much at all in the two-part series "They Got God at a Fire Sale Price (and a Whole Lot More Than They Bargained For)," *The Voice of Elijah*®, April and July 1999, I have no intention of explaining anything more about it at this time.

Perhaps I should also tell you that in yet another mirror image of the *parabolic imagery* that Paul is explaining, the "male" is the physical body—the flesh—of the Believer and the "female" is his eternal soul. The Christian Gnostics loved that *parabolic image*. However, that *parabolic imagery* comes into view only under the terms of the New Covenant, which was ratified with the *individual* members of *Corporate* Israel rather than with *Corporate* Israel. The purpose of the New Covenant was that Believers, too, might become *heirs of the promise*. (See *Not All Israel Is Israel*.) But that is not totally relevant to what Paul is explaining here.

Still Reading the Old Covenant?

To understand what Paul is *talking about*, it is essential that you not lose sight of his mind-set. In the *parabolic imagery* of *The Teaching*, the True Believer is an *individual* member of *Corporate* Israel—the Body of Jesus Christ—but he is never viewed as being separate from that corporate Body. Therefore, since the Believer has *parabolically* died *in Christ* and has been resurrected *in Christ*, he can never be independent of Christ unless he is "cut off from" Christ. While that statement is not *literally* true, it certainly is *parabolically* true. And it is absolutely essential to an accurate understanding of how Paul uses the term translated "law" in his epistles.

Paul's intent in the Book of Romans is to explain how the *parabolic imagery* that the Prophets used to describe the death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ applies to *individual* Believers *in Christ*. In so doing, he always uses the *plural* form of the verb and the *plural*

form of the second person personal pronoun (*you*). He does that to emphasize that the *parabolic imagery* he is explaining applies to the Body of Believers *collectively*, not to the individual Believer alone. If you can't understand that concept, you need to carefully consider the fact that when you finally stand before God, you will have nothing at all to commend you outside of your membership in the *collective* Body of Believers—those who make up *Corporate* Israel, which is the Body of Jesus Christ. That is, it is only those who have become members of Israel and have not been "cut off from" Israel who will be exonerated on that Great Day.

The most important thing to understand about what Paul says in Romans 7:1–3 is not the *parabolic imagery* he uses, or even his use of the second person plural form of the verb and pronoun. It is what he *means* when he says "the Law." I have already told you that Paul uses the term translated "law" in three different ways. I explained that when he says "law"—that is, when he uses the Greek noun *nomos* without the definite article—he is normally referring to the *statutes, judgments, and commandments* that Moses established for the sons of Israel in the wilderness. However, since the Jews who translated the Septuagint (ca. 250 B.C.) used the Greek term *nomos* ("law") to translate the Hebrew term *torah* ("teaching"), Paul uses that same Greek term to refer to *The Teaching of Moses*. But when he does, he always uses it with the definite article; that is, he says "the Law."

I also told you that on occasion, Paul uses the designation "the Law" as the Jews of his day did, to refer to the Pentateuch. That is what he is doing in Romans 7:1–3. However, Paul's perspective is not one in which "the Law," that is, the Pentateuch, is a legalistic list of do's and don'ts. Not at all. He is viewing the Pentateuch as a written record of the covenant that the sons of Israel made with God at Mt. Sinai. You can find that same perspective in 2 Corinthians 3:14–16, where Paul parallels "the reading of the old covenant" with "whenever Moses is read":

But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ. But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart; but whenever a man turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. (2 Corinthians 3:14–16)

The following verse makes it clear that Paul is talking about the written text of the Pentateuch when he says “the Law”:

*But now, we have been released from the Law, having died in that {the flesh} to which we were held fast, so that we might serve {as slaves} in newness of spirit and not in oldness of what is written.
(Romans 7:6) —my interim translation*

On the basis of what he says in that verse, we can take it as a given that “the Law” Paul has in mind is what we find written in the five Books of Moses. However, that only serves to confuse the issue even more. Paul also uses the term translated “law” in verse 2 without the article attached. In that case, he must be referring to the *statutes, judgments, and commandments* of the Mosaic Covenant. But why would he tell us that Christian Believers were “bound” to Jesus Christ by those *statutes, judgments, and commandments* if Christians *inherit the promise* and will *inherit what was promised* under the terms of the New Covenant? Furthermore, Paul says “the married female” must be “released from the Law” before she can be “free from the Law.” What could he possibly mean by that? Take another look at what he says:

*Or do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to those who know law—that the Law is master of the man as long as he lives? For the married female is bound by law to the living male. But if the male dies, she is released from the Law of the male. So therefore, while the male is living, she will be called an adulteress if she belongs to another male. But if the male should die, she is free from the Law, so that she is not an adulteress although she belongs to another male.
(Romans 7:1–3) —my interim translation*

If you can’t see that Paul is speaking in terms of the *parabolic imagery* of *The Teaching*, I pity you. He is not only mocking you, he is mocking everyone like you—all those who don’t know that he has been talking about the *parabolic imagery* related to God’s annihilation of the Man Jesus and His creation of “The Man” in the image and likeness of God ever since he mentioned that topic in Chapter 1. What Paul has in mind in the passage above is made clear by the fact that he uses one Greek word (*anthropos*) to say “the man” in

verse 1 and then uses an entirely different Greek word (*aner*) to refer to “the male” in the next two verses.

Those who do not have insight into what Moses and the other Prophets of Israel have said about “the man,” that is, what they have said about “the male” Israel as opposed to “the female” Israel, have no idea why Paul would first mention “the man” and then go on to explain about “the male” and “the female.” That explains why most translators pay no attention at all to what Paul has done. They have no clue as to what he is talking about.

Paul is merely explaining the *meaning and significance* of the *parabolic imagery* that Moses and the other Prophets of Israel used to describe what happened to the individual members of Israel when Jesus Christ died on the cross. I have already told you most of what you need to know to be able to see what Paul has in mind. First, I have stated repeatedly that *The Law of Moses*, that is, the Pentateuch, is *The Teaching of Moses* only because Moses hid *The Teaching* within that written text. Second, I have told you that Jesus Christ, the *Living Word of God*, is *The Teaching*. Finally, I have explained that Jesus Christ is *Corporate Israel*, the Firstborn Son of God.

Paul had all three of those *parabolic images* in mind when he wrote Romans 7:1–3. But it is not easy to see that unless you know what he is talking about. The following four statements and my paraphrase of what Paul says should make his mind-set a bit clearer:

Text: The Law is master of the man as long as he lives.

Paraphrase: The written text of the Pentateuch dictates the actions of Corporate Israel as long as He is alive.

Text: The married female is bound by law to the living male.

Paraphrase: The individual members of Israel are bound to Corporate Israel by the statutes, judgments, and commandments of the Mosaic Covenant—as long as Corporate Israel is alive.

Text: If the male dies, she is released from the Law of the male.

Paraphrase: If Corporate Israel dies, the individual members of Corporate Israel are released from the written text of the Pentateuch, which does nothing more than describe what Corporate Israel must do to inherit what was promised.

Text: *If the male should die, she is free from the Law.*

Paraphrase: *If Corporate Israel dies, the individual members of Corporate Israel are free from the written text of the Pentateuch.*

The *parabolic imagery* that Paul had in mind when he explained how True Believers are "bound by law," "released from the Law," and "free from the Law" is much more complex than what I could ever explain in a series of articles, much less in one short article. To understand it fully, one needs to know what Moses and the other Prophets of Israel said when they spoke in terms of the *parabolic images* of "the male" Israel and "the female" Israel. If you have read *Not All Israel Is Israel*, however, you should already know how Jesus Christ *parabolically* became *Corporate Israel*, the Firstborn Son of God, when all other members of Israel were "cut off from" Israel. That is nothing more than a part of what Moses and the other Prophets of Israel explained in terms of the *parabolic image* in which Israel is "the male."

If you understood and believed what I wrote in *Not All Israel Is Israel*, you should also know that Jesus Christ was the sole remaining member of Israel when He was baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan River. At that time, He accepted the terms of the New Covenant as an *individual* member of Israel, not as *Corporate Israel*. However, since He was also at that time—in His Own Person—*Corporate Israel*, He remained obligated to abide by all the terms of the Mosaic Covenant that *Corporate Israel* had accepted at Mt. Sinai. That is, to a certain extent, what Paul *meant* when he said "the Law is master of the man as long as he lives." But there is much more to what Paul has in mind than just a legal requirement that Christ "do this, and don't do that" to escape the wrath of God. God could, at any time, require that Jesus Christ—that is, *Corporate Israel*—die under the curse of "the Law." That was a foregone conclusion in light of the sins of previous generations of *Corporate Israel*. However, God's plan was not that Jesus Christ die under the curse of the Law just for the sins of past generations; He would die for the sins of future generations as well. Paul *talks about* those things in this passage:

For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT ABIDE BY ALL THINGS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE

LAW, TO PERFORM THEM." Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, "THE RIGHTEOUS MAN SHALL LIVE BY FAITH." However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, "HE WHO PRACTICES THEM SHALL LIVE BY THEM." **Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE"—in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.**
(Galatians 3:10–14)

"Bound"? Or "Free"?

Paul obviously understood a whole lot more about "the Law" and "law" than what he stated in any of his epistles. And the only way anyone can understand what he understood is if they can "see" the same *parabolic imagery* that he "saw" with the "eyes" of his "heart." So let's consider each of the four statements above, one by one, and perhaps his mind-set will come into focus.

Text: *The Law is master of the man as long as he lives.*

Paraphrase: *The written text of the Pentateuch dictates the actions of Corporate Israel as long as He is alive.*

According to the *parabolic image* in which Jesus Christ became *Corporate Israel*, the written text of the Pentateuch sets forth what was required of Him only as long as He remained alive in the flesh. When Christ died under "the curse of the Law" (Gal. 3:13) as Moses—speaking *parabolically*—said He would, everything changed. "The Law" no longer applied to Him because *Corporate Israel* had ceased to exist as a physical entity that could be governed by any legal dictate. However, Christ died under "the curse of the Law" only because He had—as *Corporate Israel*—become "one" with sinners and was therefore carrying their sins. As an *individual* member of Israel, He remained innocent of any personal sin. Therefore, although Christ died as *Corporate Israel* under the curse of the Mosaic Covenant because others *in Israel* had sinned, God was obligated—under the terms of the New Covenant—to resurrect Him as an individual member of Israel so that He could *inherit what was promised*.

Paul's point in Romans 7:2 is, when Christ had "fulfilled" what was written in "the Law" (Matt. 5:17) by

dying under the curse of "the Law" as Moses had said. He would, "the Law" was no longer His "master." That is, the things that Moses wrote in the Pentateuch no longer dictated what "the male" Israel had to do to accomplish what God desired. That text only describes what Corporate Israel, *the Heir of the promise*, had to do to *inherit what was promised*. And Jesus Christ *inherited what was promised* when He was resurrected.

Pay attention now: Jesus Christ did not *inherit what was promised* under the terms of the Mosaic Covenant. He *inherited* under the terms of the New Covenant, as does every other Believer in Christ. However, that does not *mean* the Pentateuch no longer plays a role in the lives of the individual members of the Body of Jesus Christ—the "female" Israel that Paul mentions. Those individuals have been *collectively* "bound by law" to Jesus Christ as members of Corporate Israel. So let's consider what Paul says about them.

Text: The married female is bound by law to the living male.

Paraphrase: The individual members of Israel are bound to Corporate Israel by the statutes, judgments, and commandments of the Mosaic Covenant—as long as Corporate Israel is alive.

In saying "law" (without the definite article) rather than "the Law" (with the definite article), Paul wants his reader to understand that he is referring to the *statutes, judgments, and commandments* found in the Pentateuch rather than to the Pentateuch itself. He is alluding to the fact that the legal stipulations included in the Mosaic Covenant set forth a "law" which the individual members of Corporate Israel had to adhere to under the terms of the Mosaic Covenant. As I have explained in *Not All Israel Is Israel*, however, if one member of Israel transgressed that "law," "all Israel" became guilty. That is partly what Paul has in mind when he mentions the adultery of "the female." But he is also *making a crucial distinction between* what the Mosaic Covenant required of Corporate Israel—"the male"—and what it required of the individual members of Israel—"the female."

The hurdle which every Believer must overcome before he can become completely free from "law" is the commonplace misconception that the text of the Pentateuch sets forth a "law" that the sons of Israel were supposed to obey in order to be saved. The key

phrase in that sentence is "in order to be saved." Were the individual members of Israel expected to obey the *statutes, judgments, and commandments* found in *The Law of Moses*? Of course, they were! Only an idiot would claim otherwise. But that question does not address the real issue. The question is, Could an individual member of Israel ever *attain salvation* by his obedience to those legal stipulations? If you think so, you obviously do not agree with Paul. Listen to what he says about the resurrection of the dead:

"But this I admit to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect I do serve the God of our fathers, believing everything that is in accordance with the Law, and that is written in the Prophets; having a hope in God, which these men cherish themselves, that there shall certainly be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked."
(Acts 24:14–15)

Did you see that? Paul said that only two types of people are going to be resurrected: the righteous and the wicked. Logic alone should tell you that if you aren't one of the righteous, you must be one of the wicked. My point is, Paul knew that only the righteous will be saved from destruction. But he also tells us in another place that a person cannot become righteous—that is, he cannot be saved from destruction—on the basis of some "law":

Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law.
(Galatians 3:21)

We are going to look at that verse more closely at some point later on in this series. I only mention it here to shine a bit of light on the stupidity of those who think salvation was once based on something other than faith (belief) in the Truth. The *individual* members of Israel, the Firstborn Son of God, have never been (and will never be) saved by *doing*. They have always been saved by *being* a member of Corporate Israel. The hard, cold reality is, one cannot *do* righteous. One can only *be* righteous. And since all of us are what we believe, we can never *be* anything other than what we are—either righteous or wicked—by virtue of our faith. Since I have explained all these things in *The Way, The*

Truth, The Life, I assume you know I am *talking about* faith (that is, belief) in the biblical sense of *what you believe* rather than faith (that is, belief) in the goofy modern-day nonsense of *that you believe*. As I have said repeatedly, everybody believes something about God. The only thing that separates the righteous from the wicked is *what* they believe about God.

My point in this aside is, under the terms of the Mosaic Covenant, the salvation of the individual members of Israel depended on the salvation of *Corporate* Israel. If a Believer before the time of Christ had not been "cut off from" Israel when he died, he could count on being resurrected *in Israel* when Israel—that is, Jesus Christ—finally *inherited what was promised*. All the individual member of Israel has ever had to do is maintain his position as a member of *Corporate* Israel by believing the Truth. That was true for Believers before the time of Christ; it is still true for Believers today.

In *The Mystery of Scripture, Volume 1*, I explained that the *statutes, judgments, and commandments* of the Mosaic Covenant made up the corporate charter by which the individual sons of Israel became "one" in *Corporate* Israel. Therefore, one could say—as Paul does—that the individual members of Israel were "bound" to *Corporate* Israel by that "law." That is the *parabolic imagery* Paul had in mind when he said, "The married female is bound by law to the living male." However, if *Corporate* Israel were ever to come to an end, the "law" of the *statutes, judgments, and commandments* could no longer "bind" the individual members of Israel to *Corporate* Israel because *Corporate* Israel would no longer exist. Paul knew that unusual circumstance happened when Jesus Christ died. That is why he said this:

Text: If the male dies, she is released from the Law of the male.

Paraphrase: If Corporate Israel dies, the individual members of Corporate Israel are released from the written text of the Pentateuch, which does nothing more than describe what Corporate Israel must do to inherit what was promised.

Paul understands that *Corporate* Israel, which had been formed under the terms of the Mosaic Covenant, came to an end when Jesus Christ died. His contention is, the death of Christ freed the individual members of Israel—the members of the Body of Jesus Christ—from

any further obligation to "the Law." He says that because the Pentateuch only describes what the *Heir of the promise* had to do to *inherit what was promised*. After Jesus Christ accepted the terms of the New Covenant, He did what "the Law" required. That is demonstrated by His Resurrection from the dead.

When Jesus Christ—that is, *Corporate* Israel—was resurrected, He and all those who were members of Israel when He died *inherited what was promised*. (That is a *parabolic* description of a spiritual reality.) Therefore, "the Law" can no longer dictate what He or any of the members of His Body must do to *inherit what was promised* because *the promise* has already been *fulfilled*. If you can't see that, you have no basis on which to understand what Paul says in Romans 7:4 ff. That is because after he has explained how the death of Christ freed Believers from "the Law," he is going to turn his attention to *parabolic imagery* that is associated with the freedom Believers have under the terms of the New Covenant. That is why he emphasizes the point by stating it again:

Text: If the male should die, she is free from the Law.

Paraphrase: If Corporate Israel dies, the individual members of Corporate Israel are free from the written text of the Pentateuch.

The New Is Not the Same as the Old

The covenant whereby Believers *parabolically* become "one" with Jesus Christ is not the Old Covenant, it is the New. But there is a whole lot more to the New Covenant than readily meets the eye. So let me mention just a few things that you need to know about that *parabolic image*. All that anyone today needs to do to become a member of *Corporate* Israel—the Body of Jesus Christ—is believe the Truth of that part of *The Teaching* which is commonly called the Gospel. That is what Jesus is *talking about* in this passage:

"I have given them Thy word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I do not ask Thee to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil {one.} They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth. As Thou didst send Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also

may be sanctified in truth. I do not ask in behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, {art} in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me. And the glory which Thou hast given Me I have given to them; that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, that the world may know that Thou didst send Me, and didst love them, even as Thou didst love Me. Father, I desire that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am, in order that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me; for Thou didst love Me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, although the world has not known Thee, yet I have known Thee; and these have known that Thou didst send Me; and I have made Thy name known to them, and will make it known; that the love wherewith Thou didst love Me may be in them, and I in them."
(John 17:14–26)

To understand that passage, it helps to know that "The Name" of God is Jesus Christ, the Living Word of God. But even lacking that, it should be obvious that Jesus is speaking *parabolically* about those who will become "one" in Him, the One Who became Corporate Israel. And He indicates that union includes all who would believe the Truth of *The Teaching* down through the centuries when He says this.

"I do not ask in behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, {art} in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us."
(John 17:20–21a)

In saying that, Jesus is indicating that anyone can become a member of His *parabolic* Body by believing the same Gospel that the Apostles preached. However, there is also *parabolic imagery* in *The Teaching* that describes the mechanism whereby God atones for the sins of those Believers who are still *in Christ* when they die. Paul is alluding to that *parabolic imagery* when he says "the married female is bound by law to the living male."

Through their mystical union with the One Who became Corporate Israel in the Person of just one Man, even Gentile Believers *parabolically* come under the

"law" of the Old Covenant. That is because that covenant not only governed Corporate Israel's relationship to God, it also governed the relationship of the *individual* members of Israel to Corporate Israel. Therefore, although Believers become "one" with Christ by accepting the terms of the New Covenant, the *statutes, judgments, and commandments* of the Mosaic Covenant are what *collectively* "binds" them to Corporate Israel. And that "law" demands that Corporate Israel must die for the sins of the *individual* members of Israel.

As Paul has explained, the death of Corporate Israel—that is, Jesus Christ—has freed Believers from the terms of the Old Covenant so that they can be "bound" to the *resurrected* Body of Jesus Christ under the terms of the New Covenant. To understand what Paul has in mind, however, one needs insight into the *parabolic imagery* that God used to explain how Jesus Christ could die for the sins of others.

God's purpose in granting the New Covenant is to allow each and every member of Israel to become an *heir of the promise* so that he, too, might have opportunity to *inherit what was promised*. The terms of the New Covenant are exactly the same as the terms of the Old Covenant, except for the fact that the Prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel make it abundantly clear that God would ratify the New Covenant only with *individual* members of Israel, not with Corporate Israel. One should not overlook the *significance* of that fact: Jesus Christ did not accept the terms of the New Covenant as Corporate Israel. He accepted them as the sole remaining member of Corporate Israel. Therefore, He was an *Heir of the promise* under the terms of both the Old Covenant and the New Covenant.

In a neat bit of sleight of hand on God's part, Jesus Christ died under "the curse of the Law" as Corporate Israel, thereby permanently releasing the members of His Body from all liability for their transgression of "law." *Parabolically* speaking, the members of Corporate Israel died when Christ died. Since the members of His Body bore no guilt for sin, they were free to be joined with the One Who was resurrected as the Firstborn Son of God under the New Covenant. They, too, could *inherit what was promised* as an *heir of the promise*. In case you don't know where Paul is headed with his argument in regard to the *parabolic imagery* related to "law" and "the Law," let me show you:

For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with {Him} in order that we may also be glorified with {Him.}
(Romans 8:14–17)

In that passage, Paul is describing the reality of the new birth in terms of the *parabolic imagery* that I have been explaining. He knows that when Jesus Christ was baptized by John in the Jordan River (Matt. 3:13–17; Mark 1:9–11; Luke 3:21–22), He accepted the terms of the New Covenant—as the sole remaining member of *Corporate Israel*. However, Paul also understands that event was merely a *parabolic pantomime*—a mirror image—whereby Christ depicted the death and resurrection of the members of His Body at the End.

Those who have been born again down through the centuries are nothing more than proselytes to *Corporate Israel*, the One Who is the Firstborn Son of God. That is why the Judaizers in the Early Church insisted that Gentile Christians had to be circumcised and adhere to other Jewish rituals. They knew that Gentile Believers who had joined themselves to Christ had become members of Israel. Furthermore, they understood that *Corporate Israel* was the same *Corporate Israel* that had been incorporated under the terms of the Old Covenant. Since Israel died nearly 2000 years ago, you can see that a lot of us Gentiles have had to go back and start over—*parabolically* speaking.

Just as Christ accepted the terms of the New Covenant as an individual member of Israel when He was baptized, a True Believer accepts the terms of the New Covenant and becomes an *heir of the promise* when he believes the Gospel, is born again, and *parabolically* crosses the river of death. The ritual of baptism is a *parabolic pantomime* that signifies the Believer has died in Christ and has been resurrected in Him.

The Twelve Apostles were the first to join themselves to Israel by accepting the terms of the New Covenant. They did that when they ate the bread and drank the wine that Jesus offered them at the Passover (Matt. 26:29; Mark 14:22–25; Luke 22:14–23). They may not have understood everything that Christ meant by

what He said or what He intended by what He did, but that was not important. The only thing that mattered was the *significance* of that ritual in the mind of Christ and in the eyes of God.

By means of the New Covenant meal that Jesus Christ ate with His disciples, He became “one” with a small group of sinful men who represented the whole of humanity. He thereby took their sins upon Himself and consented to become subject to “the death” to which they were subject. However, according to the terms of the New Covenant, anyone who believed “the word” of the disciples of Jesus Christ could also become “one” with Christ. Therefore, True Believers down through the centuries who have accepted the terms of the New Covenant became “one” with Christ in the same way (and at the same time) as His disciples did. *Parabolically*, all of those True Believers died when Jesus Christ died, and they were resurrected when He was resurrected. That is what Paul is *talking about* when he says this:

Therefore, my brothers, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of the Christ so that you could belong to another—to the One Who was raised from the dead—so that we could bear fruit for the {Living} God. For when we were in the flesh, the desires of the sins—those which were because of the Law—were working in our members to bear fruit for the death. But now we have been released from the Law, having died in that {the flesh} to which we were held fast, so that we might serve {as slaves} in newness of spirit and not in oldness of what is written.
(Romans 7:4–6) —my interim translation

As I explained in *The Mystery of Scripture, Volume 1, The Teaching of Moses* lies hidden behind the *symbolic rituals* that are described in the text of the Pentateuch. Paul has been speaking in terms of that *parabolic imagery* to describe what the new birth IS LIKE. However, if you do not fully understand what a “spirit” is, there is no way—in the hell in which we now live—that you can ever understand what Paul is *talking about*, much less understand what he has said. From what he has written, you should at least be able to understand that “the Law” he has in mind is the “oldness of what is written.” Yet only those who have experienced the new birth can understand how the “newness of spirit” that he mentions is *The Teaching* hidden in that dusty Old Covenant. ■



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

Windy: In the last issue of this newsletter, I explained a bit about what the Prophets and Apostles are talking about when they use the parabolic image of “wind.” (See “The Forecast,” *The Voice of Elijah*®, October 1999.) However, there is a much more sinister side to the activity of the “wind” than what I touched on at that time. So I would like to take this occasion to explain a few things that you need to know about the direction the “wind” is “blowing” today. First, let me review what I told you in the last issue. I began by pointing out what Jesus says:

“The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”
(John 3:8)

I told you the Greek word *pneuma* has been translated both “wind” and “Spirit” in that verse. I also showed you what Paul, James, Jude, and Isaiah say about the “winds” that drive the “waves” of the “Sea.” And I pointed out that Jesus says His words are *pneuma*:

“It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.”
(John 6:63)

After that, I showed you what Paul says about the “wind,” or “spirit,” that controls those who don’t know the Truth:

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.
(Ephesians 2:1–2)

Finally, I reminded you that God’s purpose in calling men to fill the offices of the Church was to ensure that True Believers would be able to recognize the messengers of that “wind” for what they are and stand against the lies that they disseminate:

And He gave some {as} apostles, and some {as} prophets, and some {as} evangelists, and some {as} pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ. As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming.
(Ephesians 4:11–14)

Now I assume that if you can “see” the spiritual reality that is depicted by the parabolic image of “wind,” you can also understand what Paul is talking about when he describes the circumstances that prevail in the Church today:

I solemnly charge {you} in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season {and} out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but {wanting} to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths.
(2 Timothy 4:1–4)

If you have read all of the things that I have written to this point, you may well be able to name several articles in which I have shown a popular and widely accepted myth for what it is: nothing more than hot air. Since only a few of those articles come readily to my

mind, I will mention those here and let the matter go at that.

In the two articles “Did You *Mean* That Literally?” and “The Origen of Folly” (*The Voice of Elijah*®, January 1993), I showed you that the literal theory of interpretation was not a part of Early Church tradition. In fact, Christians in the Early Church had no interest at all in any method of interpreting the Scriptures. Why would they? The Truth that the Prophets hid in the Hebrew Scriptures had been *handed down* to them from the Apostles, to whom Christ Himself had revealed it. It was only after the Church lost *The Apostolic Teaching* that Clement of Alexandria and his dunce of a student Origen suggested that maybe Church leaders should try to recover the Truth by using an allegorical method of interpretation. But as far as the literal method of interpretation is concerned, it didn’t show up in the Church until the early nineteenth century.

In a third article, “Satan’s Fools Are Satan’s Tools” (*The Voice of Elijah*®, April 1994), I explained how the goofy “leap of faith” nonsense first came to be a part of the Church’s lexicon and then spread into the modern mind-set. If you haven’t read that article lately, you should go back and review it lest you inadvertently slip back into that ignorant mind-set. As often as that gibberish is touted from the pulpit and in the popular media, one would tend to think it is God’s honest Truth. Yet the Truth is, it originated in the mind of a demented little man who was suffering from some form of mental illness. Nonetheless, the notion that the verb *believe* can be used as an intransitive verb has even found its way into the dictionary. If you doubt that, look it up. Then ask yourself how any rational person could believe that a person can have faith by believing ... *nothing*? Such is the power that the “prince of the power of the air” has over the minds of men.

In yet a fourth article, “Wanna Hear the Whopper the Liar Came Up With? (I Doubt You’ll Believe It!)” (*The Voice of Elijah*®, October 1996), I shed a bit of light on the fantastic fable that Satan is planning to use to herd the vast majority of “Christians” through the gates of Hell here at the End. That article, more than any other, should have sent a few chills down your spine. My purpose in writing it was to show you how Satan works in history. To do that, I disclosed how he intentionally set out 170 years ago to substitute a lie for the fundamental belief on which the Church had been

founded for over 1800 years. Those who have accepted the Truth I presented in that article are well aware that Satan is not one with whom anyone should trifle. He is aptly described (*parabolically*) as a snake in the grass.

If you want to believe that the things I have written are not true or that Satan has restricted himself to just those few lies, go ahead. Be a fool if it makes you happy. But I can assure you that if you do, those who know the Truth will arise to witness against you at the End. Contrary to what you want to believe, Satan is still alive and well, living in the minds of men. He disseminates his lies through all those who are willing to say anything that comes to mind. So when that “wind” blows through—as I know he will—telling you that I am just another off-the-wall religious fanatic, believe it. Don’t waste your time reading anything else I have written. It is just more of the same.

For the benefit of those of you who have felt the effects of that “wind” yet could never quite determine what it was that disturbed you, let me mention a few things that you need to consider. The first thing you can count on is men acting in accordance with their ignorance. We were all born ignorant, and all who fail to heed the Truth—for whatever reason—will die ignorant. In the meantime, their ignorance will determine what they do and say. Therefore, Satan being who he is, you really shouldn’t expect to find much Truth in the words of those men and women who zealously seek to shape what others believe. I have in mind these three specific groups: educators, politicians, and the media.

Educators today—both conservative and liberal—proffer education as the be-all-to-end-all remedy for ignorance. However, most never stop to consider that education can only bring an end to ignorance if the content of the curriculum is true. Otherwise, the educational system—whether it be secular or religious, liberal or conservative—produces nothing more than an educated ignoramus. In spite of that, most institutions of higher learning today continue to teach theory, with a little bit of fact thrown in for good measure. And for the most part, the facts being taught are not intended to explain the nature of the reality in which we live. The sad Truth is, educational institutions are teaching ignorant people *what* has happened, not *why* it has happened. That is, most educators teach an analysis of historical events as though a knowledge of history will put an end to ignorance. And in many cases, they don’t even do a very good job of that.

As for the second group I mentioned, one really shouldn't expect politicians to have any interest in allaying the ignorance of the population at large. Why would they? They are counting on the ignorance of their constituency to get them elected. Don't be a fool. It doesn't matter whether a politician is Republican, Democrat, Reformed, or Libertarian. Each and every one will say whatever it takes to get elected, and once elected, will say whatever is necessary to get reelected. If you think I am just being the perennial pessimist, you must not pay much attention to politics. Besides, what's wrong with being a pessimist? Pessimists are never disappointed when what they expect doesn't happen; they are only pleasantly surprised.

I'm just being sarcastic (again). To tell the Truth, I'm probably the most optimistic person in the world. It's just that my optimism extends far beyond the muck and mire of this hellhole we live in. I have complete faith in *the promise* of God. Too bad for you if you don't know what *the promise* is. You have no hope at all if you are ignorant of the fact that you have to believe *the promise* before you can *inherit what was promised*:

In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath, in order that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have strong encouragement, we who have fled for refuge in laying hold of the hope set before us. This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a {hope} both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil, where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

(Hebrews 6:17–20)

The last group to traffic in the ignorance of others is the media. One would like to think that one could count on hearing the Truth from those whose only ostensible reason for being is to provide a factual account of current events. But unfortunately, that is not so. For the most part, the media's gathering of hard facts has given way to the relying on hearsay, and the reporting of what actually happened has been replaced by the spouting of opinion. If you don't believe that, you evidently don't watch the news on television very often. The following parable aptly describes how the current circumstances in the media came about.

Once upon a time, an elderly newspaper publisher married the town gossip. When the old woman saw the honor accorded her husband for his accurate reporting of the news, she was no longer content to spread her hearsay, rumor, and opinion about the actions of others among her limited circle of friends. So she pleaded, cajoled, badgered, and threatened her husband until he granted her a small column in his paper where she could publish all the gossip she had heard during the week. Before long, the woman's gossip column was increasing circulation of the paper far beyond what it had ever been. But then the new readers began demanding more gossip and less news. Instead of starting her own publication, the old woman insisted the paper had to change with the times. Yet the old man defended factual reporting until, finally, he died.

With her husband out of the way, the old woman was free to do whatever she pleased to increase circulation. She had realized all along that the easiest way to sell papers is to tell people what they want to hear. So she brought her children into the business and showed them how to carefully blend hearsay, rumor, and opinion with hard news. That meant she could cut costs by spending less on those who gather the news and more on those who put hearsay, rumor, and opinions down on paper.

As circulation continued to increase, the readers who agreed with the opinions in which the old woman and her children regularly wrapped the news loved it. They could not see what this new breed of gossip-journalists was doing. They thought their deceptive gossip was just news. But then things began to change. Some folks didn't agree with the old woman's liberal analysis of the facts. So they began complaining and telling everybody that they wished someone would just tell them what had happened without injecting their own opinion.

Before long, a young fellow came along and started another newspaper. But instead of just reporting the facts and letting it go at that, he included his own conservative analysis. After all, he was no fool. He realized that hearsay, rumor, and opinion sell better than hard facts. And all those folks who had been complaining about the liberal bias in the media agreed with his conservative views, so they were happy. They couldn't see that he was just spreading gossip. They thought they were reading the news.

The question is, How does the Snake plan to use those who determine which direction the "wind" blows? It's hard to tell. But you can depend on this: He is planning to play one camp off against the other. ■



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: Before reading your main article in the last issue of the newsletter, I briefly reviewed your comments from the January 1998 newsletter on why the Prophet Ezra wrote the Books of Chronicles. In going over that information, a question came to mind that probably has little significance, but I'm going to ask it anyway. The question relates to the various Prophets and seers who produced the writings and chronicles that Ezra apparently drew from in compiling the Books of Chronicles. I'm talking about such men as Iddo the Prophet (2 Chr. 13:22), Gad the Seer (1 Chr. 29:29), and Iddo the Seer (2 Chr. 12:15), just to name a few. My question is, What's the difference, if any, between a Prophet and a seer? Since Iddo the Prophet and Iddo the Seer are likely the same person, why is he called a Prophet one place and a seer in another?

Elijah: Iddo is not the only Prophet who is called a Prophet in one place and a seer in another. As you noted, 1 Chronicles 29:29 tells us Gad was a seer. However, the following verse indicates he was also a Prophet:

And the prophet Gad said to David, "Do not stay in the stronghold; depart, and go into the land of Judah." So David departed and went into the forest of Hereth.
(1 Samuel 22:5)

To make matters appear even more confusing, in this passage Gad is called both a Prophet and a seer:

When David arose in the morning, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying, "Go and speak to David, 'Thus the LORD says, "I am offering you three things; choose for yourself one of them, which I may do to you."'"
(2 Samuel 24:11-12)

There is no need to get into an extended discussion of the *meaning* and *significance* of the three terms that are normally translated "prophet" and "seer." Even after a mind-numbing discussion of the term translated "prophet" and the two terms translated "seer," one obvious conclusion will still remain: The three terms are synonyms. So the best way for me to answer your question is to let the Scriptures speak for themselves.

In 1 Samuel 9:9, Jeremiah uses the term *seer* for the first time. Since he compiled his account from different sources, some of which date back four hundred to five hundred years earlier than his own time, he felt it necessary to explain the *meaning* of the archaic term *seer*, which occurred in one of the sources he used. So he integrates his own parenthetical explanation into the source from which he copied:

When they came to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant who was with him, "Come, and let us return, lest my father cease {to be concerned} about the donkeys and become anxious for us." And he said to him, "Behold now, there is a man of God in this city, and the man is held in honor; all that he says surely comes true. Now let us go there, perhaps he can tell us about our journey on which we have set out." Then Saul said to his servant, "But behold, if we go, what shall we bring the man? For the bread is gone from our sack and there is no present to bring to the man of God. What do we have?" And the servant answered Saul again and said, "Behold, I have in my hand a fourth of a shekel of silver; I will give {it} to the man of God and he will tell us our way." (Formerly in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, he used to say, "Come, and let us go to the seer"; for {he who is called} a prophet now was formerly called a seer.) Then Saul said to his servant, "Well said; come, let us go." So they went to the city where the man of God was. As they went up the slope to the city, they found young women going out to draw water, and said to them, "Is the seer here?" And they

answered them and said, "He is; see, {he is} ahead of you. Hurry now, for he has come into the city today, for the people have a sacrifice on the high place today. As soon as you enter the city you will find him before he goes up to the high place to eat, for the people will not eat until he comes, because he must bless the sacrifice; afterward those who are invited will eat. Now therefore, go up for you will find him at once." So they went up to the city. As they came into the city, behold, Samuel was coming out toward them to go up to the high place.

(1 Samuel 9:5–14)

Jeremiah's explanation is clearly necessary since a bit later on, the same source from which he copied has Samuel himself admitting that he is a seer:

When Samuel saw Saul, the LORD said to him, "Behold, the man of whom I spoke to you! This one shall rule over My people." Then Saul approached Samuel in the gate, and said, "Please tell me where the seer's house is." And Samuel answered Saul and said, "I am the seer. Go up before me to the high place, for you shall eat with me today; and in the morning I will let you go, and will tell you all that is on your mind."

(1 Samuel 9:17–19)

If one reads Jeremiah's work carefully, it is possible to identify various places where he has inserted his own comments into material he copied from other sources. He clearly added the following:

And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was confirmed as a prophet of the LORD.

(1 Samuel 3:20)

You can see from that verse how Jeremiah's natural tendency was to use the term *prophet* because that term was commonly used in his own day. He used the term *seer* only when it occurred in the centuries-old sources from which he borrowed material. In support of that fact, the last mention of the term *seer* is found in the writing of the Prophet Amos, who prophesied nearly a century and a half before Jeremiah:

Then Amaziah said to Amos, "Go, you seer, flee away to the land of Judah, and there eat bread and there do your prophesying!"

(Amos 7:12)

The evidence in the Scriptures is clear: The two terms *seer* and *prophet* are interchangeable, with no discernable difference in *connotative meaning*. (The *denotative meaning* of their root form will undoubtedly be argued until Judgment Day.) As Jeremiah explains, *seer* was an archaic term that had fallen out of use by the time he wrote, whereas the term *prophet* continued to be used just as it had been since the time of Moses (cf. Gen. 20:7; Ex. 7:1; Num. 12:6; and Deut. 13:1). However, translators can sometimes manage to obscure even the things that are stated plainly in the Scriptures. Notice how the translator of the following passage has, in his ignorance of what Jeremiah explains in 1 Samuel 9:9, confused the issue:

Yet the LORD warned Israel and Judah, through all His prophets {and} every seer, saying, "Turn from your evil ways and keep My commandments, My statutes according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you through My servants the prophets."

(2 Kings 17:13)

The translator supplied the conjunction *and* because he thought the author of the biblical text was using the terms *prophet* and *seer* to denote two different types of prophetic ministers. He probably also assumed they were engaged in completely different prophetic activities. As Jeremiah plainly told us in 1 Samuel 9:9, that is not true. The Truth is, Jeremiah omitted the conjunction *and* and used simple juxtaposition of the two terms *prophet* and *seer* in the verse above because he was indicating that a Prophet and a seer were one and the same person. The verse would be better translated this way:

And His Majesty testified against Israel and Judah by the hand of all His Prophets—every seer—saying, "Turn from your evil ways and guard My commandments—My statutes—according to all The Teaching which I commanded your fathers and which I sent to you by the hand of My servants the Prophets."

(2 Kings 17:13) —my interim translation

In that verse, Jeremiah is *talking about* the fact that the Prophets (who were also called seers) were intently listening to what God said and hard at work writing it all down. That's why he twice says the Word of God came to Israel "by the hand of" the Prophets. However,

it would not be wise to overlook the fact that Jeremiah says “His Majesty testified against Israel and Judah.”

The Prophets’ primary purpose in writing was to produce a written record that could one day be used as evidence against Israel. The Hebrew Scriptures—and by extension the Greek Scriptures—are the direct result of their efforts. So all those folks today who claim to be members of Israel—the Body of Jesus Christ—have no idea what lies in store for them. They gussy up and go to church every Sunday with a Bible tucked securely under their arm, blithely unaware that what is hidden in that Book is one day going to burn them. Let’s not tell them, okay? After all, Jesus Himself said such folks wouldn’t believe the Truth even if someone came back from the dead to warn them. He says this:

“Now there was a certain rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, gaily living in splendor every day. And a certain poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores, and longing to be fed with the {crumbs} which were falling from the rich man’s table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores. Now it came about that the poor man died and he was carried away by the angels to Abraham’s bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried. And in Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried out and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue; for I am in agony in this flame.’ But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great chasm fixed, in order that those who wish to come over from here to you may not be able, and {that} none may cross over from there to us.’ And he said, ‘Then I beg you, Father, that you send him to my father’s house—for I have five brothers—that he may warn them, lest they also come to this place of torment.’ But Abraham said, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.’ But he said, ‘No, Father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!’ But he said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone rises from the dead.’”
(Luke 16:19–31)

Editor: Speaking of Prophets, I have a question regarding Moses that is based on something Stephen, the martyr, said in Acts 7:25. As you know, just before being stoned, Stephen presents a brief overview of the history of Israel in Acts 7 where he talks at length about Moses and Israel’s history of rejecting The Teaching of Moses. In Acts 7:25, he says something that suggests Moses was aware that God intended to use him to deliver Israel out of Egypt forty years before God actually called him (Acts 7:30 ff.). Since Stephen was a man filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 6:5), there is no reason to doubt that he knew what he was talking about. The question is, What was Stephen talking about? What did he know that we don’t?

Elijah: Before I answer that, let’s take a look at what Stephen actually said. This is Luke’s account:

“But as the time of the promise was approaching which God had assured to Abraham, the people increased and multiplied in Egypt, until THERE AROSE ANOTHER KING OVER EGYPT WHO KNEW NOTHING ABOUT JOSEPH. It was he who took shrewd advantage of our race, and mistreated our fathers so that they would expose their infants and they would not survive. And it was at this time that Moses was born; and he was lovely in the sight of God; and he was nurtured three months in his father’s home. And after he had been exposed, Pharaoh’s daughter took him away, and nurtured him as her own son. And Moses was educated in all the learning of the Egyptians, and he was a man of power in words and deeds. But when he was approaching the age of forty, it entered his mind to visit his brethren, the sons of Israel. And when he saw one {of them} being treated unjustly, he defended him and took vengeance for the oppressed by striking down the Egyptian. And he supposed that his brethren understood that God was granting them deliverance through him; but they did not understand.”
(Acts 7:17–25)

In this case, the context makes all the difference. Stephen was filled with the Holy Spirit, as you rightly point out, but the infilling of the Spirit did not make him infallible any more than it makes you or me infallible. Stephen is merely expressing his personal belief. Nothing more. Since he was not a Prophet or an Apostle, and since his purpose was not to dictate Scripture, and since what he says here is not stated

anywhere else in the Scriptures, his personal belief may or may not even be accurate. Chances are, he is merely expressing a belief that was based on a tradition current among the Jews of his day. The Jewish historian Josephus (*Antiquities*, Book ii, Chap. 9 ff.) gives an extended account of the life of Moses in which he goes into great detail, providing information which is interesting but probably fictitious. He says much the same thing as Stephen states here: Moses and his parents knew he had been called to deliver the sons of Israel from the time he was a child, long before he fled to Midian.

Editor: The final question is from one of our subscribers who wrote this: "I was reading 2 Samuel and while going through the account of Absalom's death in Chapter 18, I remembered what Larry taught about the purpose of pillars being erected in order to 'remember' the name of the deceased. In verse 18, it says that Absalom during his lifetime erected a pillar for himself because he had 'no son to preserve my name.' The fly in the ointment is that 2 Samuel 14:27 says that Absalom had three sons and one daughter. My question is: Why weren't the sons that Absalom had qualified to 'preserve his name' that he saw the need to erect a pillar? There is no mention that his sons died before his death so something is amiss."

Elijah: The only thing amiss is the fact that Satan has people trained to read the Old Testament from their own perspective rather than from the perspective of the Prophets who wrote the Hebrew Scriptures. Consequently, they sometimes find it impossible to understand what the authors of the Scriptures meant by what they said. For example, most people completely ignore the historical, literary, and cultural context when they read the Old Testament. That leaves them with the misguided notion that the Hebrew Scriptures are a monolithic record in which every part stands on equal footing with every other part. Or, as in this case, they assume that just because one thing is mentioned before something else, that must mean it is in chronological order.

That sort of nonsense is what prompted liberal scholars of the nineteenth century to try to identify the historical context in which the Hebrew Scriptures were written. They failed miserably because they were trying to peer beneath the veil that has covered the Hebrew Scriptures up until our own time. However, their

misguided attempt also stemmed from an unwillingness to accept the fact that the Hebrew Scriptures do, in fact, contain an accurate record of historical events. A brief survey of liberal scholars' futile attempt at piercing the Scriptures' veil of secrecy discloses a monumental short-sightedness on their part. That short-sightedness is exactly the same tendency that your subscriber exhibits. If you take the time to carefully read the context in which Jeremiah mentions the pillar that Absalom erected because he had no sons, you should be able to see the fallacy of the mind-set that Satan has worked so hard to instill in us all:

Then David numbered the people who were with him and set over them commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds. And David sent the people out, one third under the command of Joab, one third under the command of Abishai the son of Zeruah, Joab's brother, and one third under the command of Ittai the Gittite. And the king said to the people, "I myself will surely go out with you also." But the people said, "You should not go out; for if we indeed flee, they will not care about us, even if half of us die, they will not care about us. But you are worth ten thousand of us; therefore now it is better that you {be ready} to help us from the city." Then the king said to them, "Whatever seems best to you I will do." So the king stood beside the gate, and all the people went out by hundreds and thousands. And the king charged Joab and Abishai and Ittai, saying, "{Deal} gently for my sake with the young man Absalom." And all the people heard when the king charged all the commanders concerning Absalom. Then the people went out into the field against Israel, and the battle took place in the forest of Ephraim. And the people of Israel were defeated there before the servants of David, and the slaughter there that day was great, 20,000 men. For the battle there was spread over the whole countryside, and the forest devoured more people that day than the sword devoured. Now Absalom happened to meet the servants of David. For Absalom was riding on {his} mule, and the mule went under the thick branches of a great oak. And his head caught fast in the oak, so he was left hanging between heaven and earth, while the mule that was under him kept going. When a certain man saw {it,} he told Joab and said, "Behold, I saw Absalom hanging in an oak." Then Joab said to the man who had told him, "Now behold, you saw {him!} Why then did you not strike him there to the ground? And I would have given you ten {pieces} of silver and a belt." And the man said to Joab, "Even if I

should receive a thousand {pieces of} silver in my hand, I would not put out my hand against the king's son; for in our hearing the king charged you and Abishai and Ittai, saying, 'Protect for me the young man Absalom!' Otherwise, if I had dealt treacherously against his life (and there is nothing hidden from the king), then you yourself would have stood aloof." Then Joab said, "I will not waste time here with you." So he took three spears in his hand and thrust them through the heart of Absalom while he was yet alive in the midst of the oak. And ten young men who carried Joab's armor gathered around and struck Absalom and killed him. Then Joab blew the trumpet, and the people returned from pursuing Israel, for Joab restrained the people. And they took Absalom and cast him into a deep pit in the forest and erected over him a very great heap of stones. And all Israel fled, each to his tent. **Now Absalom in his lifetime had taken and set up for himself a pillar which is in the King's Valley, for he said, "I have no son to preserve my name." So he named the pillar after his own name, and it is called Absalom's monument to this day.**

(2 Samuel 18:1-18)

That is an account of how Absalom died. Nothing more. However, Jeremiah added a parenthetical note at the end in which he *talks about* the pillar that Absalom erected. He did that because that information is necessary for an understanding of what the Prophets have stated elsewhere. But that information has little, if anything, to do with his account of Absalom's death. The tendency of most who read Jeremiah's parenthetical statement, however, is to *assume* that he *means* to tell us Absalom died without leaving a son. That is obviously not true since, as your subscriber pointed out, 2 Samuel 14:27 tells us Absalom had at least three sons before his rebellion against his father David led to his death. Jeremiah is merely saying that Absalom erected the pillar at some point "in his lifetime," *before* he had any sons.

It is natural to assume more than what Jeremiah says. And Jeremiah has intentionally obscured the true *significance* of his account concerning Absalom's pillar by using the reader's natural tendency against him. However, he is also counting on one's knowledge of this simple verity: If you want to see where Satan has lied to us, you must carefully examine the *apparent* contradictions in the Scriptures. Standing behind each and every one of them is some Truth that is essential to

your understanding of *The Teaching*. In this case, the Truth that Jeremiah hid has been concealed even further by the translator's desire to make the biblical text more readable. Here is what the text *literally* says:

Now Absalom had taken and set up for himself—during his lifetime—a massebah, which is in the King's Valley, because he said, "I have no son to cause my name to be remembered." Then he called the massebah after his name. So it is called "the hand of Absalom" to this day.

(2 Samuel 18:18) —my interim translation

It should be obvious that the ancients thought a *massebah* could, LIKE a son, somehow cause the name of a man to be remembered. Unfortunately, Jeremiah doesn't bother to explain how a stone pillar was supposed to do that. So he must have assumed his reader would already have insight into that bit of information. But when he mentions that the pillar was crudely "called the hand of Absalom," it becomes clear he is mocking the ignorance of all those who would come along later, reading his account and arrogantly assuming they already know all they need to know about what the Prophets hid in their writings. Unfortunately for them, they don't. But that won't become clear to them until it is too late for them to do anything about it.

In the ancient Canaanite/Hebrew culture, "hand" was a euphemism for another (male) bodily member that one does not mention in polite company. In erecting the pillar, Absalom was crassly declaring that since he had no son to "carry his name," the only hope he had was that the pillar would "cause my name to be remembered." He was openly mocking Canaanite religious concepts that were current in his day. That is not totally unlike the Prophets' ridicule of those same beliefs, although their mockery is not quite so obvious. Nonetheless, they undoubtedly found it amusing when God had them allude to the same euphemism when *talking about* the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

If you read carefully, you can find a mocking allusion to the Canaanite euphemism in Psalm 127, where the psalmist is *talking about* how God is going to "build" His "house" through the Resurrection of the Righteous. Of course, when one reads that psalm, it helps to know that—euphemistically speaking—a "bow" was the same as a "hand" in that ancient culture. Knowing that, you can easily envision what "arrows" and a "quiver" were. ■