



THE VOICE of ELIJAH

Restoring the hearts of the fathers to the children

It's Not Whether You Know the Truth, It's How

But if philosophy contributes remotely to the discovery of truth, by reaching, by diverse essays, after the knowledge which touches close on the truth, the knowledge possessed by us, it aids him who aims at grasping it, in accordance with the Word, to apprehend knowledge. But the Hellenic truth is distinct from that held by us (although it has got the same name), both in respect of extent of knowledge, certainly of demonstration, divine power, and the like. For we are taught of God, being instructed in the truly "sacred letters" by the Son of God. Whence those, to whom we refer, influence souls not in the way we do, but by different teaching.

And if, for the sake of those who are fond of fault-finding, we must draw a distinction, by saying that philosophy is a concurrent and cooperating cause of true apprehension, being the search for truth, then we shall show it to be a preparatory training for the enlightened man (τοῦ γνωστικῶς); not assigning as the cause that which is but the joint-cause; nor as the upholding cause, what is merely co-operative; nor giving to philosophy the place of a *sine qua non*. Since almost all of us, without training in arts and sciences, and the Hellenic philosophy, and some even without learning at all, through the influence of a philosophy divine and barbarous, and by power, have through faith received the word concerning God, trained by self-operating wisdom. But that which acts in conjunction with something else, being of itself incapable of operating by itself, we describe as co-operating and concausing, and say that it becomes a cause only in virtue of its being a joint-cause, and receives the name of cause only in respect of its concurring with something else, but that it cannot by itself produce the right effect.

Although at one time philosophy justified the Greeks, not conducting them to that entire righteousness to which it is ascertained to cooperate, as the first and second flight of steps help you in your ascent to the upper

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room, and the grammarian helps the philosopher. Not as if by its abstraction, the perfect Word would be rendered incomplete, or truth perish; since also sight, and hearing, and the voice contribute to truth, but it is the mind which is the appropriate faculty for knowing it.

But of those things which co-operate, some contribute a greater amount of power; some, a less. Perspicuity accordingly aids in the communication of truth, and logic in preventing us from falling under the heresies by which we are assailed. But the teaching, which is according to the Saviour, is complete in itself and without defect, being "the power and wisdom of God;" and the Hellenic philosophy does not, by its approach, make the truth more powerful; but rendering powerless the assault of sophistry against it, and frustrating the treacherous plots laid against the truth, is said to be the proper "fence and wall of the vineyard." And the truth which is according to faith is as necessary for life as bread; while the preparatory discipline is like sauce and sweet-meats. "At the end of the dinner, the dessert is pleasant," according to the Theban Pindar. And the Scripture has expressly said, "The innocent will become wiser by understanding, and the wise will receive knowledge." "And he that speaketh of himself," saith the Lord, "seeketh his own glory; but He that seeketh His glory that sent Him is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him." On the other hand, therefore, he who appropriates what belongs to the barbarians, and haunts it is his own, does wrong, increasing his own glory, and falsifying the truth. It is such an one that is by Scripture called a "thief."

Clement of Alexandria, "The Stromata," Book i, Chap. xx, in Roberts and Donaldson (Eds.), *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (1885), Vol. 2, pp. 323-324.

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Allen Friess, Executive Editor
Marcia Woody, Managing Editor

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A Note From the Editor

The recent terrorist attacks at the World Trade Center and the Pentagon have changed the face of our nation. Although the full impact of these changes will not be fully realized for some time, it is clear that America will never be the same. At the very least, Americans now realize that our open society and nearly unlimited freedoms carry a steep price—one that more and more citizens will be unwilling to pay as we go along.

Americans have always felt secure living in the United States and most would certainly like to have that sense of security back. But for that to happen, we will undoubtedly be forced to give up more and more freedom in the process. Those who have traveled by air since September 11 already know something about that. Having security officials rifle through your luggage while fellow passengers look on certainly qualifies as a loss of privacy and freedom. And that's just the start.

I'm not saying security measures shouldn't be taken. I'm merely pointing out the fact that personal freedoms are slowly being eroded in this country and that we can expect to see a greater erosion of freedom as we draw near to the End. Think about it. The Antichrist is one day going to have the authority to persecute and kill True Believers all around the world, including here in the United States. So doesn't it make sense that many of the freedoms we currently enjoy as U.S. citizens—especially the freedom to believe what you want to believe without fear of being persecuted for it—won't exist in that day?

Here's a fact: True Believers who seek to remain loyal to God by holding firmly to the Truth of His Word will be marked for death during the reign of the Antichrist (Rev. 6:9–11), and it won't matter where they live. It may seem unthinkable that Believers in the United States could ever face such persecution, but logic dictates that it must happen. And the reason it must is because it's the only way the Antichrist can carry out his God-ordained reign of terror in this world.

If it bothers you that I said "God-ordained reign of terror," it shouldn't. The Scriptures repeatedly talk about the fact that God intends to bring the civilization of this Earth to a horrifying end through the actions of the Antichrist. To understand the association that exists between God and the Antichrist you need to keep one thing in mind: Satan can do nothing unless God allows it. The first two chapters of the Book of Job make this fact perfectly clear. So if Satan, in the form of the Antichrist, is given the freedom to persecute True Believers in the End, it is only because God allows it. The Apostle Paul talks about God's involvement in the activities of the End:

And then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming;

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

(2 Thessalonians 2:8–12)

If you are not aware that God intends to use the Antichrist to delude those who refuse to believe the Truth of His Word here at the End, you should be now. Of course, if you refuse to believe the Word you have just heard (assuming it's true—which it is) then you are destined to succumb to the “deluding influence” that is coming and to face judgment for having rejected the Truth you have heard. Your only consolation in that day will be that you will not be alone. The vast majority of “Christians” in this generation will be right there beside you.

God has known from the beginning that the overwhelming majority in this generation would reject the Truth of His Word, just as previous generations have since the time of Adam. Although there have always been a few in every generation who have believed and held on to the Truth they were given, humanity as a whole has repeatedly demonstrated an unwillingness to believe the Word of God—The Teaching—when given the chance to hear it. That's why God is going to destroy the civilization of this Earth. He is fed up with the foolishness and arrogance of men who think they are wise, yet consistently reject the Truth.

If you doubt that God has plans to destroy the Earth, you either don't know your Bible very well or you don't actually believe what it says. There are numerous passages that allude to what God is going to do at the End of the Age, and the Apostle Peter states the facts in the clearest possible manner:

Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with {their} mocking, following after their own

*lusts, and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For {ever} since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.” For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God {the} heavens existed long ago and {the} earth was formed out of water and by water, through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water. **But the present heavens and earth by His word are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.... But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.** Since all these things **are to be destroyed** in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, **on account of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!** But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.*

(2 Peter 3:3–7, 10–13)

Did you notice that Peter says “by the Word of God” this Earth was not only created but also destined for destruction? The first destruction of this civilization, the Flood, has already occurred; but the second, the Burning, is still to come. And just as surely as the Flood was a literal event that destroyed the civilization of this Earth long ago, so the coming destruction by fire will be a literal event as well. But don't miss Peter's main point. He wants it understood that the Word of God is all-powerful and that God, through His Word, is going to accomplish all that He promised.

Peter mentions two elements of the promise in the passage above (vv. 4 and 13). If you don't know whether the promise applies to you, or how it applies to you, it's time you found out. Reading *The Voice of Elijah*® is a good starting point, but it's only a starting point. I'll tell you how you can acquire more knowledge of the Truth in the next issue.

Allen Friend

Is This Enough “Distress” for You? No Matter; More’s Coming

Well, well, well! On September 11, 2001, Satan finally tipped his hand. That’s an idiom. It *means* the opposite of “he played his cards close to the vest.” So now we have a fairly good idea as to what he’s got up his sleeve. That’s another idiom. It is based on the same *parabolic imagery* as the first two idioms. I only mention those things as a segue into warning you that if you don’t know the *meaning* and *significance* of several Hebrew idioms and the *parabolic imagery* on which they are based, you had better get out of the game before Satan ups the ante and the stakes get too high. I will tell you bluntly that if you don’t heed that warning, by the time you realize Satan is no longer bluffing, you will have already bet your soul that I don’t know what I’m *talking about*. But then again, if you have no idea what I am *talking about*, you obviously are not aware that Satan is playing for keeps this time. Perhaps you should take the time necessary to carefully ascertain the *meaning* and *significance* of the parables of Jesus.

Over the past several years, I have explained the *meaning* and *significance* of a few key Hebrew idioms. I have also spelled out various things concerning God’s plan for True Believers at the End of the Age. Now is the time for us to pick up the pace a bit. The reason for that is easy to understand: Satan has now provided insight into how he intends to come to power as the Antichrist. He has also disclosed how he plans to bring Jews and Christians together in their acceptance of him as the messiah of the Jews. Other elements of his plan also became a bit more well-defined from the reaction that nations around the world exhibited in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. That is why you need to seriously contemplate what he is planning.

From the brief insight that Satan provided on September 11, 2001, it is an absolute certainty that terrorism will remain a constant threat right up to the End of the Age. Despite the pledge to “root out terrorists” everywhere, the United States government will fail miserably. That is because Satan needs terrorists and their ignorant schemes to help him shape the mind-set of our generation—to make the populace more receptive to the other things he has planned. And in light of the worldwide response to recent terrorist activity, terrorism is undoubtedly also part of the “distress” the Prophet Daniel mentions in this passage:

“Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands {guard} over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace {and} everlasting contempt. And those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.”
(Daniel 12:1–3)

The Early Church Fathers

The preening parrots who are currently perched in the pulpit propound various explanations of what the Prophets of Israel have said concerning the Last Days. They do so on the basis of some great insight into the plan of God which they claim to have gained by their own personal study of the Scriptures. The Truth is, they are merely *handing down* an *oral tradition* they got

from some other pompous, pious parrot. I'm not going to do that. If you want to understand what Satan plans to do in these Last Days, all you need to do is read and believe what the Early Church Fathers have already explained concerning his activities. After all, the two Church Fathers who have the most to say about the Antichrist—Irenæus and Hippolytus—forthrightly claim that they were *handing down* an oral tradition which had been *handed down* to them from the Apostle John. You know, John—the Apostle who wrote the Book of Revelation.

Since Irenæus and Hippolytus have already done the heavy lifting for me in regard to explaining most of the *parabolic imagery* in the Book of Daniel and the Book of Revelation, I don't have to run the risk of getting all puffed up (as some do) while showing you what I *think* I know about those things. I have already contributed my two cents' worth on that subject in the footnotes to *The Advent of Christ and AntiChrist*, a book which *The Voice of Elijah*® sends out to everyone who becomes a Monthly Contributor. [Editor: See the Order Form.]

In "The Light" of *The Apostolic Teaching*, it is obvious that Irenæus and Hippolytus understood the Truth about the deception planned by the venomous little man the Apostle John called "antichrist." (See *The Advent of Christ and AntiChrist* or "That's Why He's Called AntiChrist!" *The Voice of Elijah*®, April 1992 and *The Antichrist* on the Order Form.) Therefore, it is probably best that we review some of what they said before we *talk about* how current events fit into Satan's plan.

If you have read what the Early Church Fathers have written about the Antichrist, you already know how to recognize him. So rather than discussing all of his identifying characteristics, I'll just review the crucial parts of what Irenæus and Hippolytus say about him. The most important thing to keep in mind concerning their description of the Antichrist are the two primary characteristics that will allow you to identify him with absolute certainty. First, he will come pretending to be Jesus Christ, while claiming to be the messiah that Orthodox Jews have been expecting. Second, after the Jews accept him as their messiah and make him king, he will rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem. That is what Hippolytus explains here:

1. Christ is a lion, so Antichrist is also a lion;
2. Christ is a king, so Antichrist is also a king.

3. The Saviour was manifested as a lamb; so he too, in like manner, will appear as a lamb, though within he is a wolf.
4. The Saviour came into the world in the circumcision, and he will come in the same manner.
5. The Lord sent apostles among all the nations, and he in like manner will send false apostles.
6. The Saviour gathered together the sheep that were scattered abroad, and he in like manner will bring together a people that is scattered abroad.
7. The Lord gave a seal to those who believed on Him, and he will give one in like manner.
8. The Saviour appeared in the form of man, and he too will come in the form of a man.
9. The Saviour raised up and showed His holy flesh like a temple, and he will raise a temple of stone in Jerusalem. (Hippolytus, *The Treatise of Christ and Antichrist*; see also *The AntiChrist*, p. 34 and *The Advent of Christ and AntiChrist*, pp. 147–148)

Hippolytus repeats that same list in his *On the Day of the Consummation*, but in that work he adds one item to it:

And as our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was spoken of in prophecy as a lion on account of His royalty and glory, in the same manner also has the Scripture prophetically described the accuser as a lion, on account of his tyranny and violence. For in every respect that deceiver seeks to make himself appear like the Son of God:

1. Christ is a lion, and Antichrist is a lion.
2. Christ is King of things celestial and things terrestrial, and Antichrist will be king upon earth.
3. The Saviour was manifested as a lamb; and he, too, will appear as a lamb, while he is a wolf within.
4. The Saviour was circumcised, and he in like manner will appear in circumcision.
5. The Saviour sent the apostles unto all the nations, and he in like manner will send false apostles.
6. Christ gathered together the dispersed sheep, and he in like manner will gather together the dispersed people of the Hebrews.
7. Christ gave to those who believed on Him the honourable and lifegiving cross, and he in like manner will give his own sign.
8. Christ appeared in the form of man, and he in like manner will come forth in the form of man.

9. *Christ arose from among the Hebrews, and he will spring from among the Jews.*

10. *Christ displayed His flesh like a temple, and raised it up on the third day; and he too will raise up again the temple of stone in Jerusalem.*

(Hippolytus, *On the Day of the Consummation*; see also *The Advent of Christ and AntiChrist*, p. 211)

The Early Church Father Irenæus wrote a monumental work in which he refuted the major heresies of his day. In that work, which has been titled “Against Heresies,” he not only corroborates the accuracy of the information that Hippolytus provides, he also explains exactly what Satan intends to accomplish by pretending to be the Messiah—Jesus Christ—and rebuilding the Temple in Jerusalem. In the process, Irenæus tells us other things we need to know about Satan’s plan:

1. *And not only by the particulars already mentioned, but also by means of the events which shall occur in the time of Antichrist is it shown that he, being an apostate and a robber, is anxious to be adored as God; and that, although a mere slave, he wishes himself to be proclaimed as a king. For he (Antichrist) being endued with all the power of the devil, shall come, not as a righteous king, nor as a legitimate king, [i.e., one] in subjection to God, but an impious, unjust, and lawless one; as an apostate, iniquitous and murderous; as a robber, concentrating, in himself [all] satanic apostasy, and setting aside idols to persuade [men] that he himself is God, raising up himself as the only idol, having in himself the multifarious errors of the other idols. This he does, in order that they who do [now] worship the devil by means of many abominations, may serve himself by this one idol, of whom the apostle thus speaks in the second Epistle to the Thessalonians:*

“Unless there shall come a falling away first, and the man of sin shall be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself as if he were God.”

(2 Thessalonians 2:3–4)

The apostle therefore clearly points out his apostasy, and that he is lifted up above all that is called God, or that is worshipped—that is, above every idol—for these are indeed so called by men, but are not [really] gods; and that he will endeavour in a tyrannical manner to set himself forth as God.

2. *Moreover, he (the apostle) has also pointed out this which I have shown in many ways, that the temple in Jerusalem was made by the direction of the true God. For the apostle himself, speaking in his own person, distinctly called it the temple of God. Now I have shown in the third book, that no one is termed God by the apostles when speaking for themselves, except Him who truly is God, the Father of our Lord, by whose directions the temple which is at Jerusalem was constructed for those purposes which I have already mentioned; in which [temple] the enemy shall sit, endeavouring to show himself as Christ, as the Lord also declares:*

“But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, which has been spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let him that readeth understand), then let those who are in Judea flee into the mountains; and he who is upon the house-top, let him not come down to take anything out of his house: for there shall then be great hardship, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall be.”

(Matthew 24:15–21)

3. *Daniel too, looking forward to the end of the last kingdom, i.e., the ten last kings, amongst whom the kingdom of those men shall be partitioned, and upon whom the son of perdition shall come, declares that ten horns shall spring from the beast, and that another little horn shall arise in the midst of them, and that three of the former shall be rooted up before his face. He says:*

“And, behold, eyes were in this horn as the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things, and his look was more stout than his fellows. I was looking, and this horn made war against the saints, and prevailed against them until the Ancient of days came and gave judgment to the saints of the most high God, and the time came, and the saints obtained the kingdom.”

(Daniel 7:8, 21–22)

Then, further on, in the interpretation of the vision, there was said to him:

“The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall excel all other kingdoms, and devour the whole earth, and tread it down, and cut it in pieces. And its ten horns are ten kings which shall arise; and after them shall arise another, who shall surpass in evil deeds all that were before him, and shall overthrow three kings;

and he shall speak words against the most high God, and wear out the saints of the most high God, and shall purpose to change times and laws; and [everything] shall be given into his hand until a time of times and a half time." (Daniel 7:23–25)

That is, for three years and six months, during which time, when he comes, he shall reign over the earth. Of whom also the Apostle Paul again, speaking in the second [Epistle] to the Thessalonians, and at the same time proclaiming the cause of his advent, thus says:

"And then shall the wicked one be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the spirit of His mouth, and destroy by the presence of His coming; whose coming [i.e., the wicked one's] is after the working of Satan, in all power, and signs, and portents of lies, and with all deceivableness of wickedness for those who perish; because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. **And therefore God will send them the working of error, that they may believe a lie, that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but gave consent to iniquity.**" (2 Thessalonians 2:8–12)

4. The Lord also spoke as follows to those who did not believe in Him:

"I have come in my Father's name, and ye have not received Me. When another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive," (John 5:43)

calling Antichrist "the other," because he is alienated from the Lord. This is also the unjust judge, whom the Lord mentioned as one "who feared not God, neither regarded man," to whom the widow fled in her forgetfulness of God, —that is, the earthly Jerusalem, —to be avenged of her adversary. **Which also he shall do in the time of his kingdom: he shall remove his kingdom into that [city], and shall sit in the temple of God, leading astray those who worship him, as if he were Christ.** To this purpose Daniel says again:

"And he shall desolate the holy place; and sin has been given for a sacrifice, and righteousness been cast away in the earth, and he has been active and gone on prosperously." (Daniel 8:12)

And the angel Gabriel, when explaining his vision, states with regard to this person:

"And towards the end of their kingdom a king of a most fierce countenance shall arise, one understanding [dark] questions, and exceedingly powerful, full of wonders; and he shall corrupt, direct, influence, and put strong men down, the holy people likewise; and his yoke shall be directed as a wreath [round their neck]; deceit shall be in his hand, and he shall be lifted up in his heart. He shall also ruin many by deceit, and lead many to perdition, bruising them in his hand like eggs." (Daniel 8:23–25)

And then he points out the time that his tyranny shall last, during which the saints shall be put to flight, they who offer a pure sacrifice unto God:

"And in the midst of the week," he says, "the sacrifice and the libation shall be taken away, and the abomination of desolation [shall be brought] into the temple: even unto the consummation of the time shall the desolation be complete." (Daniel 9:27)

Now three years and six months constitute the half-week.

5. From all these passages are revealed to us, not merely the particulars of the apostasy, and [the doings] of him who concentrates in himself every satanic error, but also, that there is one and the same God the Father, who was declared by the prophets, but made manifest by Christ. For if what Daniel prophesied concerning the end has been confirmed by the Lord, when He said,

"When ye shall see the abomination of desolation, which has been spoken of by Daniel the prophet" (Matthew 24:15)

(and the angel Gabriel gave the interpretation of the visions to Daniel, and he is the archangel of the Creator, who also proclaimed to Mary the visible coming and the incarnation of Christ), then one and the same God is most manifestly pointed out, who sent the prophets, and made promises of the Son, and called us into His knowledge. (Irenæus, "Against Heresies," Book v, Chapter xxv; see also *The AntiChrist*, pp. 15–20 and *The Advent of Christ and AntiChrist*, pp. 55–62)

The Early Church Father Hippolytus confirms most of what Irenæus says concerning the Antichrist. He, too, insists that Satan will rebuild the Temple and pretend to be Jesus Christ. But he does so in the course of explaining other things that Daniel wrote:

The prophet then, after thus recounting the things which have taken place already, and been fulfilled in their times, declares yet another mystery to us, while he points out the last times. For he says:

“And there shall rise up another shameless king; and he shall exalt himself above every god, and shall magnify himself, and shall speak marvellous things, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished;”
(Daniel 11:36 ff.)

and so forth.

“And these shall escape out of his hand, Edom, and Moab, and the chief (or principality) of the children of Ammon. And he shall stretch forth his hand upon the land; and the land of Egypt shall not escape. And he shall have power over the secret treasures of gold and silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt and of the Libyans, and the Ethiopians in their strongholds.”
(Daniel 11:41–43)

*Thus, then, does the prophet set forth these things concerning the Antichrist, who shall be shameless, a war-maker, and despot, who, exalting himself above all kings and above every god, shall build the city of Jerusalem, and restore the sanctuary. **Him the impious will worship as God, and will bend to him the knee, thinking him to be the Christ.***

(Hippolytus, Commentary on the Book of Daniel; see also The Advent of Christ and AntiChrist, pp. 130–131)

Hippolytus mentions that same passage from Daniel 11 again in his *Treatise on Christ and Antichrist*. He says this:

51. But not to confine ourselves to these words and arguments alone, for the purpose of convincing those who love to study the oracles of God, we shall demonstrate the matter by many other proofs. For Daniel says,

“And these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon.”
(Daniel 11:41)

Ammon and Moab are the children born to Lot by his daughters, and their race survives even now. And Isaiah says:

“And they shall fly in the boats of strangers, plundering the sea together, and (they shall spoil) them of the east; and they shall lay hands upon Moab first; and the children of Ammon shall first obey them.”
(Isaiah 11:14)

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

“Be thou ashamed, O Sidon; the sea hath spoken, even the strength of the sea hath spoken, saying, I travailed not, nor brought forth children; neither did I nurse up young men, nor bring up virgins. But when the report comes to Egypt, pain shall seize them for Tyre.”
(Isaiah 23:4–5)

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

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

And to the like effect Isaiah says:

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

In like manner also Ezekiel:

"Wilt thou yet say to those who slay thee, I am God? But thou (shalt be) a man, and no God."

(Ezekiel 28:9)

(Hippolytus, Treatise on Christ and Antichrist; see also The AntiChrist, pp. 53–54; and The Advent of Christ and AntiChrist, pp. 177–179)

The Order of Events

From what Hippolytus says in another context, it is possible to gain all of the information necessary to recognize the Antichrist with absolute certainty when he appears. One can also get a clear sense of how Satan will manage to delude Pretenders in the Church into believing that he is Jesus Christ. They will do so not only because the Antichrist will do many of the things that dispensational doctrine says Jesus Christ will do, but also because the Jews will respond to him exactly as those who believe that lie expect the Jews to respond to Jesus Christ. [See "Wanna Hear the Whopper the Liar Came up With? (I Doubt You'll Believe It!)" *The Voice of Elijah*®, October 1996.] In the following passage, Hippolytus precisely delineates which activities of the Antichrist will precede his building of the Temple in Jerusalem and which will follow:

And even as Christ chose His apostles, so will he too assume a whole people of disciples like himself in wickedness. Above all, moreover, he will love the nation of the Jews. And with all these he will work signs and terrible wonders, false wonders and not true, in order to deceive his impious equals. For if it were possible, he would seduce even the elect from the love of Christ. But in his first steps he will be gentle, loveable, quiet, pious, pacific, hating injustice, detesting gifts, not allowing idolatry; loving, says he, the Scriptures, reverencing priests, honouring his elders, repudiating fornication, detesting adultery, giving no heed to slanders, not admitting oaths, kind to strangers, kind to the poor, compassionate. And then he will work wonders, cleansing lepers, raising paralytics, expelling demons, proclaiming things remote just as things present, raising the dead, helping widows, defending orphans, loving all, reconciling in love men who contend, and saying to such, "Let not the sun go down

upon your wrath;" and he will not acquire gold, nor love silver, nor seek riches.

*And all this he will do corruptly and deceitfully, and with the purpose of deluding all to make him king. For when the peoples and tribes see so great virtues and so great powers in him, they will all with one mind meet together to make him king. And above all others shall the nation of the Hebrews be dear to the tyrant himself, while they say one to another, Is there found indeed in our generation such a man, so good and just? That shall be the way with the race of the Jews pre-eminently, as I said before, who, thinking, as they do, that they shall behold the king himself in such power, will approach him to say, **We all confide in thee, and acknowledge thee to be just upon the whole earth; we all hope to be saved by thee; and by thy mouth we have received just and incorruptible judgment.***

*And at first, indeed, that deceitful and lawless one, with crafty deceitfulness, will refuse such glory; but the men persisting, and holding by him, will declare him king. And thereafter he will be lifted up in heart, and he who was formerly gentle will become violent, and he who pursued love will become pitiless, and the humble in heart will become haughty and inhuman, and the hater of unrighteousness will persecute the righteous. **Then, when he is elevated to his kingdom, he will marshal war; and in his wrath he will smite three mighty kings, —those, namely, of Egypt, Libya, and Ethiopia. And after that he will build the temple in Jerusalem, and will restore it again speedily, and give it over to the Jews. And then he will be lifted up in heart against every man; yea, he will speak blasphemy also against God, thinking in his deceit that he shall be king upon the earth hereafter forever; not knowing, miserable wretch, that his kingdom is to be quickly brought to nought, and that he will quickly have to meet the fire which is prepared for him, along with all who trust him and serve him.***

(Hippolytus, On the Day of the Consummation; see also The Advent of Christ and AntiChrist, pp. 217–219)

So there you have it. That is the essence of what the Early Church taught concerning the Antichrist. Both Irenæus and Hippolytus have a whole lot more to say about the persecution of the True Believers. They also explain why some "Christians" in the Church will be able to see through Satan's pretense while others

blindly fall for his delusion. These two Early Church Fathers clearly state that those who have insight into the Truth will reject the Antichrist’s claim that he is Jesus Christ because they understand things that have been sealed up in the Scriptures. But I am not going to summarize what they said in that regard or expound upon it. You can do that for yourself. I just want to point out the salient actions of the Antichrist that will allow you to recognize him when he appears.

First, the Antichrist will somehow dupe the Jews into believing he is the Messiah. After they make him their king, however, he will immediately show himself to be little more than a warmonger. When he threatens war with Jordan, that nation will concede to his demands. Lebanon—which is apparently still a satellite of Syria at that time, since it is evidently not considered to be one of the ten “horns”—will not get off so easily. The Antichrist’s first military action will be to move into that area to take Tyre and Beirut. He will then invade and conquer Egypt. Not content with his conquest of that nation, he will send his troops west into Libya and south into Sudan. Returning from that expedition, he will rebuild the Temple and take his seat in the Holy of Holies as the “abomination of desolation.”

How Do We Get There From Here?

Irenæus and Hippolytus clearly provide the broad outlines of how the Antichrist will come to power and what he will do militarily. Knowing those things, one can easily surmise that Satan must have instigated the events of September 11, 2001, to bring about the circumstances necessary for him to carry out the final stage of his carefully crafted plan. The logical question to ask is, What else does he have cooking? That is, what does he plan to do between now and the End? Good question. But I’m not going to speak directly to that question because God did not call me as a Prophet. He called me as a Teacher to *restore* and teach *The Apostolic Teaching*. My purpose is to alert True Believers by explaining the Truth of the Scriptures so that they are ready when the Antichrist appears.

One of the unique aspects of my calling, however, is this: *The Apostolic Teaching* includes an explanation of what the Prophets of Israel said concerning some events that are still future at this time. Therefore, I can explain those things for you, but only in the course of fulfilling my calling as a Teacher. For example, eleven

years ago this month—more than three months before the Gulf War began—I explained how the Prophet Isaiah not only described the Gulf War in fairly good detail but how he also pointed to the death of Saddam Hussein as a *parabolic harbinger* of the death of the Antichrist. (See “Prophet Predicts Death of Hussein,” *The Voice of Elijah*®, October 1990.) Isaiah says this:

*“Those who see you will gaze on you!
They’ll pay close attention to you!”*

*‘Is this the man
—who threw the earth into turmoil?
—who caused kingdoms to quake?
—who made productive earth like a wilderness,
and tore down its cities?
—who didn’t allow his captives to {go} home?’*

All the kings of the nations, all of them, have laid down in glory (been buried with honors)—each one in his house (tomb).

*But you!
You’ve been cast out of your grave
—like a rejected branch, clothed with the slain,
—those pierced with the sword!
—those going down to the stones of the pit!
—like a trampled corpse.*

*You won’t be joined with them in burial, because
—you destroyed your land!
—you destroyed your people!*

*The seed of those who do evil won’t be named forever!
Prepare for his sons a slaughtering place according to the iniquity of their fathers! They won’t arise to **inherit** the Earth, or to fill the surface of the Earth with cities. But I’ll rise up against them,” declares the LORD of Hosts, “I’ll cut off from Babylon name, remnant, posterity, and progeny! I’ll make it an **inheritance** for a porcupine, and watery marsh-land. I’ll mop it with a mop of annihilation!”
(Isaiah 14:16–23) —my interim translation*

My purpose in explaining how that passage *parabolically* describes the ongoing war against Iraq and the ignominious death of Saddam Hussein was to catch the attention of those who sincerely believe the Second Coming of Jesus Christ is imminent. The subscribers

who received that first issue of *The Voice of Elijah*® saw many of the things that I explained in that issue unfold with amazing accuracy shortly after the Gulf War began. But they have been waiting for more than a decade and have yet to see the assassination of Saddam Hussein. They will probably not have to wait much longer. Unless I am mistaken, the remaining days of that Arab numskull are dwindling rapidly. The ongoing investigation into the terrorist attack of September 11, 2001, should securely seal the fate of Mr. Hussein and his cohorts in Iraq. Remember what happened to Julius Caesar? But the fate of such ignorant buffoons is beside the point.

Given the current situation, the "kingdom" of the "ten horns"—which occupies the same general region as the Greek and Roman Empires—would appear to be an Arab league of ten nations that have joined forces to present a united front against the heavy-handed, albeit completely justified, anti-terrorist policies of the United States, Great Britain, and Israel. From the depth of the hatred that the average Arab on the street now holds for those countries, you should be able to understand how easily such a union might come about. Three of the ten nations that make up that "kingdom" are, of course, the three "horns" the Antichrist defeats immediately after he comes to power in Israel—Egypt, Libya, and Sudan. Beyond that, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq will almost certainly be members. Jordan may or may not be since it escapes unscathed when the Antichrist initiates military action against the members of the league. Nonetheless, I suspect it will be.

To name the remaining three (or four) countries in the Arab league of ten nations would be nothing more than a guess on my part. However, one can come to a fairly reasonable conclusion through simple deductive reasoning. We are *talking about* a league of Arab nations, not one in which some members are non-Arab Muslim nations like Iran, Afghanistan, or Pakistan. The Arab nations that I have not already mentioned are Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Kuwait, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Somalia, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

As you can see, there are more than enough other Arab nations to complete an Arab league of ten nations. My guess is, the ten nations who join the ten-nation Arab league will be contiguous states that have come together for mutual defense against the nation of Israel—which they perceive as a growing threat to

their security. It is logical to assume that the Antichrist invades Egypt, Libya, and Sudan to eliminate the threat of the Arab-league nations to his west. That *means* those three nations are most likely the only African nations in the league. According to that line of reasoning, the other members of the league would be some of the smaller Gulf states: Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. That indicates the league will be made up of oil-rich Arab states which may be trying to control the price of oil. If that is the case, the other members of the league would be those with substantial oil reserves. Since Kuwait is currently more or less a United States' protectorate, it may well not be a member.

The United States' response to terrorism could be the catalyst that galvanizes the leaders of ten Arab states to take action. If the United States government remains resolutely focused on "rooting out terrorism" and takes action in an Arab country other than Afghanistan, as I believe it will, it will not only alienate moderate Arab leaders, it will most likely also prompt the average Arab on the street to demand that Arab governments finally take a stand against the United States and Israel. It could take a while for the leaders of ten Arab nations to act, but if they do, a world economy stuck in the doldrums because of the high price of oil would eventually take precedence over any war against terrorism by the United States. Terrorism would then remain a virulent threat to Israel right up to the End of the Age. Unfortunately, under this scenario, Satan will have accomplished exactly what he set out to accomplish through the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001.

Satan's ultimate purpose in taking up residence in the Antichrist derives from his overwhelming desire to put an end to the Truth of *The Teaching* once and for all. He knows he can only do that by destroying all those who understand and believe the Truth. To achieve his objective, he has been avidly promoting the lies which dispensational doctrine teaches concerning Jesus Christ rebuilding the Temple and the salvation of the Jews. Those ridiculous beliefs will deceive most "Christians" into accepting the Antichrist as *the fulfillment of the promise* that God made concerning Jesus Christ. That mistake on their part will completely eliminate all hope of them ever understanding, much less accepting, the Truth. However, there will be many—"The Many"—who will not fall for Satan's lie because

they will be able to see the logic in the things the Early Church Fathers understood.

Satan already knows that “The Many” will reject his pretense. So he realizes he will need access to countries around the world to “root out” those who oppose him when he appears as the Antichrist. That is part of what he set out to accomplish through the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. His ultimate goal is to craft circumstances in which he feels confident he can completely eradicate True Believers. It is not too far-fetched to believe that he will indiscriminately label all who oppose him as “terrorists”—even though True Believers will be vehemently opposed to terrorism.

The United States government has already established a policy by which any nation could theoretically demand that a country harboring terrorists give them up. At present, a country that refuses to turn them over to the United States could automatically find itself at war with not only the United States but also with all the other members of NATO. If the members of the United Nations stand by silently and tacitly condone that policy in this case, the Antichrist could easily invoke its use by Israel since that country is the target of most of the terrorist groups now operating out of Muslim countries.

If Satan is planning what he seems to be, the United States government will continue on its current course. It may even expand the war against terrorism by demanding that Muslim nations other than Afghanistan turn over anyone and everyone suspected of participating in terrorist activity. The government of Iraq—that is, Saddam Hussein and his henchmen—is the next likely target, either overtly or covertly. That conclusion is based, in part, on the fact that the Scriptures confirm that the Antichrist will take military action against Lebanon, Egypt, Libya, and Sudan. But they make no mention of any other “horn” being removed. If Iraq were still a threat when the Antichrist came to power, one would assume that he would move against that country as well. Since he does not, it tends to indicate that Saddam Hussein’s weapons of mass destruction must no longer be of concern to Israel.

Libya and Sudan are already recognized as being terrorist states. So the fact that the Antichrist invades Egypt along with those two countries may suggest that the moderate government currently in power in Egypt may have been replaced by a hard-line fundamentalist government. If such a turn of events should occur

down the road, it would merely be one more indication that what Satan has planned is rapidly becoming a reality. Also, the government of Saudi Arabia is probably set to take a hard turn away from the United States after the death of its current leader—King Faud. Stay tuned. You should have known that Satan was getting desperate when the Berlin Wall fell.

A Few Things to Consider

Although Satan has clearly indicated he intends to use terrorists and the activities of terrorist networks to set the stage for his appearance as the Antichrist, there are some elements of his plan that still remain shrouded in darkness. For example, how will he manage the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem? The site is currently occupied by a mosque which will, one assumes, have to be either torn down or destroyed before the Temple can be built there. Will Muslims allow him to remove that mosque because they accept him as the Messiah that they, too, are expecting? Or will he simply ride roughshod over them (that’s an idiom) and tear down the mosque despite their objections? That remains to be seen.

Another aspect of Satan’s plan that he will undoubtedly not unveil until the very last moment is the “mark” that he will insist everyone accept. That “mark” would appear to be some sort of technology that governments will use to track the activities of people around the world. Whether it utilizes the Global Positioning System technology or something else is mere speculation at this point. It will be obvious to “The Many” when it is finally introduced because they will have already seen “the abomination of desolation standing where it should not be.” That will be their cue to head for the hills (that’s another idiom).

Now that I have explained the rough details of Satan’s plan, it should be obvious that time is rapidly running out (that’s an idiom as well). Nonetheless, we still have a ways to go before everything is in place for that miniscule moron to make his appearance and drag the world into the fiery inferno which reveals the wrath of God. If you have any desire at all to know the Truth, you should “set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth” (Col. 3:2). A new “day”—the seventh “day” of Creation—is almost on us. Some things down here—including mankind—have already been consigned to the scrap heap of history. ■



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.

*“Let my teaching drop as the rain,
My speech distill as the dew,
As the droplets on the fresh grass
And as the showers on the herb.”*
(Deuteronomy 32:2)

When God *delivered* *The Teaching* to Moses, He established an ongoing relationship between the Teacher and the Prophet. (See *The Mystery of Scripture, Volume 1*.) Both were supposed to preserve and protect the integrity of *The Teaching*, making sure that it was *handed down* intact to the next generation. The Teacher was expected to gain his insight into the Truth from the *oral Teaching* that was being *handed down* by the priests. However, if that *oral Teaching* became corrupted, as it often did, God would call a Prophet to *restore* the Truth. The Prophet gained his insight into the Truth through divine revelation, which allowed him to understand the *meaning* and *significance* of the *written Torah*.

The Pharisees understood that Moses had been entrusted with both an *oral* and a *written Teaching*. But they insisted—erroneously—that their ancestors had successfully *handed down* the *oral Teaching* to them. Jesus refuted their claim on several occasions. But in the following passage, He blasts the Pharisees for having “seated themselves in the chair of Moses”—which He knew should have been occupied by the priests. He also warns His disciples to be careful not to follow any teaching other than His Own:

Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, saying, “The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses; therefore all that they tell you, do and observe, but do not do according to their deeds; for they say {things,} and do not do {them.} And they tie up heavy loads, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves are unwilling to move them with {so much as} a finger. But they do all their deeds to be noticed by men; for they broaden their phylacteries, and lengthen the tassels {of their garments.} And they love the place of honor at banquets, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and respectful greetings in the market places, and being called by men, Rabbi. But do not be called Rabbi; for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers. And do not call {anyone} on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. And do not be called leaders; for One is your Leader, {that is,} Christ.”
(Matthew 23:1–10)

If one does not understand the *parabolic image* in which Jesus Christ is the *Living Word* of God, it is easy to distort what Jesus said. Some of the poor, confused souls who do that even go so far as to claim that everyone can gain insight into the Word of God by simply looking within himself. Knuckleheads! If God expected it to work that way, why would He even bother calling Teachers whose specific goal is to “build” the Body and equip others for service (Eph. 4:11–12) by teaching? The Truth is, the Spirit of Jesus Christ is *The Teaching*. So the person to whom the “fullness” of *The Teaching* has been *handed down* needs no other Teacher. His Teacher resides within, just as John said. But John also warns against going beyond *The Teaching*:

And as for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him.
(1 John 2:27)

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

Just a reminder: The latter rain has begun. It would be prudent to seek shelter now. ■



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: *There seems to be a strong sentiment among some Americans that nuclear weapons should be used, if necessary, to wipe out terrorism. Although this sentiment is in the minority right now, it will undoubtedly become more popular if and when more terrorist attacks occur. Considering the degree of hatred that many Americans now have for Islamic terrorists and vice versa, do you think we could see nuclear weapons used by one side or the other before this war is over?*

Elijah: First, let me say that I do not believe that the people you refer to are “Islamic terrorists.” They are Arab terrorists who are using Islam in much the same way as white supremacists use Christianity. I say that because their basic agenda is not religious, it is political. Like Saddam Hussein, they envision the establishment of a pan-Arab union in which Islam would be the state religion. [Editor: See “Saddam Hussein: Heir to the Throne of Nebuchadnezzar?” *The Voice of Elijah*®, October 1990.] But the terrorists have no real interest in religion other than in using it to advance their cause. They are hiding behind the ignorant non-Arab Muslim fundamentalists in control of Afghanistan only because Arab governments understand their agenda and rightly see them as a threat. Ultimately, a ten-nation Arab league may well be the realization of the terrorists’ agenda. [Editor: See “Is This Enough ‘Distress’ for You?”

No Matter; More’s Coming,” in this issue of *The Voice of Elijah*®.] But I digress.

Nuclear weapons will most definitely be used “before this war is over.” That is because the war against terrorism is going to continue right up to the End of the Age. Terrorism and the world’s current response to it is, in fact, an essential part of Satan’s plan. [Editor: See “Is This Enough ‘Distress’ for You? No Matter; More’s Coming,” in this issue of *The Voice of Elijah*®.] But God has other plans. He knows that Satan will fail and, in a final act of fury, bring the sixth “day” of Creation to a close in the terrifying inferno of a nuclear holocaust. That will not happen until the End, when world leaders finally realize they have been duped by the Antichrist. The Prophet Zephaniah describes it this way:

*Near is the great day of the LORD,
Near and coming very quickly;
Listen, the day of the LORD!
In it the warrior cries out bitterly.
A day of wrath is that day,
A day of trouble and distress,
A day of destruction and desolation,
A day of darkness and gloom,
A day of clouds and thick darkness,
A day of trumpet and battle cry,
Against the fortified cities
And the high corner towers.
And I will bring distress on men,
So that they will walk like the blind,
Because they have sinned against the LORD;
And their blood will be poured out like dust,
And their flesh like dung.
Neither their silver nor their gold
Will be able to deliver them
On the day of the LORD’s wrath;
And all the earth will be devoured
In the fire of His jealousy,
For He will make a complete end,
Indeed a terrifying one,
Of all the inhabitants of the earth.
(Zephaniah 1:14–18)*

Zephaniah also warns those who know the Truth how to respond as the Day of the Lord draws near:

*Gather yourselves together, yes, gather,
O nation without shame,*

Before the decree takes effect—
 The day passes like the chaff—
 Before the burning anger of the LORD comes upon you,
 Before the day of the LORD's anger comes upon you.
 Seek the LORD,
 All you humble of the earth
 Who have carried out His ordinances;
 Seek righteousness, seek humility.
 Perhaps you will be hidden
 In the day of the LORD's anger.
 (Zephaniah 2:1–3)

In light of what Zephaniah says, a True Believer who does not know how to “gather” with other True Believers would appear to be in some danger—if indeed the Second Coming of Christ is approaching. I can only tell you that the Prophet is not speaking of a *literal* “gathering” in the flesh, where folks get together to sing, shout, or otherwise bask in the warm-fuzzies. He is speaking *parabolically* in terms of the *parabolic image* of the members of Israel—that is, the members of the Body of Jesus Christ—*parabolically* “gathering” in “The House” on Passover night for protection against “the Destroyer” (Ex. 12:23). If a True Believer understands the Truth of *The Teaching* and responds in accordance with what the Apostle Paul *meant* by his use of that *parabolic image* in the following verse, he will be safe:

Clean out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, just as you are {in fact} unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed.
 (1 Corinthians 5:7)

It should be obvious to even the most narrow-minded that the Apostle is speaking *parabolically* in that verse, but it isn't. That's because folks today don't even know what a parable is. So how can they be expected to understand that the Prophets and Apostles hid the Truth by speaking in terms of *parabolic imagery*, where one thing represents another? Being ignorant of those things, most people will have a difficult time accepting the Truth when they hear it. Nevertheless, any True Believer who sincerely wants to “clean out the old leaven” will eventually realize he has to get rid of his old mind-set and take on a completely new one—one based on the *parabolic images* that Moses and the other Prophets of Israel employed. Matthew clearly explains what the *parabolic image* of leaven represents:

And the disciples came to the other side and had forgotten to take bread. And Jesus said to them, “Watch out and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” And they began to discuss among themselves, “{It is} because we took no bread.” But Jesus, aware of this, said, “You men of little faith, why do you discuss among yourselves that you have no bread? Do you not yet understand or remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets you took up? Or the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many large baskets you took up? How is it that you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread? But beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” Then they understood that He did not say to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.
 (Matthew 16:5–12)

Unfortunately, the True Believer's *parabolic* removal of “leaven” has no value if it is not done in “The House” as part of the Passover ritual. Therefore, he must begin by *parabolically* “gathering” with other members of the Body of Christ—in “The House” on the Passover—as the Lord commanded through Zephaniah. Only then will his *parabolic* efforts to “clean out the old leaven” have any real *meaning* and *significance*. But I stringently warn True Believers to beware of anyone who suggests they “help” each other accomplish that task. That person is undoubtedly a Pretender. The “gathering” of Believers is not something people can do by *literally* joining together with others. The “gathering” is a *parabolic* “gathering,” a gathering by which the Body of Jesus Christ finally comes together as One.

God expects True Believers to “gather” in Jesus Christ, the *Living Word* of God—the One Who is “The House” of God. However, the members of that Body who are currently scattered around the world cannot reasonably be expected to do something they know nothing about. Consequently, those who have insight into the *meaning* and *significance* of the *parabolic image* of the Passover should alert those whom they believe may be born-again Believers that Satan's delusion is already in place and “the Destroyer” is soon to appear as the Antichrist. Only then can the members of the Body of Jesus Christ “gather” in “The House” as the Lord requires and “clean out the old leaven.”

It is important for those who are already being “gathered” to understand that time is of the essence. One of the few things currently holding Satan back is

the fact that some elements of “*The Mystery*” have yet to be completed. When those things—which are coming together fairly rapidly—are in place, Satan’s delusion will control the thinking of all but a very few. Unfortunately, when the events that John describes *parabolically* in the following passage finally occur, it will be impossible for anyone else to “gather”:

And I saw another strong angel coming down out of heaven, clothed with a cloud; and the rainbow was upon his head, and his face was like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire; and he had in his hand a little book which was open. And he placed his right foot on the sea and his left on the land; and he cried out with a loud voice, as when a lion roars; and when he had cried out, the seven peals of thunder uttered their voices. And when the seven peals of thunder had spoken, I was about to write; and I heard a voice from heaven saying, “Seal up the things which the seven peals of thunder have spoken, and do not write them.” And the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land lifted up his right hand to heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, WHO CREATED HEAVEN AND THE THINGS IN IT, AND THE EARTH AND THE THINGS IN IT, AND THE SEA AND THE THINGS IN IT, that there shall be delay no longer, but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then the mystery of God is finished, as He preached to His servants the prophets.
(Revelation 10:1–7)

Editor: *It’s normal for people and nations to believe the god they worship will help their side—the “good” side—be victorious over their enemies—the “evil” side. The statements made by both the United States and the Taliban in Afghanistan support this notion because both sides claim they are the “good” side and that the other side is “evil.” They also insist their god will lead them to victory. Unfortunately, “good” and “evil” are not defined by the One true God in the same way that sinful men define these terms, and the gods that men love to worship are nothing more than figments of their imagination. Would you please define “good” and “evil” as the God of Truth defines these terms? And would you also explain how the God Who is—the One Who is described in the Scriptures—differs from the imaginary god this country wants to believe exists?*

Elijah: One completely insurmountable problem faces all those dullards who desperately want to believe—in

spite of all the evidence to the contrary—that God is on their “side.” The difficulty with their way of thinking is this: God does not take sides in the petty controversies in which men engage. He has a plan—a specific purpose—which has not changed since the beginning of Creation. In that plan, “*The Man*”—both male and female—Whom God has created in His Own image and likeness will rest on the seventh “day” of Creation and begin to reign over all Creation. Until then, as God continues to carry out his plan concerning “*The Man*,” individuals (not groups) may occasionally find themselves on God’s side, not because of what they are, but because of what they have in their possession—an understanding of *the promise*. That incredible circumstance fell on Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as well as some of their descendants. It will do the same to “*The Many*” here at the End.

Even when people can see through the idiotic notion that God takes sides, they still tend to be myopic when it comes to understanding what it *means* to be on God’s “side.” “Christians” today rattle off the Old Testament stories about Samson and David, or they *talk about* Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego as though victory over one’s circumstances is the norm for those who take their stand with God. Yet they completely ignore the fact that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, for example, went through Hell on Earth before God finally delivered them from the fiery furnace.

Those poor souls who believe the nonsense preached by the pulpit parrots live in constant tension. On the one hand, they think that if those who live the victorious “Christian” life should always revel in the blessings of God. So when they look at their own life and see a good heapin’ helpin’ of tragedy, frustration, dejection, or defeat, they come to the logical conclusion that God must have caught them off guard and abandoned them while they weren’t looking.

When bad things happen to the Pretenders in the churches, they tend to get good and angry at God, blaming Him for everything in their lives that makes them unhappy. Because of Satan’s lies, even True Believers sometimes have difficulty getting through difficult experiences with their faith intact. But that is only because they don’t realize they are experiencing exactly what God has in store for anyone who has chosen to stand with Him on His “side.” He is testing them to see what is in their “heart”—that is, what is in their mind. He does that with every True Believer. [Editor:

See "God Did a Job on Job, Didn't He?" *The Voice of Elijah*®, April 1996.]

God is currently getting ready to put the Body of Jesus Christ through the most intensive refining process the world has ever known. If one does not understand that God has always dealt that way with those who stand on His "side," the persecution of True Believers by the Antichrist will make no sense at all. In fact, Pretenders will see it as nothing more than the Wicked getting their just desserts. To those who know the Truth however, the desperate antics of a ridiculous little man who piously sits in the rebuilt Temple and pretends to be Jesus Christ will make perfect sense. Will they to you? That depends entirely on what you choose to believe between now and then. When the Antichrist appears, those born-again Believers who have prepared themselves by attaining a knowledge of the Truth will step forward to face down the Liar. Everyone else will fall for his delusion. As the Early Church Father Irenæus describes it:

For this is the last contest of the righteous, in which, when they overcome, they are crowned with incorruption. (Irenæus, "Against Heresies," Book v, Chap. xxix; see also The AntiChrist, p. 23 and The Advent of Christ and AntiChrist, p. 75)

Before I explain how God defines "good" and "evil," let me say a bit about the "imaginary god" that you mentioned. That fictitious being stems from the fact that unregenerate people have a hard time coping with the cold, hard reality of the prison in which we live. So instead of facing the Truth, they rationalize by creating an imaginary reality more to their liking. As the basis for that reality, most have accepted the myth in which the angry God of Israel is a benevolent, all-forgiving, ever-loving god of grace. You know, the "God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life" kind of god. That goofy god has completely replaced the God of wrath Who has already found them guilty and is going to sentence them to an eternity of suffering if they do not accept the Truth and repent. As Jesus explained, God doesn't have to judge anyone and find him guilty. According to the judgment process He established, the lost will judge themselves by rejecting the Truth:

"For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him.

He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who practices the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God."
(John 3:17-21)

The basic difficulty with the imaginary reality Pretenders have constructed is this: Anyone who believes a lie concerning the God Who is will find it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to relinquish that lie when confronted with the Truth. That effectively prevents them from being saved. Therefore, those who have chosen to believe the lie that God is a god of unconditional love simply cannot believe they must repent to avoid the wrath of an angry God. They should know better. The Apostle Paul warns them:

But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who WILL RENDER TO EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS: to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation. (Romans 2:5-8)

That passage comes from the New Testament, not the Old. And it was written long after Jesus Christ died on the cross. That can only mean that the God of wrath was still alive and kicking at that time. However, He obviously died sometime after that, otherwise the goofy god of unconditional love never would have been able to take His place. But enough ridicule of knuckleheads. Most of the folks who fill church pews every Sunday are in for a very big surprise. Yet they remain so firmly convinced by Satan's lie that they would never stop to listen to the Truth.

The God of wrath that the Apostle Paul describes doesn't sound anything at all like the goofy god of unconditional love that so many fools worship today. That's because they are two entirely different gods.

One exists; the other doesn't. But perhaps I'm wrong. Maybe we should just wait and see which god shows up on Judgment Day—the God Who is or the goofy god of unconditional love that morons desperately want to believe God is. We shouldn't have to wait long. He'll be along shortly. Unfortunately, those who are waiting for some goofy god of unconditional love to appear may wait, but they will never see the God Who is as He actually is. Those who have insight will:

See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and {such} we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. 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 3:1–2)

The God of the Old Testament—the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—is described in the Hebrew Scriptures as a jealous God, a God Who is quick to anger and *promises* to mete out vengeance on any and all who dare to worship any other god. That God of wrath said this to the sons of Israel:

"You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments."
(Exodus 20:4–6)

"Watch yourself that you make no covenant with the inhabitants of the land into which you are going, lest it become a snare in your midst. But {rather,} you are to tear down their altars and smash their {sacred} pillars and cut down their Asherim—for you shall not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God."
(Exodus 34:12–14)

Those two passages cast an entirely different light on the activities of all those "Christians" today who avidly worship their goofy god of unconditional love.

That god cannot be the same God that Moses and the other Prophets of Israel describe in the Hebrew Scriptures. It is nothing more than a figment of the imagination of fools. Even the bird-brained parrots who preach that god from the pulpit every Sunday should be able to understand that anyone who worships the god they preach is guilty of breaking the first commandment.

Unfortunately, most "Christians" will not listen even if someone preaches the Truth concerning the God Who is. They have no interest in the Truth. They only want to feel good in the face of a stark reality that they are completely unwilling to accept. So it doesn't bother them that those who preach the goofy god of unconditional grace are merely parroting some other imbecile who told them what they wanted to hear.

The "tares" in the Church will never admit that their goofy god of unconditional love originated with idiots who took the characteristics of "The Man" Jesus Christ—Who was obligated to love His neighbor when He lived under the Law—and attributed them to the angry God of Israel—a God Who knows no such limitation. Can you imagine the white-hot rage that the jealous God of Israel must feel when morons worship a god that does not even exist and dogmatically insist that they are worshiping Him? Believe me, their Day is coming. Yet such people go on blithely ignoring what the author of the Book of Hebrews says about the wrath of God that awaits those who fail to "keep the commandments":

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

Now let's talk about how God defines the terms good and evil. The first thing one needs to know about that is what Jesus said in that regard:

And as He was setting out on a journey, a man ran up to Him and knelt before Him, and {began} asking Him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone."
(Mark 10:17–18)

If you go through the Hebrew Scriptures tracking the usage of the Hebrew word that is normally translated “good,” you will find that what Jesus said is true. God is repeatedly said to be good, as He is in these verses:

*Good and upright is the LORD;
Therefore He instructs sinners in the way.
(Psalm 25:8)*

*O taste and see that the LORD is good;
How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!
(Psalm 34:8)*

*For the LORD is good;
His lovingkindness is everlasting,
And His faithfulness to all generations.
(Psalm 100:5)*

*Praise the LORD!
Oh give thanks to the LORD, for He is good;
For His lovingkindness is everlasting.
(Psalm 106:1)*

*Oh give thanks to the LORD, for He is good;
For His lovingkindness is everlasting.
(Psalm 107:1)*

In contrast to those descriptions of the Lord, Moses and the other Prophets of Israel never say that any human being is “good,” except in appearance. For example, Moses describes himself as a “good” baby:

*Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a daughter of Levi. And the woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was beautiful, she hid him for three months.
(Exodus 2:1–2)*

Likewise, Jeremiah also describes Saul as a person who was “good,” but only in appearance:

Now there was a man of Benjamin whose name was Kish the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Becorath, the son of Aphiah, the son of a Benjamite, a mighty man of valor. And he had a son whose name was Saul, a choice and handsome {man,} and there was not a more handsome person than he among the sons of Israel; from his

*shoulders and up he was taller than any of the people.
(1 Samuel 9:1–2)*

Although the Prophets never say that men are “good,” they do report that ordinary people in their day used the phrase “good man.” Jeremiah tells us David did so on at least one occasion:

*Now David was sitting between the two gates; and the watchman went up to the roof of the gate by the wall, and raised his eyes and looked, and behold, a man running by himself. And the watchman called and told the king. And the king said, “If he is by himself there is good news in his mouth.” And he came nearer and nearer. Then the watchman saw another man running; and the watchman called to the gatekeeper and said, “Behold, {another} man running by himself.” And the king said, “This one also is bringing good news.” And the watchman said, “I think the running of the first one is like the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok.” And the king said, “**This is a good man** and comes with good news.”
(2 Samuel 18:24–27)*

In the New Testament, Luke even uses the phrase “good man” to describe Barnabas:

*And the news about them reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas off to Antioch. Then when he had come and witnessed the grace of God, he rejoiced and {began} to encourage them all with resolute heart to remain {true} to the Lord; **for he was a good man**, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And considerable numbers were brought to the Lord.
(Acts 11:22–24)*

Although the Prophets never use the phrase “good man” to describe anyone, the Prophet who wrote the Book of Proverbs does use the phrase as a cryptic description of Jesus Christ in the following passages:

*A good man will obtain favor from the LORD,
But He will condemn a man who devises evil.
(Proverbs 12:2)*

*A good man leaves an inheritance to his children’s children,
And the wealth of the sinner is stored up for the righteous.
(Proverbs 13:22)*

*The backslider in heart will have his fill of his own ways,
But a good man will {be satisfied} with his.
(Proverbs 14:14)*

Then, of course, there is the Prophet's use of the phrase "good man" to mock Solomon's stupidity in "turning aside from *The Way*":

*It is the same for all. There is one fate for the righteous
and for the wicked; for the good, for the clean, and for the
unclean; for the man who offers a sacrifice and for the one
who does not sacrifice. As the good man is, so is the sin-
ner; as the swearer is, so is the one who is afraid to swear.
(Ecclesiastes 9:2)*

As far as the Prophets are concerned, the adjective *good* can only be used to describe the Man Jesus Christ. No one else qualifies. But what did it take for Jesus Christ to be a "good Man"? You have already seen the verse that provides the short answer:

*The backslider in heart will have his fill of his own ways,
But a good man will {be satisfied} with his.
(Proverbs 14:14)*

That translation doesn't adequately emphasize the sharp contrast that the Hebrew text draws between the "good Man" Who knew the Truth and the idiot who has heard the Truth but wants to think his own thoughts and do his own thing. Here is a more *literal* translation:

*A backslider of heart will be satisfied with his ways,
And a Good Man with His.
(Proverbs 14:14) —my interim translation*

If your readers don't know that Moses and the other Prophets of Israel *parabolically* referred to thoughts as "ways," or that Moses defined "*The Way*" as the Truth of *The Teaching*, the *meaning* and *significance* of that verse will elude them completely. But to the one who knows the Truth, it makes perfect sense: The Prophet's point is, the Messiah (the Man) will not only know and understand the Truth, He will also hold on to it. Consequently, He will be a "good Man" because He thinks good thoughts. That contrasts sharply with anyone who has believed the Truth of *The Teaching* of Moses, but later turns back from it. Mercifully, God will

make sure that person never doubts that the lies he has chosen to believe are true.

If Jesus Christ was a "good Man" because He believed the Truth and held on to it, it is logical to ask why the Prophets do not describe others who do the same as "good men." The answer is, they do. But one needs to understand the *parabolic imagery* related to "The One" and "The Many" before he can comprehend what they said in that regard. Only then does it make sense why an individual Believer does not qualify as a "good man" while "The Many" are (collectively) described as "those who are good," that is, "good men":

*Do good, O LORD, to those who are good,
And to those who are upright in their hearts.
(Psalm 125:4)*

*So you will walk in the way of good men,
And keep to the paths of the righteous.
(Proverbs 2:20)*

*The evil will bow down before the good,
And the wicked at the gates of the righteous.
(Proverbs 14:19)*

*The eyes of the LORD are in every place,
Watching the evil and the good.
(Proverbs 15:3)*

The Hebrew parallelism in those verses provides several essential definitions to anyone who seeks to understand "*The Way*." "Good men," that is, "those who are good," are those who are "upright in heart" and "righteous." If one knows that righteousness comes by belief in the Truth, that makes sense. "Good" is not defined by what one does, it is defined by what one has in his "heart," that is, in his mind. The good person is good because he understands and believes the Truth of "*The Way* of the Lord," that is, *The Teaching*. Those who don't have that same insight are "evil."

To be completely accurate, the translation "evil" is somewhat misleading. The Hebrew term that is normally translated "evil" actually *means* nothing more than "bad." It is the same term one finds in verses like the following where "good" is contrasted with "bad":

*"He shall not replace it or exchange it, a good for a bad, or
a bad for a good; or if he does exchange animal for animal,*

then both it and its substitute shall become holy.”
(Leviticus 27:10)

*Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil;
Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness;
Who substitute bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!*
(Isaiah 5:20)

A dimwit might argue that it is not fair for God to consider someone to be “bad,” or “evil,” before they have had opportunity to hear the Truth of the Gospel. The Truth is, God does not arbitrarily consider people to be bad. They are bad. That is, everybody starts out ignorant of the Truth. In that condition, there is nothing in their “hearts”—that is, in their minds—but bad thoughts. That’s why God destroyed everybody but Noah and his “house” at the time of the Flood:

Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. And the LORD said, “I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them.”
(Genesis 6:5–7)

The two terms that have been translated “wickedness” and “evil” in verse 5 actually derive from the same root. They carry the meaning “badness” and “bad,” respectively. The perspective inherent in both terms is one in which a person is evaluated in terms of both what he thinks and what he does. A “bad” person does “bad” things—that is, “badness”—because he thinks “bad” thoughts. The same perspective holds true for the term *good*. A “good” person does “good” things—“goodness”—because he thinks “good” thoughts. The principle that good deeds stem from good thoughts is one which I have often emphasized: We all act in accordance with what we believe. That is what the Apostle Paul had in mind when he wrote this:

Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things. The things you have learned and received and

heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace shall be with you.
(Philippians 4:8–9)

There is another set of Hebrew terms in which the person is viewed not from the perspective of what he thinks and does but from that of who he is. In that set, the “righteous” are “righteous,” and the “wicked” are “wicked.” “Righteousness” describes the essence of the “righteous” person’s being, “wickedness” that of the “wicked.” As you have already seen, the parallel terms in the two sets are considered to have nearly synonymous meaning:

*The evil will bow down before the good,
And the wicked at the gates of the righteous.*
(Proverbs 14:19)

Again, the Hebrew term in that verse which has been translated “evil” actually means “bad.” By his use of parallel terms, however, the Prophet defines a “good” person as “righteous” and a “bad” person as “wicked.” That link is crucial. As every good student of the Bible should know, the elusive personal characteristic known as “righteousness” depends entirely on whether one chooses to believe the Truth of God’s Word:

And He took him outside and said, “Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them.” And He said to him, “So shall your descendants be.” Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.
(Genesis 15:5–6)

This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? Does He then, who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? Even so Abraham BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.
(Galatians 3:2–6)

With the depth of Satan’s delusion being what it is, few will be able to understand that the important

thing is not *that* one believes but *what* one believes. As the Prophet clearly states by his innovative use of the following set of parallel statements, the righteousness needed to avoid wrath on Judgment Day comes only by believing the Truth of *The Teaching*:

*Your righteousness is a righteousness for 'olam,
And Your Teaching is truth.
(Psalm 119:142) —my interim translation*

Editor: As politically incorrect as prayer and the mere mention of God in a public setting used to be in this country, I find it amusing that everything suddenly changes when tragedy strikes. Not only is it politically correct now to pray in public or to sing "God Bless America" at public events, it is practically un-American if you don't. What is there about the human psychological makeup that prompts people who have no interest in God to suddenly start acting pious and religious when tragedy strikes? Do these people really think God can be so easily fooled by their pretense? Or do they act this way because deep down they know the imaginary "god" this country worships is as phony as they are?

Elijah: I agree with you that *some* people who have absolutely no interest in the God Who is suddenly start acting pious and religious when tragedy strikes. But I don't believe it is possible to generalize and say that *all* people start acting that way. There are some people—mainly politicians and people in other prominent positions—who put on an act after a tragedy because that is what is expected of them. But it is generally understood that such people are nothing more than a façade anyway.

By and large, those in the general population who act pious and religious in sorrowful situations are people who have done so off and on for years. Many, if not most, of them react that way because their conscience bothers them that they don't behave the way they know they should. Those are the people who started attending church after the terrorist attack on September 11. But the vast majority of unchurched people didn't suddenly show up on the doorstep of a church the next Sunday. If they had, churches would have been flooded with more people than they could ever have handled.

I believe that what actually happened after the terrorist attack was this: Devoutly religious people and

others who dabble in religion—among them, a few "Christian" politicians like the President—became more vocal in the days immediately after the tragedy. Very few irreligious people dared raise any objection to their public display of religion for fear of being labeled "un-American." To be blunt about it, unbelievers have been too cowardly to stand up to the "pious and religious" folks by expressing how they really feel. Give them time, they'll eventually get back to their agenda.

The phenomenon you mention is important, however, because the cowardice of unbelievers in such situations is going to allow the Antichrist to gain the upper hand throughout the world after he sets up shop in the Temple. If you think people have been acting "pious and religious" in the aftermath of the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, you haven't seen anything yet. Can you imagine how enthusiastically "Christians" and Jews will respond when the one they believe to be the Messiah appears? I'm not sure whether Muslims will also be taken in by Satan's charade and accept him as their messiah as well. The Scriptures tend to indicate that some will. But I am certain that unbelievers will be completely unable to stand against the idiocy of those "Christians" and Jews who are totally ignorant of Satan's plans.

Consider the implications of how John describes the reign of the Antichrist:

*And he causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves, to be given a mark on their right hand, or on their forehead, and {he provides} that no one should be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark, {either} the name of the beast or the number of his name.
(Revelation 13:16–17)*

That can only be describing a desperate attempt on the part of the Antichrist to identify those who oppose him. Considering the circumstances that currently exist in the Middle East, some of those people will undoubtedly be terrorists—angry Arab men who continue to seek the destruction of the Jews right up to the End of the Age. However, others will be True Believers like you and me—people who are able to see through the Antichrist's charade because they know the Truth. Unfortunately, some people who are completely irreligious—that is, people who would never admit that the bozo sitting in the rebuilt Temple is Jesus

Christ—will nevertheless accept the “mark” that he institutes because they see no harm in it and because they consider themselves to be patriotic citizens of the country in which they live. Since those people don’t know the Truth, they will see it as nothing more than part of their duty to help mankind “root out terrorism.”

Editor: Two prominent evangelical leaders were criticized shortly after the attacks on September 11, 2001, for suggesting that God brought judgment against America, in part, because of the sins of specific groups of Americans. These leaders would no doubt be shocked to think that God is every bit as angry, if not more so, at the Church and its leaders for having supplanted The Apostolic Teaching with the lies of men than He is at any particular secular group. What word of advice would you give a True Believer who might be inclined to disagree with the notion that God is angry with the Church?

Elijah: I would, first of all, question whether that person actually is a True Believer. I say that because it is impossible for anyone to believe—or to continue to believe—the Gospel and not have a firm grasp on the Truth concerning the wrath of God. Belief in the impending wrath of God is, after all, the only valid reason anyone has to repent and believe the Gospel. [Editor: See “What’s Left of the Right That Stayed Down When He Went Up?” *The Voice of Elijah*® *Update*, September 1995.] Since the Holy Spirit confirms the Truth within a True Believer when he hears it, it is impossible for anyone to reject that fundamental Truth and still continue to be a True Believer.

If someone is having a difficult time believing that God is angry with the Church for having lost the Truth, that person has most likely already rejected some essential part of the Gospel by choosing to believe a lie. That will not only make him reject more of the Truth when he hears it, it will also make it difficult for him to hold on to the Truth he already has. So I would advise such a person to carefully review his beliefs. He is definitely believing a lie.

Editor: Over the years you have talked about the authority that inheres in being a Prophet, Apostle, Teacher, or Evangelist; yet you haven’t said all that much about the authority that inheres in being a Believer. That is, the authority that a layman—a Believer who has not been called to a specific office in the Church—possesses

as a result of his or her faith in Christ. To hear most pastors tell it, every Believer has the authority to be an Evangelist and most Believers have the authority, to one degree or another, to be a Teacher. I know this isn’t true, but would you please explain what legitimate authority the Believer does possess?

Elijah: That’s an appropriate question, given the fact that the Second Coming is just around the corner. At that time, every True Believer will be required to give account of how he used—or abused—the authority he was given when he was born again. So it is probably best that he start planning for that now.

If you have ever stopped to think about the concept of authority, you probably already know that authority is nothing more than the right to do certain things. For example, if someone has the authority of a police officer, he has the right to arrest anyone who breaks the law. But his authority as a police officer is limited, as is that of most people in authority. For example, he does not have the right—the authority—to arrest someone who has not engaged in an unlawful activity.

Authority is also not something a person can come up with on his own—if he is a law-abiding citizen. It must be transferred to him by someone who has authority to grant authority to others. And it is important to note that every *right* (authority) has a corresponding *responsibility*. A law-enforcement officer who has been granted the *authority* to arrest people who break the law has also been invested with the *responsibility* to do so diligently but not to abuse the authority he has been given. If he does not act responsibly and is found out, he will not only lose the authority he has, he will also be punished. Keep that in mind. It applies directly to the authority God has granted the Believer.

Jesus *talks about* the authority of the Believer in the following passage, where He warns His disciples that they need to be vigilant so as to be ready for His Second Coming:

“Take heed, keep on the alert; for you do not know when the {appointed} time is. {It is} like a man, away on a journey, {who} upon leaving his house and putting his slaves in charge, {assigning} to each one his task, also commanded the doorkeeper to stay on the alert. Therefore, be on the alert—for you do not know when the master of the house is coming, whether in the evening, at midnight,

at cockcrowing, or in the morning—lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. And what I say to you I say to all, 'Be on the alert!'"
(Mark 13:33–37)

As is the case in so many other instances, the translator of that text partially obscured the Truth of what Jesus said because he did not understand what Jesus was *talking about*. This is a more *literal* translation of what Jesus said:

"Watch! Stay awake! For you do not know when the time is. Like a man away on a journey who left his house and gave his slaves the authority—to each one his work—and gave orders to the doorkeeper so that he would stand watch. Therefore, stand watch! Because you do not know when the lord of the house will return—whether late, or midnight, or rooster crowing, or early morning. Lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. And what I say to one, I say to all: 'Stand watch!'"
(Mark 13:33–37) —my interim translation

In that parable, Jesus is using the *parabolic imagery* related to the Hebrew idiom "build a house" to speak *parabolically* concerning "the authority" He turned over to the Church—which is, *parabolically* speaking, His "house." "The authority" Jesus mentions is the same authority that God *promised* He would give "The Man" He created in His Own image and likeness. After His Resurrection in the image and likeness of God, Jesus *handed down* that authority to His disciples:

And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."
(Matthew 28:18–20)

The point that Jesus makes in the parable above is actually quite easy to understand: Every member of "The House" of God has been given the basic authority of a doorkeeper. That is, every True Believer is responsible for staying awake and standing watch so that he can immediately inform the other members of "The House" when he knows for certain—not just thinks, assumes,

or supposes—that the "Lord" of "The House" is about to return from his "journey." The major fly in that ointment is this: A Believer certainly cannot fulfill his responsibility as a doorkeeper in God's "House" if he does not know what the Lord of "The House" looks LIKE. However, if someone is able to recognize Jesus Christ, the One Who is the *Living Word of God*, *The Apostolic Teaching*, that person not only has the authority to notify others that the Lord is about to return, he also has the responsibility to stay awake so that he can do so.

As Jesus explains, every True Believer has the authority of a doorkeeper. But each and every one of them has an even more basic authority than that. The Apostle John mentions that authority in this passage:

There was the true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, {even} to those who believe in His name, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.
(John 1:9–13)

The term *authority* has been translated "right" in that passage. John is using the term to explain how one can be "born again." I am not going to get into an involved discussion concerning the *meaning* and *significance* of the Greek word translated "born" in the New Testament. If you are interested, you can look it up for yourself in a Greek lexicon. Suffice it to say that the word should be translated "engendered" since it can refer either to the point of conception or to the time of delivery. It depends on whether the term refers to the male or to the female as the one who "engenders" the child in question. In this case, both events are in view. That's why John says True Believers have not only been given "the right to become children of God" but "were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

Contrary to the lie that Satan has propagated concerning the new birth, True Believers have only been "engendered" by God. That is, they have been conceived. They have not yet been "born" of "The Woman." Those who do not live up to the right and the corresponding responsibility that they have been given

as Children of God will certainly not participate in the parabolic “delivery” of the Children of God that the Apostle Paul describes in this passage:

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.} For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for {our} adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.

(Romans 8:14–23)

Some dolt who reads your publication is undoubtedly going to reject the *parabolic imagery* related to the new birth that I have just explained. He will argue that it cannot in any way apply because Paul says True Believers are already the Children of God. Such abject dumbness doesn’t even merit a response, but I’ll bite—just to show you how ridiculous that argument is. To be logical, that idiot cannot disapprove of abortion since the basis for his position rests on the contention that a *parabolic* fetus growing in the *parabolic* womb of “The Woman” is not a *parabolic* Child of God.

The Truth concerning the new birth is this: Over the centuries, God has—through the preaching of the simple Gospel message—*parabolically* “engendered” millions of children in the womb of “The Woman.” When the sixth “day” of Creation is complete, “The Woman” will “engender”—that is, give birth to—those who are to bear the image and likeness of God for all eternity. That is what the Prophet Isaiah is *talking about* when he says this:

*“Before she travailed, she brought forth;
Before her pain came, she gave birth to a boy.
Who has heard such a thing?
Who has seen such things?
Can a land be born in one day?
Can a nation be brought forth all at once?
As soon as Zion travailed, she also brought forth her sons.
Shall I bring to the point of birth, and not give delivery?”
says the LORD.
“Or shall I who gives delivery shut {the womb?}”
says your God.
“Be joyful with Jerusalem and
rejoice for her, all you who love her;
Be exceedingly glad with her,
all you who mourn over her,
That you may nurse and
be satisfied with her comforting breasts,
That you may suck and
be delighted with her bountiful bosom.”
(Isaiah 66:7–11)*

Although God has *parabolically* “engendered” millions of children in “The Woman,” not all will survive to full term. That is the case because a Believer will never see “The Light” of day if he does not avail himself of the “authority” he has, as John says, “to become a child of God.” Keep in mind that I am speaking *parabolically*. As I have stated on other occasions, all authority resides in *The Teaching*. So I’ll let you figure out what John had in mind when he wrote that.

Editor: *It is commonly taught in the Church today that every Believer possesses one or more spiritual gifts. What exactly are spiritual gifts and how many are there? Is it true that every True Believer has at least one spiritual gift and if so, how is the Believer supposed to determine what his spiritual gift is?*

Elijah: Paul mentions spiritual gifts in several of the letters he wrote to the churches he established. But he *talks about* them at some length in only two of his letters—the one he wrote to the church at Rome and his first letter to the church at Corinth. He says this to the church at Rome:

For through the grace given to me I say to every man among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment,

as God has allotted to each a measure of faith. For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, {let each exercise them accordingly:} if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

(Romans 12:3–8)

There are two especially significant things to note in what Paul says about spiritual gifts on this occasion. The first is that the purpose of the gifts is to prepare “The Many” members of the Body of Jesus Christ so that they can function effectively as individual members of One Body. The second is that the function of “The Many” in “The One” depends on their “measure of faith.” Satan has so effectively disseminated the “leap of faith” nonsense that even True Believers have no idea saving faith must be based on a knowledge of the Truth. (See “Satan’s Fools Are Satan’s Tools,” *The Voice of Elijah*®, April 1994.) Nevertheless, God still expects people to respond to the Truth because it makes sense to them. Therefore, the “measure of faith” that Paul mentions has nothing to do with the “desperately hanging on to God in spite of everything” nonsense that one hears today.

In the Early Church, it was generally understood that the “measure” of one’s faith depended on the extent to which he understood and believed the Truth of *The Apostolic Teaching*. Therefore, those who did not have sufficient knowledge of *The Teaching* were generally considered to be “weak” because they had a “weak” conscience, as Paul mentions in this passage:

*Therefore concerning the eating of things sacrificed to idols, we know that there is no such thing as an idol in the world, and that there is no God but one. For even if there are so-called gods whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords, yet for us there is {but} one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and we {exist} for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we {exist} through Him. **However not all men have this knowledge; but some, being accustomed to the idol until now, eat***

*{food} as if it were sacrificed to an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled. But food will not commend us to God; we are neither the worse if we do not eat, nor the better if we do eat. But take care lest this liberty of yours somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. For if someone sees you, who have knowledge, dining in an idol’s temple, will not his conscience, if he is weak, be strengthened to eat things sacrificed to idols? **For through your knowledge he who is weak is ruined, the brother for whose sake Christ died. And thus, by sinning against the brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ.***

(1 Corinthians 8:4–12)

You can see that, in Paul’s view, the one who is “weak” is one who does not believe (have faith) that he can eat anything that is offered to him. In another place, Paul defines such a person as “weak in faith”:

*Now accept the one who is weak in faith, {but} not for {the purpose of} passing judgment on his opinions. **One man has faith that he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats vegetables {only.}** Let not him who eats regard with contempt him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats, for God has accepted him. Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and stand he will, for the Lord is able to make him stand. One man regards one day above another, another regards every day {alike.} Let each man be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord, and he who eats, does so for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who eats not, for the Lord he does not eat, and gives thanks to God. For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself; for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s.*

(Romans 14:1–8)

The opposite of a person who is “weak in faith” is, quite naturally, one who is “strong in faith.” Paul describes Abraham as being just that sort of individual:

For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified; for the Law brings about wrath, but where there

is no law, neither is there violation. For this reason {it is} by faith, that {it might be} in accordance with grace, in order that the promise may be certain to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, (as it is written, "A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS HAVE I MADE YOU") in the sight of Him whom he believed, {even} God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist. In hope against hope he believed, in order that he might become a father of many nations, according to that which had been spoken, "SO SHALL YOUR DESCENDANTS BE." **And without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb; yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief, but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what He had promised, He was able also to perform.**

(Romans 4:13–21)

The thing that one should note in what Paul says about Abraham is this: There was a definite content to Abraham's faith. He did not have some vaguely defined belief like the dimwits today who claim to "believe in Jesus Christ" yet have never heard the Gospel message. No, Abraham firmly believed *the promise* that God had explained to him, and he knew that *the fulfillment of the promise* depended on him *handing down the promise* to his son. Therefore, he was absolutely certain that God would eventually provide him a son to whom he could *hand down the promise*. My point is simply this: The strength of Abraham's faith depended on his knowledge of the Truth. He was able to grow "strong in faith" only because he had already been given insight into the Truth. That is, the "measure" of his faith was not hampered by a lack of knowledge.

Now let's get back to the spiritual gifts and see how the things I have just explained apply. In his letter to the church at Corinth, Paul says this about the gifts:

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. And there are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all {persons.} But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same

Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another {various} kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.

(1 Corinthians 12:4–11)

Paul parallels his statements concerning "varieties of gifts," "varieties of ministries," and "varieties of effects" to draw attention to the fact that the gifts he lists can be used in various ways to produce various results. There is no "right" or "wrong" way to manifest any one of them. It is important to keep in mind, however, what I have already explained on another occasion: The gifts that Paul mentions clearly involve the communication of a definite content. (See "Questions & Answers," *The Voice of Elijah*®, October 1997.) That's because God's purpose in the gifts is to equip the members of the local church with knowledge, understanding, and wisdom so that each can contribute to the functioning of that Body. Paul goes on to explain that *parabolically* this way:

For even as the body is one and {yet} has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not {a part} of the body," it is not for this reason any the less {a part} of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not {a part} of the body," it is not for this reason any the less {a part} of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired. And if they were all one member, where would the body be? But now there are many members, but one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; or again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." On the contrary, it is much truer that the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary; and those {members} of the body, which we deem less honorable, on these we bestow more abundant honor, and our unseemly {members come to} have more abundant seemliness, whereas our seemly {members} have no need {of it.}

But God has {so} composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that {member} which lacked, that there should be no division in the body, but {that} the members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if {one} member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it.
(1 Corinthians 12:12–27)

Pay close attention to what Paul says about the members of the Body “which seem to be weaker.” As I have already explained, knowledge of the Truth is a determining factor in the strength or weakness of one’s faith. But one’s “measure of faith” sets the limits of his authority to minister to others. Therefore, it is logical that the spiritual gifts would be related to the authority structure of the Church. That is why Paul says this:

And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, {various} kinds of tongues. All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not {workers of} miracles, are they? All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they?
(1 Corinthians 12:28–30)

Paul is talking about the fact that a knowledge of the Truth is the primary qualification for the office of Apostle, Prophet, or Teacher as well as for all of the spiritual gifts. But did you notice that Paul did not include the office of Evangelist in that list? That’s because an Evangelist has absolutely no authority to minister to anyone who has already been “born again.” That is, the focus of the ministry of an Evangelist is not to the members of the Body of Jesus Christ. It is to minister to unbelievers by preaching the Gospel *outside the Church*. [Editor: See “What’s Left of the Right That Stayed Down When He Went Up?” *The Voice of Elijah*® *Update*, September 1995.]

Unfortunately, Satan has managed to plant so many “tares” among True Believers (Matt. 13:24–30, 36–43) that there are almost as many unbelievers who show up in church every Sunday as there are unbelievers who stay home. For that reason *where* an Evangelist preaches is no longer as important as *what* he preaches. If he gets off his assigned message and starts preaching

something other than the simple message of the Gospel, God is not well pleased, to say the least.

Now that I’ve gotten off my soapbox, let me make my point and be done with it. Under the authority structure that Jesus Christ established in the Church, the Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, and Teachers had to be either called by God or by someone who had been called. That is, an Apostle, Prophet, Teacher, or Evangelist could authorize other people to do certain things if they believed them to have sufficient knowledge of the Truth to minister to others. However, they chose laymen for the role they were to play in ministering to the other members of the Church on the basis of their knowledge of and belief in the Truth of *The Apostolic Teaching*. Laymen who were chosen to minister to the Body received authority to minister through the laying on of hands. For example, it appears that Timothy may have had a couple of different gifts—one he received from the hands of Paul and another from the hands of others:

*Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed upon you through prophetic utterance **with the laying on of hands by the presbytery**.*
(1 Timothy 4:14)

*And for this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you **through the laying on of my hands**.*
(2 Timothy 1:6)

Paul is also referring to the bestowal of spiritual gifts through the laying on of hands in this passage:

*Always in my prayers making request, if perhaps now at last by the will of God I may succeed in coming to you. For I long to see you **in order that I may impart some spiritual gift** to you, that you may be established.*
(Romans 1:10–11)

From what I have told you, you should be able to see that there was no definite number of spiritual gifts in the Apostolic Church. The nature of the gift bestowed through the laying on of hands depended entirely on what authority a layman needed under the circumstances. Even then, lay ministry was conducted under the supervision of those with authority over the local church. Therefore, if someone is seeking a spiritual gift, I suggest that they find someone who has been

called as an Apostle, since only an Apostle has the authority to establish a local church and delegate authority to those he appoints to govern that church. I also suggest that the person seeking a spiritual gift find someone who has been called as a Prophet or Teacher, since the operation of spiritual gifts requires the oversight of someone with a comprehensive knowledge of *The Teaching*. It would also be best if he kept in mind the fact that the purpose of spiritual gifts is to “build” the local church. That contrasts with the calling of an Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, or Teacher, whose calling is to “build” the universal church.

I have repeatedly stated that God called me as a Teacher. Therefore, I could “call” others and give them authority to minister as Teachers under my calling. But I will tell you—just for the record—that I do not intend to ever transfer authority to anyone. Therefore, anyone seeking to minister to others in a local church setting is going to have to find somebody else to bestow it on them. I can easily fulfill my calling without teaching people face-to-face. And if there is any need for anyone to teach what I teach after I pass on, it will be obvious that what I teach is not true.

Editor: *What advice would you give a person who is hearing the Truth of The Teaching for the first time?*

Elijah: I would warn them to be extremely careful how they respond to the little bit of Truth they have heard. If they have heard no more than what is in one or two issues of *The Voice of Elijah*® newsletter, they certainly haven’t heard enough to decide whether or not the things I teach are true. At a minimum, one needs to read *Not All Israel Is Israel*, *The Mystery of Scripture*, *The Advent of Christ and AntiChrist*, and the articles in the first six years of *The Voice of Elijah*® newsletter. Then they can decide whether or not they have heard the Truth.

If someone can thoroughly evaluate the things I have written and still reject them, God has obviously not called me to teach that person. However, the reason I warn your readers to be careful how they respond to the Truth has nothing to do with the people who reject it. It has to do with those few True Believers who have honestly responded to God’s offer of salvation on the basis of a belief in the Truth of the Gospel. Those people may not realize that when they were “born again,” they were entrusted with a down payment on an eternal *inheritance*. Despite their ignorance in that regard, God

holds them responsible for how they treat that sacred “pledge”:

He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him with a view to an administration suitable to the fulness of the times, {that is}, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things upon the earth. In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of {God’s own} possession, to the praise of His glory.
(Ephesians 1:9–14)

Most True Believers don’t realize how highly God values the Holy Spirit with which they have been entrusted. The Apostle Paul did. That’s why he sternly admonishes Timothy to be careful what he teaches:

Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to {you.}
(2 Timothy 1:13–14)

It isn’t obvious that Paul is *talking about* the True Believer’s obligation to protect the Truth of *The Apostolic Teaching* that he has been privileged to hear. But he is. The Apostle also says this concerning the Truth of *The Teaching*:

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves; {we are} afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus’ sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.
(2 Corinthians 4:7–11)

The “treasure in earthen vessels” that Paul had in mind is the True Believer’s knowledge of and belief in the Truth of *The Apostolic Teaching*. That Truth holds the incredible power to save the one who believes it. It is, therefore, not something to be treated casually or taken lightly. Jesus warned His disciples that those who have been given insight into the Truth that He *handed down* to His disciples will be held accountable for what they do with that insight:

“For {it is} just like a man {about} to go on a journey, who called his own slaves, and entrusted his possessions to them. And to one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability; and he went on his journey. Immediately the one who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and gained five more talents. In the same manner the one who {had received} the two {talents} gained two more. But he who received the one {talent} went away and dug in the ground, and hid his master’s money. Now after a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. And the one who had received the five talents came up and brought five more talents, saying, ‘Master, you entrusted five talents to me; see, I have gained five more talents.’ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things, enter into the joy of your master.’ The one also who {had received} the two talents came up and said, ‘Master, you entrusted to me two talents; see, I have gained two more talents.’ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’ And the one also who had received the one talent came up and said, ‘Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no {seed.} And I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the ground; see, you have what is yours.’ But his master answered and said to him, ‘You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I scattered no {seed.} Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my {money} back with interest. Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.’ For to everyone who has shall {more} be given, and he shall have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away. And cast out the worthless slave into the outer

darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”
(Matthew 25:14–30)

In that parable, Jesus is clearly using money (“talents”) as a *parabolic image* to represent something else. The question is, What does it represent? Jesus provides the answer in what He says on another occasion:

“The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil {man} out of the evil {treasure} brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart.”
(Luke 6:45)

If one does not know that—in the Scriptures at least—the “heart” is the mind, it is impossible to understand not only that statement but also many of the other statements the Prophets and Apostles made in the Scriptures. That is why Satan has worked so hard over the years to disseminate the idiotic modern-day notion that the “heart” is some nebulous, non-existent seat of the emotions. What Jesus says concerning the “treasure” in the heart of the “good man” (remember him?) gets straight to the point: Since salvation is by faith—that is, by belief in the Truth—the one who knows and believes the Truth of *The Teaching* has a phenomenal treasure in his possession. That “treasure” resides in his mind, and he brings it forth each and every time he *talks about* the things he understands.

In the Parable of the Talents, Jesus is *parabolically* describing what it was LIKE when He ascended. The “talents” He gave His disciples *parabolically* represent a given amount of insight into *The Apostolic Teaching*. Jesus is explaining that before He left on His *parabolic* “journey” through the “veil” (Heb. 4:14; 6:19–20), He established an authority structure in which some had a greater understanding of the Truth and others had less. Nonetheless, He warned His disciples that each person to whom they *handed down* *The Apostolic Teaching* would be judged on the basis of what he did with the Truth he *received*.

In the Apostolic Church, the Apostles had the ultimate authority because they had *received* a revelation of *The Apostolic Teaching* directly from Jesus Christ Himself. That is, their understanding of the Truth included everything the Prophets had sealed up in the Hebrew Scriptures. The Prophets in the Church had somewhat

less authority than the Apostles because they had been taught by the Apostles. God provided them additional insight into the Truth only on an as-needed basis. The Teachers in the Early Church had less authority than the Apostles and Prophets because they *received* no direct revelation at all from God. Their understanding of the Truth came from someone who had the authority to teach. That may have been an Apostle or Prophet, since they also had the authority of a Teacher. That is, they could teach others the things they got directly from Jesus Christ. But, as Jesus plainly stated, it is impossible for a disciple of *The Apostolic Teaching* to achieve an understanding of the Truth that is greater than that of the person who taught him:

“A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master.”

(Matthew 10:24)

Laymen in the Early Church got their insight into *The Teaching* from someone with the authority of a Teacher. Therefore, to a certain extent, their understanding of the Truth was determined by that of their Teacher. But to an even greater extent, it depended on whether they wanted to know the Truth—that is, whether they had a real love of the Truth. That is why Paul said this about the appearance of the Antichrist:

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

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

(2 Thessalonians 2:1–12)

The greatest test that True Believers will ever face is how to respond appropriately to the Truth here at the End. It is going to be an ongoing test, one that they will confront daily. The consequences for failure are dire, yet most will never even know they are being tested. It is not by accident that Jesus said the one who failed to do what his master expected was the one who had *received* the fewest “talents.” As He plainly states on another occasion, those who know the least about the *meaning* and *significance* of the parables of the Prophets are the ones who are the most at risk:

And the disciples came and said to Him, “Why do You speak to them in parables?” And He answered and said to them, “To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted. For whoever has, to him shall {more} be given, and he shall have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him. Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. And in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, ‘YOU WILL KEEP ON HEARING, BUT WILL NOT UNDERSTAND; AND YOU WILL KEEP ON SEEING, BUT WILL NOT PERCEIVE; FOR THE HEART OF THIS PEOPLE HAS BECOME DULL, AND WITH THEIR EARS THEY SCARCELY HEAR, AND THEY HAVE CLOSED THEIR EYES LEST THEY SHOULD SEE WITH THEIR EYES, AND HEAR WITH THEIR EARS, AND UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART AND RETURN, AND I SHOULD HEAL THEM.’

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

(Matthew 13:10–17) ■