



# THE VOICE of ELIJAH

Restoring the hearts of the fathers to the children

## Then Along Came the Liar, Twisting the Truth

Celsus adds, that it was foretold to the Jews, that if they did not obey the law, they would be treated in the same way as they treated their enemies; and then he quotes from the teaching of Christ some precepts which he considers contrary to those of the law, and uses that as an argument against us. But before proceeding to this point, we must speak of that which precedes.

We hold, then, that the law has a twofold sense, —the one literal, the other spiritual, —as has been shown by some before us. Of the first or literal sense it is said, not by us, but by God, speaking in one of the prophets, that “the statutes are not good, and the judgments not good;” whereas, taken in a spiritual sense, the same prophet makes God say that “His statutes are good, and His judgments good.” Yet evidently the prophet is not saying things which are contradictory of each other.

Paul in like manner says, that “the letter killeth, and the spirit giveth life,” meaning by “the letter” the literal sense, and by “the spirit” the spiritual sense of Scripture. We may therefore find in Paul, as well as in the prophet, apparent contradictions. Indeed, if Ezekiel says in one place, “I gave them commandments which were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live,” and in another, “I gave them good commandments and judgments, which if a man shall do, he shall live by them.”

Paul in like manner, when he wishes to disparage the law taken literally, says, “If the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance, which glory was to be done away; how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious?” But when in another place he wishes to praise and recommend the law, he calls it “spiritual,” and says, “We know that the

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law is spiritual;" and, "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good."

When, then, the letter of the law promises riches to the just, Celsus may follow the letter which killeth, and understand it of worldly riches, which blind men; but we say that it refers to those riches which enlighten the eyes, and which enrich a man "in all utterance and in all knowledge." And in this sense we "charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate."

For, as Solomon says, "riches" are the true good, which "are the ransom of the life of a man;" but the poverty which is the opposite of these riches is destructive, for by it "the poor cannot bear rebuke." And what has been said of riches applies to dominion, in regard to which it is said, "The just man shall chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight." Now if riches are to be taken in the sense we have just explained, consider if it is not according to God's promise that he who is rich in all utterance, in all knowledge, in all wisdom, in all good works, may not out of these treasures of utterance, of wisdom, and of knowledge, lend to many nations.

Origen, "Against Celsus," Book vii, Chaps. xx-xxi, in Roberts and Donaldson (Eds.), *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (1885), Vol. 4, pp. 618-619.

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## *A Note From the Editor*

When you picked up this issue of the newsletter you may have noticed something a little different about the cover. In case you missed it, we added the phrase “Restoring the hearts of the fathers to the children” (see Mal. 4:6) just below *The Voice of Elijah*® logo. This phrase succinctly states what *The Voice of Elijah*® ministry is all about—restoring the hearts of the fathers to the children. We plan to make this maxim an integral part of our identity from this point forward by adding it to everything that carries our name. Over time, we hope True Believers will come to identify *The Voice of Elijah*® with our stated objective and automatically think of one when they think of the other. But before that can happen, Believers need to know what “restoring the hearts of the fathers to the children” means. So let’s look at the passage of Scripture that contains this verse:

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

*(Malachi 4:1–6)*

The first thing to notice about this passage is that it is talking about the End of the Age. This is obvious from the fact that the destruction of the Wicked is described in verse 1 and the Day of the Lord is mentioned in verse 5. If you don’t understand what these two events have in common it’s simply this: The Wicked will be destroyed in the Day of the Lord. This is verified by the Apostle Peter who tells us that the eradication of “ungodly men” and the destruction of this Earth by fire occur in the Day of the Lord (2 Pet. 3:7–13). Therefore, the above passage must pertain to the End Times.

The second thing to notice in this passage is that Elijah the Prophet will be sent to God’s People before “the great and terrible Day of the Lord.” However, don’t make the mistake of thinking (as some Jews and Christians do) that God is *literally* going to send Elijah the Prophet—the one who was carried off to Heaven in a whirlwind (2 Kin. 2:11)—back

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down to Earth to minister to Israel. God is speaking parabolically. That is, He is going to send someone who is parabolically like Elijah to accomplish specific things before the Day of the Lord. The things that person will accomplish are like certain things that Elijah the Prophet accomplished in his day. If this seems hard to believe, you need to remember that God did something similar to this once before when He sent John the Baptist to Israel in the (parabolic) image of Elijah prior to the First Advent of Christ. Jesus said so:

*“And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and violent men take it by force. For all the prophets and the Law prophesied until John. And if you care to accept {it,} he himself is Elijah, who was to come.”*  
(Matthew 11:12–14)

*And His disciples asked Him, saying, “Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?” And He answered and said, “Elijah is coming and will restore all things; but I say to you, that Elijah already came, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they wished. So also the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands.” Then the disciples understood that He had spoken to them about John the Baptist.*  
(Matthew 17:10–13)

Don't miss the point: John the Baptist was not literally Elijah; he was parabolically like Elijah, in the sense that he was sent to Israel to accomplish things that were like what Elijah accomplished in his day. Not surprisingly, the “Elijah” who is coming to “restore all things” (Matt. 17:11) prior to Christ's Second Advent will also accomplish things like those that Elijah accomplished in his day. Chief among the things “Elijah” will “restore” prior to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ is “the hearts of the fathers to their children” (Mal. 4:6). But what does that phrase mean, and how will “Elijah” accomplish that task? Malachi has provided the answer:

*“Remember the law of Moses My servant, {even the} statutes and ordinances which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel. Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD. And he will restore the hearts of the fathers to {their} children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse.”*  
(Malachi 4:4–6)

The word translated “law” in this passage is the Hebrew word *torah*. As we have stated repeatedly, the word *torah* means “teaching.” Once you understand this fact, it is easy to see that The Teaching (*torah*) of Moses is what “Elijah” is sent to restore prior to “the great and terrible Day of the Lord.” But if you also understand that the “heart” is the mind in the ancient way of thinking, it becomes even clearer that the ultimate objective of “Elijah” is to restore the mind-set—that is, the mentality, the beliefs, the way of thinking—of the fathers to the children. Finally, if you understand that those who are in Christ are in Israel and thus “children” of Abraham through faith (Gal. 3:7, 29), it becomes crystal clear that the “fathers” Malachi has in mind are the Fathers of Israel who knew and understood The Teaching, and the “children” are the True Believers in Israel (in Christ) who need to understand The Teaching before the Day of the Lord arrives.

If that confused you, let me simplify it for you. “Elijah's” ministry in these Last Days, just prior to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, is to restore The Teaching of Moses that the Fathers of Israel once understood and believed so that Believers in Christ might understand and believe those same concepts. By restoring The Teaching that Israel once believed, “Elijah” will be able to fill the minds (hearts) of True Believers with the thoughts and beliefs of their spiritual “fathers,” thus “restoring the hearts of the fathers to the children.” The question that remains is, Who is “Elijah”? And how does his ministry relate to what we are doing? I will address these questions in the next issue.

*Allen Fries*

# “The Law” of This, “The Law” of That, So Much “law” One Can’t Keep Track

**T**his is the third in a series of articles explaining what the Apostle Paul meant when he talked about law. The first article in this series was published as “We Know the Law Is Holy. But What About the Commandment?” in **The Voice of Elijah**®, July 1998. The second in the series, “There Is Nothing More Amazing Than Dead Men Walking (in ‘The Way’),” appeared in **The Voice of Elijah**®, January 2000. In those two articles and in the current article, I have included my own translation of some of the biblical texts that are most relevant to this topic, not because I consider my translation to be completely accurate at this point, but because it makes it easier for me to explain my current understanding of the meaning of the original Greek text. I will, most likely, continue to make minor changes to my translation as more and more of the parabolic imagery of The Teaching of Moses comes into clearer focus. I plan to publish a complete translation of the epistles of Paul—eventually. In the articles in this series, more than in any of the other articles I have written for **The Voice of Elijah**®, I will refer to things that I have explained in The Next Step program. The reader should not take that as an encouragement to join that program, however, since those things will eventually be published in book form.

In the first article in this series (“We Know the Law Is Holy. But What About the Commandment?” **The Voice of Elijah**®, July 1998), I mentioned five things that you need to know to understand what the Apostle Paul means when he uses the Greek term *nomos* (“law”). The first thing you must realize is that, since Satan has lied to us, most of what you now believe about the Scriptures is probably a fiction.

The second thing you must know is that when Paul says “law,” that is, when he uses *nomos* without the definite article, he is normally referring to the

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

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

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

The final thing you need to know about Paul’s use of the term *law* is that he uses various *prepositions* with specific meaning when he talks about both “law” and “the Law.” Therefore, I explained a few things about the *parabolic imagery* of *The Teaching* that he had in mind when he used phrases like “in law,” “from law,” “from works of law,” “under law,” and “through law.”

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

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

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

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

I told you that when Paul says "those *from law*," he is speaking idiomatically. I even showed you that Jesus uses the same idiomatic expression in John 8:44. I told you that by speaking in terms of that *parabolic image*, Paul is depicting the Jews of his day as having been engendered "from" their belief in "law"—that is,

"from" their belief in the benefit of external rituals—rather than "from" belief in the Truth of "the Law" (*The Teaching*). He is also mockingly alluding to the *parabolic image* in which God has engendered True Believers by writing "the Law" on their "hearts."

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

After Paul has explained how Jesus Christ freed us from "the curse" that God imposed because of "the sin" of Adam (Adam's rejection of the Truth), he introduces the *parabolic image* in which "life"—that is, knowledge of the Truth of *The Teaching*—is the opposite of "the death," which is mankind's ignorance of the Truth of *The Teaching*. He then begins to speak in terms of the *parabolic imagery* that the Prophets used to describe what one's knowledge of the Truth IS LIKE.

In Romans 6:1–4, Paul alludes to some of the *parabolic imagery* I explained in *The Passover Parable*. [See Order Form.] However, he is doing much more than just using the same *parabolic imagery* that Moses and the Prophets used to *talk about* "the death." He is explaining how that *parabolic imagery* describes the reality in which all those who are ignorant of the Truth of *The Teaching* now live. His point is, those of us who know the Truth no longer share that experience.

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

In the second article in this series ["There Is Nothing More Amazing Than Dead Men Walking (in

‘The Way’),” *The Voice of Elijah*®, January 2000], I picked up where I left off at the end of the first article. I explained that it is impossible to understand what Paul says in Romans 6–8 if one does not know what he *means* when he says “the sin.” Contrary to what most folks today believe, “the transgression” of Adam—that is, his physical act of sin—was not “the sin” that Paul had in mind. As far as Paul is concerned, “the sin” of Adam was his rejection of the Truth. That “sin” ultimately led to “the transgression,” by which Paul *means* Adam’s physical act of sin.

In the second article, I also explained a few things about the “riddle in a mirror,” which I have mentioned on occasion. I have since written an article in which I disclosed even more about that riddle. [See “He’s Coming in Clouds of Glory (Whatever That Means),” *The Voice of Elijah*®, January 2001.] Without insight into the *parabolic equivalencies* that exist between the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ and the sacrifice of the man Adam at the End of the Age, one has no way at all of understanding what Paul is *talking about* when he says this:

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

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

I explained that Paul is speaking in terms of some rather detailed *parabolic imagery* when he says that. In that *parabolic imagery*, individual Believers become members of the Body of Jesus Christ—“The One” Who is *Corporate Israel*—under the terms of the New Covenant. However, Jesus Christ—*Corporate Israel*—died for the sins of the individual members of *Corporate Israel* under the curse of the Old Covenant. And He was resurrected—as the sole surviving Member of *Corporate Israel*—under the terms of the New Covenant. Therefore, individual members of *Corporate Israel*—Believers who had *parabolically* become “one” with the Man Israel under the terms of the New Covenant before the time of His death—escape death by *parabolically* dying in the Man Israel and being resurrected in “The Man” Israel. Or as Paul explains the *parabolic*

*imagery*, they joined themselves to one “male” (the physical body of Jesus Christ) so that when He died, they would be “free from the Law” and belong “to another male” (the resurrected Body of Jesus Christ):

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

(Romans 7:1–3) —my interim translation

Paul’s argument in Romans 6–8 is based almost entirely on the *parabolic equivalency* that describes how the death of the man Adam at the End of the Age IS LIKE the death of Jesus Christ. However, there is an additional *parabolic equivalency* that points out the correlation between the physical death and Resurrection of Christ and the death and resurrection of the Believer. Consequently, anyone who is unaware of those two *parabolic equivalencies* will find it impossible to adequately explain all of the statements that Paul makes in Romans 6–8. Yet his statements can be generally understood if one keeps in mind the things I have already explained.

In Paul’s perspective, the reality experienced by individual Believers IS (*parabolically*) LIKE they died when Christ died and are already living in the resurrected Body of Jesus Christ. That is made possible, however, only because they have been given insight into *The Teaching*—which is the “Spirit” of Jesus Christ, “The One” Who is “The Man,” Israel:

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

(Romans 7:4–6) —my interim translation

With that passage, I concluded the second article in this series of articles on Paul's use of the Greek term *nomos*, that is, his use of the term translated "law." In this article, I will pick up where I left off and continue to explain what Paul had in mind when he *talked about* the differing roles that "law" and "the Law" play in the life of the Believer.

## "Law" Is Not "the Law"

I have already explained that Paul uses the designation *o nomos* ("the Law") to refer to the Pentateuch. By contrast, when he wants to refer to the legal requirements that Moses recorded in the Pentateuch, he always uses *nomos* without the article ("law") or else says "the commandment." Therefore, if you are serious about understanding what Paul says in the Book of Romans, it is important that you begin by *making a clear distinction between* those instances where he says "the Law" and those where he says "law."

Paul also *makes an extremely fine distinction between* "sin" and "the sin." While he obviously views "sin" (without the article) as a person's innate desire to do something contrary to "law," he refers to "the sin" (with the article) only when he is pointing to Adam's rejection of the Truth he understood or to the rejection of the Truth by someone else.

After he contrasts the "newness of spirit" (*The Teaching*) with the "oldness of what is written" (the "law" found in the Pentateuch), Paul begins to explain the different roles that "the Law" (the Pentateuch), "law" (the legal stipulations found in the Pentateuch), and "the Law" (*The Teaching* found in the Pentateuch) play in the life of the Believer:

*Therefore, what will we say? The Law is sin? Certainly not! Instead, I would not have known sin except because of law. For I would not have known about desiring if the Law had not said, "You will not desire."*

(Romans 7:7)—my interim translation

Did you notice that I discarded the archaic term *covet* and replaced it with the more common expression *desire*? I did that because everybody knows we are not supposed to *covet*, but very few understand what *coveting* is. Now that you know what it is, it might benefit your relationship with God if—the next time you want something that you don't have—you stop to consider

that you are not supposed to *desire* things that belong to others. If you don't really *need* what you *want*, you may have just stepped over the line as far as "law" is concerned. But I'll leave it to you to sort that out with God.

Paul's point is, the Pentateuch ("the Law") has one special "law" which made him realize that "sin" resides within him. He then describes the result that stems from "the sin"—that is, from his tendency to reject the Truth when he hears it:

*But the sin, receiving an opportunity because of the commandment, produced in me every desire. For outside of law sin is dead. Yet I was alive outside of law once, but when the commandment came, sin came to life, and I died—{when} the commandment which was for life was found by me, it was for death. For the sin, receiving an opportunity because of the commandment, deceived me, and because of it {the commandment} killed {me}.*

(Romans 7:8–11)—my interim translation

Did you understand what Paul said? He said that because of his natural tendency to reject the Truth ("the sin"), the Truth of "the commandment" provoked an immediate rebellion in him. Therefore, "the commandment" resulted in his "death"—ignorance of the Truth—even though God intended it to produce "life"—knowledge of the Truth. Paul's statement concerning his status "outside of law" is *parabolic*. The point is: That's what it was LIKE when I heard "the commandment." It "deceived me" (by making me think that something other than the Truth was true) and thereby "killed {me}." He is alluding to the fact that there is much more to "the Law" than just the deception presented by "the commandment." That is because Moses hid the *oral Torah* (*The Teaching*) in the Pentateuch—which the Jews eventually came to believe was *written Torah* ("the Law").

If you want to understand what Paul says, you must assume his mind-set. He is speaking *parabolically* in terms of the two *parabolic equivalencies* I mentioned on page 3. But he is describing what "the death" and "life" of the "spirit" of the Believer are LIKE. Along with the *parabolic imagery* that describes what happens to his "spirit" when he hears the Truth, however, he also uses *parabolic imagery* to explain what it IS LIKE for his "flesh." Therefore, anyone who fails to *make a distinction between* his statements in regard to his "spirit" and those in

which he is referring to his physical body will most likely come away feeling totally confused.

The Truth is, Paul is describing the different roles that “the sin,” “the Law,” and “law” played in the parabolic “death” of his body and resurrection of his “spirit” from “the death” when he heard *The Teaching*—that is, when he heard the Truth that is hidden in “the Law.” He goes on to point out that although “the sin” caused him to rebel against “the commandment,” that does not impugn “the Law” in any way:

*So then, the Law is indeed holy, and the commandment holy and what is right and good. Therefore did the good {thing} become death in me? Certainly not! Instead, the sin—so that it could be made visible as sin—produced death in me because of the good {thing}.*  
(Romans 7:12–13a)—my interim translation

At this point in his explanation, Paul begins to make a subtle transition from using “the Law” to designate only the written text of the Pentateuch to using it to signify also *The Teaching*, which is what that written text actually means. To understand what Paul says, you must keep in mind the fact that he confuses the issue by using “the Law” to represent both the oral *Torah*—*The Apostolic Teaching*—and what the Jews claimed to be written *Torah*—the Pentateuch:

*For we know that the Law is of spirit, but I am of flesh, having been sold {as a slave} under {the control of} the sin.*  
(Romans 7:14)—my interim translation

An accurate understanding of that statement is absolutely essential if you want to comprehend what Paul says later on. He puts the same thing this way in his first letter to the Corinthians:

*Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual {thoughts} with spiritual {words.} But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no man. For WHO*

*HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE SHOULD INSTRUCT HIM? But we have the mind of Christ.*  
(1 Corinthians 2:12–16)

Paul’s point in Romans 7:14 is this: Everybody starts out in the flesh and cannot understand the Truth that is hidden in “the Law” because it is “spirit.” Their innate tendency to reject the Truth (“the sin”) controls the flesh and seeks to prevent them from seeing, much less believing, the Truth. The control that “the sin” has over the unbeliever is so absolute that even when someone desperately wants to be free, they are compelled to go on doing what they don’t want to do:

*For I don’t know what I am doing. For what I want {to do}, this {is what} I do not do, but what I hate {to do}, this {is what} I do. But if what I do not want {to do}, this {is what} I do, I agree with the Law, that {it is} good. So at the present time, I am no longer producing it, but the sin dwelling in me. For I know that this {the sin} does not dwell in me, it is in my flesh. For the wanting {to do} good is present in me, but the producing of the good {thing} is not. For I do not do good (which I want), but evil (which I do not want), this {is what} I do. But if I do what I do not want {to do}, I am no longer producing it, but the sin dwelling in me.*  
(Romans 7:15–20)—my interim translation

Paul is not describing his current situation in that passage. Although he is speaking in the first person, he is using himself as an example of what everyone goes through when they come to an understanding of the Truth. The point of what he says is this: The “natural man” can acquire a sufficient understanding of the Truth that is hidden in “the Law” to realize that he is guilty. But when he tries to stop doing what he knows he shouldn’t do, he finds that he cannot stop. Yet in the act of trying to stop, he mentally agrees with “the Law” (*The Teaching*) that stands behind the “law” he is trying to obey. He has thereby made a distinction between what he believes in “the inner man” and what “the sin” that controls his flesh would have him believe:

*I find then the Law in my wanting to do the good, because the evil is present in me. For I rejoice in the Law of the {Living} God in accordance with the inner man. But I see another law in my members, which is waging war against the Law of my mind, and making me a*

prisoner of *the Law of the sin* which is in my members.  
(Romans 7:21–23) —my interim translation

It is important to note that Paul has drawn a sharp contrast between "the inner man" and "my members," that is, what he has earlier called "the flesh" (Rom. 7:5). He has also identified the locus of "the inner man" as "my mind" by paralleling "the Law of the {Living} God" with "the Law of my mind." However, the most crucial distinction he has made involves "the Law." He says:

For I rejoice in *the Law of the {Living} God* in accordance with *the inner man*.  
(Romans 7:22) —my interim translation

Paul is *talking about* the fact that, as a result of his agreeing that he should not sin, he has been able to gain insight into the Truth that is hidden in the text of the Pentateuch. He has, therefore, come to understand the true *meaning* of "the Law." That causes him to rejoice "in accordance with the *inner man*." However, he also sees "another law," a "law" in total opposition to "the Law of my mind," that is, the Truth of *The Teaching* that he wants to believe. That "law," which he calls "the Law of the sin," is what the Pentateuch *appears* to say. That lie seeks to convince him that all he has to do is rationalize the Truth and go on sinning.

The one who honestly wants to believe the Truth he has seen is faced with a desperate situation. Will he continue to *make a distinction between* "the inner man" (his "mind") and "the flesh" (his body)? Or will he succumb to the persuasive deception of "the sin" which tells him that there is nothing at all hidden in "the Law"? That is, will he believe that "the Law" is nothing more than "another law" which he must try to obey by continually struggling against the flesh? Paul asks the question and then answers it:

*I am a miserable man! Who will rescue me from this body of the death? Thanks to God because of Jesus Christ our Lord! So therefore, I myself am—on the one hand—a slave to a law of God in my mind, but—on the other—{I am a slave} to a law of sin in the flesh.*  
(Romans 7:24–25) —my interim translation

If you have never experienced the struggle that Paul describes, you have probably never been born

again. Paul is *talking about* the "rest" that True Believers experience when they realize that they do not have to strive against the "desire" of the flesh. All they have to do is mentally seek refuge in "the Law of God" (*The Teaching*) and they are immediately free from "the sin" that seeks to hold them captive in "the flesh." I have told you all along that righteousness and holiness have nothing to do with the flesh. They are strictly a matter of the "heart," that is, of the mind. As Paul suggests in Romans 7, that first step toward freedom is certainly a long one. If you have not yet taken it, you undoubtedly cannot even understand what he is *talking about*.

## *Engendered by the Word of God*

In the first verse of Romans 8, Paul gets to the heart of the matter:

*So therefore, there is no condemnation on those who are in Christ Jesus.*  
(Romans 8:1) —my interim translation

If you are not thinking in terms of the same *parabolic imagery* that Paul had in mind, there is no possible way for you to see how that statement relates to the preceding verse (Rom. 7:25), in which Paul claims that Jesus Christ has rescued him "from this body of the death" even though he remains both a slave "to a law of God in my mind" and a slave "to a law of sin in the flesh." The *parabolic image* Paul has in view is the one in which the resurrected "Spirit" of Jesus Christ is *The Apostolic Teaching*. Without a grasp of that simple *parabolic equivalency*, one is left wondering whether Paul is not trying to have his cake and eat it too.

The Truth is, a knowledge of *The Teaching* is the only way that anyone can be free "from this body of the death." It should be easy for you to understand why that is. "The death" that Paul had in mind is an abject ignorance of the Truth of "the Law," that is, the Truth of *The Teaching*. Those who honestly believe the Truth of *The Teaching* are firmly ensconced "in Jesus Christ," the One Who is *The Teaching*. But I didn't need to tell you that. Paul goes on to say exactly the same thing. The only difference is, I have spoken plainly while he continues to speak *parabolically*:

*For the Law of the Spirit of the life {which is} in Christ has freed me from the Law of the sin and the*

*death. For the inability of the Law, in which it was weak because of the flesh, the {Living} God, sending His Own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and on account of sin, condemned the sin in the flesh, so that the requirement of the Law could be accomplished in us—those who are walking not in accordance with flesh but in accordance with spirit.*

*(Romans 8:2–4) —my interim translation*

If one does not know what Paul is talking about, it is extremely easy to slip into the mind-set conditioned by “the Law of the sin and the death.” Hopefully, now that I have explained what Paul means when he says “the Law,” “the sin,” and “the death,” you can rise above those things and begin to “walk in The Way.” That is, after all, what Paul is talking about. Either you walk “in accordance with spirit” or you walk “in accordance with flesh.” There is no other “way” to “walk.” That is why Paul says this when he finally explains what he has been talking about:

*For those who are in accordance with flesh think about the things of the flesh, but those {who are} in accordance with spirit {think about} the things of the Spirit. For the flesh’s way of thinking is death, but the Spirit’s way of thinking is life and peace, because the flesh’s way of thinking is a hatred toward God, for it cannot submit to the Law of the {Living} God, for it is not able. So those who are in flesh are not able to please God.*

*(Romans 8:5–8) —my interim translation*

You may very well choose to go on thinking that it does not matter what you think—that is, that it does not matter what you believe about Jesus Christ or the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. If you decide to continue down that “road,” it will only be because your mind is still set on the flesh. You have not yet grasped one immutable fact: Truth is not variable. You cannot plug any value that you desire into your version of “truth” and then claim that God agrees. Either you know the Truth that God revealed to Moses and all the other Prophets of Israel or you don’t. If you don’t know the Truth and want to go on thinking that you do, you are headed for Hell in a handbasket of your own making. I know that for a fact because I have just explained the Truth concerning an extremely difficult-to-understand portion of the New Testament. But that explanation pales in comparison to what I have yet to explain about

The Teaching that Moses and the other Prophets of Israel hid in the Hebrew Scriptures.

If you have experienced the reality that Paul is describing when he talks about “Spirit” and “flesh,” you will probably be able to understand these next few verses with little or no help from me:

*Yet you are not in flesh, but in spirit, if a Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have a Spirit of Christ, he is not {a part} of Him. Yet if Christ is in you, the body is indeed dead because of sin, but the spirit is alive because of what is required. But if the Spirit of the One Who raised Jesus from those who are dead dwells in you, the One Who raised Jesus from those who are dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of His Spirit dwelling in you. So therefore, brothers, we are not indebted to the flesh—to live in accordance with flesh. For if you live in accordance with the flesh, you are going to die, but if by spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.*

*(Romans 8:9–13) —my interim translation*

The Truth that Paul explains in that passage can only be understood if you are thinking in terms of the parabolic imagery that stands behind the phrases “in Christ” and “Christ in you.” That is, you must understand the parabolic relationships that exist between “The One” and “The Many” in Israel. But you must also be willing to accept the fact that the True Believer is faced with a constant choice: Is he going to continue on believing the Truth? Or is he going to “turn aside from The Way” by believing a lie? Although Paul is using a completely different set of parabolic images, he is, nonetheless, admonishing Believers in much the same way as the author of the Book of Hebrews when he said this:

*Take care, brethren, lest there should be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart, in falling away from the living God. But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is {still} called “Today,” lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end.*

*(Hebrews 3:12–14)*

Any fool who thinks he has an iron-clad guarantee of salvation from the angry God of Israel has no

inking of the terror that awaits him when he suddenly realizes he made a *horrible* mistake in not heeding that admonition. Such folks have failed to read the fine print in the covenant they *think* they made with God. If you want to go to Heaven, you have to believe *the Truth*. That's because salvation is by faith alone. But that is not faith in the sense of *that you believe*. It is faith in the sense of *what you believe*. Everybody believes something about God. But those who will be saved actually believe the Truth. Paul assumes you already knew that. If you have not yet been able to grasp that simple fact, these next few verses obviously do not apply to you:

*For as many as are being led by a Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you have not received a Spirit of slavery again to fear, but you have received a Spirit of adoption in which we shout, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit Himself providing evidence in our spirit that we are children of God. But if children, also heirs, indeed heirs of God, but joint heirs of Christ, if indeed we suffer together so that we may be glorified together.*

(Romans 8:14–17) —my interim translation

In the next article in this series, I am going to explain not only what Paul is *talking about* in Galatians 3–4 but also the *parabolic imagery* he uses to explain how "law" and "the Law" relate to *the inheritance of the promise*. That is, after all, what he has in mind when he mentions the "Spirit of adoption" that makes the True Believer *parabolically* LIKE a child, and therefore, an *heir*, of God. But now that I have explained a bit about the *parabolic imagery* that forms the basis for Paul's argument in the Book of Romans, I want to summarize what he has said about "law" and "the Law."

## A Summary

Paul first *talks about* "law" and "the Law" in Romans 2:12–29. He says this:

*For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in law will be judged through law. For the hearers of law are not innocent before God, but the doers of law will be acquitted. For when Gentiles—those who have no law—naturally do the things of the Law, these {people}—having no law—are a law to themselves, which {will} show the work of*

*the Law written in their hearts, their conscience also providing evidence, and their thoughts—{as though arguing a legal case} among themselves—accusing or else defending them on a day when the God {Who is} will judge the secrets of men according to my Gospel through Jesus Christ. But if you call yourself a Jew and rest in law and boast in God and know the will {of God} and {examine and} approve the things that are valuable, being instructed from the Law, having persuaded yourself that you are a guide of the blind, a light to those in darkness, an instructor of those who are foolish, a teacher of those who are immature, having the total content of knowledge and Truth in the Law, do you—the one who is teaching others—not teach yourself? Do you—the one preaching not to steal—steal? Do you—the one saying not to commit murder—commit murder? Do you—the one who detests idols—do sacrilegious things? Do you—the one who boasts in law—dishonor God through violation of the Law? For "THE NAME OF GOD IS BLASPHEMED AMONG THE GENTILES BECAUSE OF YOU," just as it is written. For indeed circumcision does benefit—if you could do law. But should you be a violator of law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision. If therefore, the uncircumcised {person} were to guard the requirements of the Law, will not his uncircumcision be considered as circumcision? And the one who is physically uncircumcised yet fulfills the Law will judge you who, because of what is written and {because of} circumcision, violate law. For the Jew is not in the visible, neither {is} circumcision in the visible—in flesh. But the Jew is in the hidden—and circumcision of the heart is in the spirit, not {in} what is written—whose praise is not from men but from God.*

(Romans 2:12–29) —my interim translation

It is important to keep in mind that Paul is addressing Jews who have heard the Truth of *The Teaching*—which he refers to as "the Law." Yet those ignorant people are causing trouble for Christian Believers by insisting that they must continue to observe the *parabolic* rituals—what Paul calls "law" and "the commandment"—mandated in the Pentateuch, which Paul, likewise, refers to as "the Law." Paul points out the fact that it is impossible for those Jews not to somehow "violate law." Therefore, the Gentile who believes the Truth of "the Law" (*The Teaching*) and thereby "fulfills the Law" will judge those who "violate law" because of an absurd fixation on "what is written"—that is, what the Pentateuch *appears* to say:

*And the one who is physically uncircumcised yet fulfills the Law will judge you who, because of what is written and {because of} circumcision, violate law. (Romans 2:27) —my interim translation*

With that simple statement, Paul alludes to what he will state rather plainly later on—that “the Law” is more than just a *written* “letter” (the *written* text of the Pentateuch). It also contains an *oral* “spirit,” that is, *The oral Teaching* that the sons of Israel were supposed to make sure accompanied the *written* text of the Pentateuch. Thus Paul tacitly confirms that Moses did indeed *receive* “the Law” as both an *oral Torah* and a *written Torah*. (See *The Mystery of Scripture*, Vol. 1.)

Paul’s argument in the Book of Romans and in the Book of Galatians is against the *oral tradition* of the Pharisees, which he repeatedly identifies with the *written* text of the Pentateuch. However, he makes that equation only to reject the Pharisees’ claim that their *oral tradition* was the *oral Torah* that Moses *delivered* to the sons of Israel. As Paul explains later, those Believers who have insight into the Truth of the *oral Torah* (*The Teaching*) have been released from blind obedience to “law,” which is the Pharisees’ interpretation of the *written* text of the Pentateuch. God’s purpose is:

*So that we might serve {as slaves} in newness of spirit and not in oldness of what is written. (Romans 7:6) —my interim translation*

Following his initial explanation that God requires an understanding of “the Law” rather than slavish adherence to “law,” Paul explains that the Jews have long since turned away from *The oral Teaching of Moses* (Rom. 3:1–18). After that, he comes back to focus on the importance of knowing the Truth of *The Teaching* and believing it. He insists that the only valid “law” is a “law of belief”:

*We know that whatever the Law says, it says to those who are in the Law, so that every mouth would be shut and the whole world would become subject to prosecution by God, because no flesh will be acquitted in His sight from works of law, for knowledge of sin is because of law. But now what God requires has been made known outside of law, {with} evidence being provided by the Law and the Prophets, yet what God requires {is} because of the belief of Jesus Christ in all those who believe—for there is*

*no distinction, for all have sinned and lack the glory of God—{in all} those who are being freely acquitted by His favor because of the ransom which is in Christ Jesus, the One Whom God publicly displayed as a propitiation—through belief in His blood—to demonstrate what He requires by passing over the sins previously committed—in the forbearance of God—for the demonstration of what He requires in the present time, so that He would be what is required and the One Who acquits the one who is from belief of Christ. Where then is the boasting? It is excluded. Because of what law? {One} of the works? No, but because of a law of belief. For we hold that a man is acquitted by belief outside of works of law. Is the {Living} God only {the God} of Jews? {Is He} not also {the God} of the Gentiles? Yes, {He is} also {the God} of Gentiles since the {Living} God is One, Who will acquit a circumcised {person} on account of belief and an uncircumcised {person} because of his belief. Do we therefore abolish law because of our belief? Certainly not! Instead, we confirm law.*

*(Romans 3:19–31) —my interim translation*

When Paul says “the Law,” he is referring to both the *oral Torah* of *The Apostolic Teaching* (“the Law”) and the Pentateuch, which the Jews claim is the *written Torah* (“the Law”). He is adamant in insisting that salvation is attained solely by belief in the Truth of *The oral Teaching* rather than by observing the *parabolic* rituals prescribed by Moses in the Pentateuch. His point is, the person who believes the Truth of *The Teaching* has confirmed the validity of “law” because “law” provides the basis for the impending judgment of God which the Believer seeks to avoid by responding to the Truth.

After Paul makes his argument concerning belief as the only prerequisite for salvation, he points to the scriptural account of Abraham’s steadfast belief in *the promise* of God (Rom. 4:1–12) as an example that every Believer should follow. At that point, he briefly touches on the *parabolic imagery* associated with *the inheritance of the promise*:

*For the promise to Abraham, or {rather} to his Seed—that He would be the Heir of {the} world—was not because of law, but because of a belief {that attained} what is required. For if those from law are heirs, the belief {of Abraham} has been emptied and the promise abolished. For the Law produces wrath. But where no law exists, neither does violation. For this reason {it is}*

from belief, so that—in accordance with favor for the purpose of confirming **the promise** to all the Seed—{it is} not only to **the One from the Law**, but also to the one from belief—{that is} Abraham, who is father of us all—just as it is written, that "I HAVE MADE YOU A FATHER OF MANY GENTILES" in the view of the One he believed—God, the One Who brings the dead to life and gives a name to those who don't exist as though they exist—who believed contrary to hope—against hope—so that he might become father of many Gentiles in accordance with what had been said, "THIS IS WHAT YOUR SEED SHALL BE." (Romans 4:13–18) —my interim translation

Paul's argument in regard to **the promise** is based on the fact that *The Teaching* is parabolically equivalent to **the promise** of God. That is, God put **the promise** in the form of an oral blessing (*The Teaching*) that He ordained was to be **handed down** orally from one generation to the next. That is why God still holds Evangelists accountable for the task of orally preaching what is left of the Gospel, a task that they have ever so casually conceded to anyone willing to go door-to-door. (See "What's Left of the Right That Stayed Down When He Went Up?" *The Voice of Elijah*® Update, September 1995.)

God also held Teachers in the Early Church accountable for orally teaching *The Teaching*. But that wouldn't seem to matter much today since the Church lost *The Teaching* nearly 1800 years ago. Now, if someone were to come along and restore *The Teaching*, that might change things. But absent that, God will just have to continue focusing the full heat of His anger on ignorant men who have been called of God to preach the simple message of the Gospel, yet somehow can't even bring themselves to do that right. (Sorry for pulling out my raggedy old soapbox again. I told myself I didn't have time for such things. But I guess somebody needed to hear.)

The next point that Paul makes concerning "law" and "the Law" has to do not only with belief in **the promise** but also with the attaining of **what was promised**. Therefore, after explaining that True Believers will be acquitted on Judgment Day solely because of their belief in the Truth of **the promise** (Rom. 4:19–5:11), Paul begins to explain the symbiotic relationship of "sin" to "law." He does so against the backdrop of the parabolic imagery of "The One" and "The Many." But he evidently feels compelled to speak cryptically in terms of "the sin," "the transgression," and "the death." As I have

already told you, "the sin" refers to Adam's unbelief, "the transgression" to his physical act of disobedience, and "the death" to the ignorance of the Truth which resulted from "the sin" of Adam:

{We received reconciliation} because of **this One**, just as because of **one man**, **the sin** came into the world, and **the death** because of **the sin**, and thus **the death** came to all men because all sinned. For until **law** {came}, sin was in the world, but sin is not charged {to anyone's account} when there is no **law**. But **the death** reigned from Adam to Moses—even over those who did not sin in the likeness of the violation of Adam, who is a type of the one who is coming, {the Antichrist}. By contrast, the {spiritual} gift is not in the same way also like **the transgression**. For if **the Many** died in **the transgression of the one**, much more did the favor of God and the gift by the favor of **one Man**, Jesus Christ, become an abundance for **the Many**. Also, the {spiritual} gift {of life} is not like {what is} because of the one who sinned. For, on the one hand, the verdict {of death} is from one {transgression} for condemnation, but on the other hand, the gift {of life} is from many transgressions for acquittal. For if, because of **the transgression of the one**, **the death** has reigned because of **the one**, much more will those who receive the abundance of the favor and the gift of what is required reign in life because of **the One**, Jesus Christ. Consequently then, just as because of **one transgression**, {the verdict} was to all men for condemnation {to death}, likewise also because of one act of what is required, {the verdict} was to all men for acquittal to life. For just as because of the disobedience of **the one man**, **the Many** were made sinners, likewise also because of the obedience of **the One**, **the Many** will be made innocent. But **law** slips in so that **the transgression** might become greater. Yet where **the sin** became greater, the favor became more than abundant so that, just as **the sin** reigned in **the death**, likewise also the favor might reign—because of what is required—in eternal life because of Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 5:12–21) —my interim translation

Paul's use of the parabolic image of "The One" and "The Many" is the key that unlocks his mind-set. I will eventually explain that parabolic imagery in detail. But not now. You should be able to see that Paul is talking about how "The Many" in Adam lost the Truth through "the sin" of Adam and how that corresponds to "The Many" in Christ regaining the Truth through the obedience of Christ. (The word I have translated "obedience"

in verse 19 is precisely the same word that Paul uses in Romans 6:16. As I have already explained, the word has the sense of “listen to.”)

Paul is describing the reality brought about by belief in *the promise*. But it is important to keep in mind that there is only one *promise*. If you do not know what *the promise* is, you obviously do not have ears to hear. I have already told you: *The promise* is *The Teaching*. It is an *oral blessing* that God ordained was to be *handed down orally* from one generation to the next. It is the “power” of true godliness that Paul mentions in this passage:

*But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; and avoid such men as these.*

(2 Timothy 3:1–5)

Paul repeatedly explains that a “form of godliness,” that is, blind adherence to some *written “law,”* is not what God requires. God demands belief in the Truth of the *oral Torah* He revealed to the Prophets and Apostles. You may well be an extremely “godly” person, but if you deny the Truth of *The Teaching*, you have denied the “power” of true godliness. That is why Paul is absolutely insistent in his contention that belief in *the promise* is the only way anyone can be reconciled to God. Through belief in the Truth of *the promise*, a True Believer *parabolically* becomes one of “The Many” who are *in Jesus Christ*—“The One” Who is Israel. As Paul explains in Romans 6:1–7, that mystical union occurs for every True Believer just prior to the death of Christ. That is why all who believe the Truth have already died and been resurrected. All we need to do to gain freedom from “the sin,” that is, from our innate tendency to reject the Truth, is to continue to listen to the Truth:

*Yet if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with Him, knowing that Christ—having been raised from the dead—is no longer mortal. Death is no longer lord over Him. For that which He died, He died to **the sin** once for all {time}. But that which He lives, He*

*lives to the {Living} God. So also consider yourselves to be dead indeed to **the sin** but alive to the {Living} God in Christ Jesus. Therefore, do not let **the sin** reign in your mortal body so that you listen to its desires, and don’t offer your members to **the sin** as tools for what is not right. Instead, offer yourselves to the {Living} God like those {who are} alive from the dead and your members to the {Living} God as tools for what is required. For sin will not be lord over you, for you are not **under law** but under favor. What therefore? Should we sin because we are not **under law** but under favor? Certainly not! Do you not know that to whomever you offer yourselves to listen to as slaves, you are slaves to whomever you listen to, either {to listen} to sin into death or to listen {to The Teaching} into what is required? But thanks to the {Living} God that {although} you were slaves to the sin, **you have listened from {your} heart into what was delivered to you—a form of teaching.** And having been freed from **the sin**, you became slaves to what is required.*

(Romans 6:8–18) —my interim translation

Paul’s argument concerning the “power” of the *oral Torah* (*The Teaching*) in the life of the True Believer is based on the fact that “law” governs the actions of the flesh. “The Law” (which is *The Teaching*—both *oral* and *written*) has nothing at all to do with the deeds of the flesh. “The Law” is a “spirit” which conveys a message to the “heart,” that is, to the mind, of the True Believer. Through belief, that “spirit” frees the Believer from the insatiable demands of the flesh that can only be met by breaking God’s “law.”

Paul goes on to describe (*parabolically*) what that reality of belief in the Truth IS LIKE for the Believer. It is as if he were a woman who had joined herself to one man—the Man Jesus Christ—Who then died, leaving her free to be joined to another—“*The Man*,” Jesus Christ. In the *parabolic image* Paul has in mind, Jesus Christ is the Word of God—*The Teaching*—with which the Believer becomes “one” through belief:

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

she is not an adulteress although she belongs to another male. Therefore, my brothers, you also were made to die to **the Law** through the body of the Christ so that you could belong to another—to **the One** Who was raised from the dead—so that we could bear fruit for the {Living} God. For when we were in the flesh, the desires of the sins—those which were because of **the Law**—were working in our members to bear fruit for the death. But now we have been released from **the Law**, having died in that {the flesh} to which we were held fast, so **that we might serve {as slaves} in newness of spirit and not in oldness of what is written**. Therefore, what will we say? **The Law** is sin? Certainly not! Instead, I would not have known sin except because of **law**. For I would not have known about desiring if **the Law** had not said, "You will not desire." But **the sin**, receiving an opportunity because of **the commandment**, produced in me every desire. For **outside of law** sin is dead. Yet I was alive **outside of law** once, but when **the commandment** came, sin came to life, and I died—{when} **the commandment** which was for life was found by me, it was for death. For **the sin**, receiving an opportunity because of **the commandment**, deceived me, and because of it {the commandment} killed {me}. So then **the Law** is indeed holy, and **the commandment** holy and what is right and good. Therefore did the good {thing} become death in me? Certainly not! Instead, the sin—so that it could be made visible as sin—produced death in me because of the good {thing}. For **we know that the Law is of spirit, but I am of flesh**, having been sold {as a slave} under {the control} of **the sin**. For I don't know what I am doing. For what I want {to do}, this {is what} I do not do, but what I hate {to do}, this {is what} I do. But if what I do not want {to do}, this {is what} I do, I agree with **the Law**, that {it is} good. So at the present time, I am no longer producing it, but **the sin** dwelling in me. For I know that this {the sin} does not dwell in me, it is in my flesh. For the wanting {to do} good is present in me, but the producing of the good {thing} is not. For I do not do good (which I want), but evil (which I do not want), this {is what} I do. But if I do what I do not want {to do}, I am no longer producing it, but the sin dwelling in me. I find then **the Law** in my wanting to do the good, because the evil is present in me. For I rejoice in **the Law** of the {Living} God in accordance with the inner man, But I see another **law** in my members, which is waging war against **the Law of my mind**, and making me a prisoner of **the Law of the sin** which is in my members. I am a miserable man! Who will rescue me from this body of **the death**? Thanks to God because of Jesus Christ our Lord!

So therefore, I myself am—on the one hand—a slave to a **law of God in my mind**, but—on the other—{I am a slave} to a **law of sin in the flesh**.

(Romans 7:1–25) —my interim translation

If one has never experienced the incredible power of *The Teaching*, Paul's statements may appear to leave his explanation in regard to "law" and "the Law" unresolved. That may be why he goes on to briefly summarize what he has been saying all along: God does not require anyone to do anything to be saved. All that one has to do is believe **the promise** (*The Teaching*):

So therefore, there is no condemnation on those who are in Christ Jesus. For **the Law of the Spirit of the life** {which is} in Christ has freed me from **the Law of the sin and the death**. For the inability of **the Law**, in which it was weak because of the flesh, the {Living} God, sending His Own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and on account of sin, condemned the sin in the flesh, so **that the requirement of the Law could be accomplished in us—those who are walking not in accordance with flesh but in accordance with spirit**. For those who are in accordance with flesh think about the things of the flesh, but those {who are} in accordance with spirit {think about} the things of the Spirit. For the flesh's way of thinking is death, but the Spirit's way of thinking is life and peace, because the flesh's way of thinking is a hatred toward God, for it cannot submit to **the Law of the {Living} God**, for it is not able.

(Romans 8:1–7) —my interim translation

There is one small problem with God's plan of salvation by faith. It is possible for a person to believe a lie and be firmly convinced that it is the Truth:

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 2:8–12) ■



**T**he 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.

The “winds” that whip the Earth have been seeking to drum a “victim” concept into our minds for quite some time. Now that it is becoming more obvious how they intend to use that mind-set, you need to be able to recognize and avoid it. So let me explain a bit about the lies they have disseminated. The Apostle Paul says this concerning our miserable circumstances:

*For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.  
(Romans 3:23)*

Paul also indicates how we can remedy our sorry circumstances:

*“Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.”  
(Acts 17:30–31)*

The Apostle John goes further and lays out the situation in black and white, leaving no wiggle room for those who dearly love their shades of gray:

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

Paul tells it like it is for those who want to go on insisting they just don’t know how to respond to God:

*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.  
(Romans 2:5)*

Given the fact that one is destined for either salvation or destruction, does it make any sense at all to see oneself as a “victim”? I mean, let’s be honest: If everyone has sinned and is fully deserving of the wrath of God, where is the victim? Yet that is the idiotic mind-set the “winds” have sold this generation.

Consider the facts: Union workers are far better paid than the average blue-collar worker, yet they complain that they are victims of corporate greed. African Americans in the United States, including many who are middle- and upper-income, see themselves as victims of racism in spite of the fact that they have achieved nearly all of the goals of the Civil Rights Movement. And now, thanks to the Feminist Movement, many women consider themselves victims of a male-dominated society. The same goofy “victim” mentality has also been assumed by gays and lesbians.

The “victim” mind-set of various groups here in the United States is easily explained. It has been assiduously cultivated by the adherents of a major political party—with diabolical consequences. If you have any interest in such things, Jesse Lee Peterson provides some rather eye-opening insight into the effect the “victim” mentality has had on African Americans in his book *From Rage to Responsibility*. I seriously recommend it. (See Order Form.)

If the “victim” mind-set were limited only to the members of one political party here in the United States, one could easily ignore it. Unfortunately, in our generation, everyone has been tainted by the idiocy in one way or another. To what else can we attribute the increased number of lawsuits but to a larger number of people who see themselves as victims? The difficulty now facing us is this: Individual countries see themselves as having been victimized by other countries. For example, the Chinese see themselves as the victims of former colonial powers. Consequently, they have an extreme sensitivity to perceived slights of any kind.

What are the “winds” objectives? Undoubtedly, social unrest (violence, rioting, terrorism) and WAR. ■



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

*Editor: In the January 2001 issue of the newsletter you presented five diagrams that illustrate various parabolic equivalencies related to “the riddle in the mirror.” You said the main thing to keep in mind with parabolic equivalencies is that they tell us how “this is like that” or, said differently, how one event or time in history is like another event or time in history. Based on your diagrams and what you explained in that article, is it an oversimplification to say that every parabolic equivalence and parabolic pantomime in the Scriptures, in one way or another, ultimately points to the End of the Age and the Resurrection of the Righteous in Christ? Also, when two or more historical events are parabolically equivalent to each other, are we supposed to look at these equivalent events as a whole and “see” the same basic message in all of them, or are we supposed to look at them separately and learn something slightly different from each one?*

*Elijah:* Before I answer the two questions you asked, there is one small matter that needs to be clarified. “The riddle” of *The Teaching* that the Prophets hid in the Hebrew Scriptures is not “the riddle in the mirror”; it is the “riddle in a mirror.” While that may seem a minor distinction to some, it is absolutely crucial to anyone who seeks to understand the Truth. We are not *talking about* a definite mirror—that is, a mirror which can be

called “the mirror.” We are *talking about* a *parabolic image* in which the Word of God that is hidden in the Hebrew Scriptures IS LIKE a mirror. That is why Paul says “a mirror” in both instances where he refers to the *parabolic image* of *The Apostolic Teaching* as a mirror:

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

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

The Apostle James also uses the *parabolic image* in which the Word of God IS LIKE a mirror. But he explains a bit more about the *parabolic imagery* than Paul does. From what he says, we learn that the *parabolic mirror* he has in mind is “the perfect law,” that is, “the word” of God (*The Apostolic Teaching*) to which a Believer is supposed to listen until he can “see” an image of himself with the “eyes” of his “heart.” Then he is expected to remember the image he has seen. However, James does not mention the fact that the mirror image he has in mind is an intricately detailed *parabolic image* of Jesus Christ. The closest he comes to that is calling it “the word”:

*For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for {once} he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the {law} of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man shall be blessed in what he does.*  
(James 1:23–25)

To answer your first question, I would hesitate to say that every *parabolic equivalence* and *parabolic pantomime* in the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures points to the End of the Age. But that is only because I do not currently understand all of the *parabolic pantomimes* I see in the Scriptures. Certainly one can say that any *parabolic pantomime* that points to the death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ also points to the death

and resurrection of the man Adam at the End of the Age. However, I arrived at that conclusion by simple syllogistic reasoning: If A IS LIKE B in the same way that B IS LIKE C, then A IS LIKE C.

In response to your second question, I can only say this: Every historical event orchestrated by God as a *parabolic pantomime* makes its own unique contribution to the overall message of the Scriptures. So in that sense, we are supposed to learn something different from every one of them. However, if one cannot “see” how each one of the *parabolic pantomimes* contributes to the same basic message, it is impossible to learn much of anything at all from any of them. That is why insight into the *meaning* and *significance* of the Hebrew idioms in *The Teaching* is absolutely essential. Without an understanding of that, one is left with nothing more than speculation as to how all the parables and *parabolic pantomimes* of the Scriptures fit together.

For example, I have often mentioned that Jesus is *parabolically* depicting Himself as the wise man and Satan—in the person of the Antichrist—as the fool in the following parable:

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

*(Matthew 7:24–27)*

If one has no understanding of the *meaning* and *significance* of the Hebrew idiom “build a house,” which is the most fundamental of all the idioms used by the Prophets and Apostles, one has absolutely no idea how I know that Jesus is *parabolically* referring to events that will occur at the End of the Age. To be able to understand the Truth, one first needs to know that the idiom “build a house” is *meant* to evoke a mental image of the ancient Canaanite practice in which a *zonah* “gave a seed” to the god Baal in hopes of “raising up a name” for him. But there is much more to the *parabolic imagery* that Jesus had in mind than just the cultic prostitution

that the Prophets of Israel ridiculed by their use of the idiom “build a house.” Anyone who is interested in those things can read what I have already written about them. (See “Questions & Answers,” *The Voice of Elijah*®, October 1995; “The Sad, Sordid History of the People of God,” *The Voice of Elijah*®, July 1996; “Questions & Answers,” *The Voice of Elijah*®, January 1997; “Questions & Answers,” *The Voice of Elijah*®, April 1997; “So Why Would a Nomad ‘Build a House’ And Settle Down?” *The Voice of Elijah*®, October 1997; and “Pay Close Attention to ‘The Way’ That Woman Walks,” *The Voice of Elijah*®, October 1999.)

*Editor: We received a question from a Monthly Contributor who would like you to explain the meaning of the biblical term translated “remnant.” Although the question relates primarily to the Prophet Isaiah’s use of the term in the Book of Isaiah, it is not limited to Isaiah’s usage only. So would you please explain the meaning and significance of the term remnant and tell us whether all of the Prophets use this term in the same way?*

*Elijah:* All of the Prophets attach the same *meaning* to the Hebrew term translated “remnant.” But that is only because there is nothing mystical or mysterious about the term. It has exactly the same *meaning* as the English term *remnant*. It means “that which is left” or “that which remains.” In contrast to the English term *remnant*, however, which is most often used to refer to a remaining piece of carpet or cloth, the Hebrew term which is customarily translated “remnant” always refers to the remaining members of a particular family, tribe, or people.

The fact that the term *remnant* applies to the remaining members of a family should alert anyone who seeks to understand the message of the Scriptures that the ancient Hebrew/Canaanite culture placed an inordinately strong emphasis on the continuation of a man’s lineage. One should logically ask the simple question: Why? But one also needs to realize that, to answer that question, it is necessary to understand a whole lot more about the Scriptures than the *meaning* of just one biblical term.

To accurately understand the Hebrew mind-set standing behind the Hebrew term translated “remnant” in the Old Testament, one must go far beyond the basic *meaning* of the term *remnant* and determine its

significance. So let me briefly explain that. The Hebrew noun normally translated “remnant” is *she'erith*. It derives from an ordinary Hebrew verb (*sha'ar*) which means nothing more than “to be left,” or “to remain.” Although the verb *sha'ar* is most often used to refer to a remnant of people, it can also be used to refer to anything that remains, as it is in the following texts:

*And when that year was ended, they came to him the next year and said to him, “We will not hide from my lord that our money is all spent, and the cattle are my lord’s. There is nothing left for my lord except our bodies and our lands.”*  
(Genesis 47:18)

*And Moses said to Pharaoh, “The honor is yours to tell me: when shall I entreat for you and your servants and your people, that the frogs be destroyed from you and your houses, {that} they may be left only in the Nile?” Then he said, “Tomorrow.” So he said, “{May it be} according to your word, that you may know that there is no one like the LORD our God. And the frogs will depart from you and your houses and your servants and your people; they will be left only in the Nile.”*  
(Exodus 8:9–11)

*“And they shall cover the surface of the land, so that no one shall be able to see the land. They shall also eat the rest of what has escaped—what is left to you from the hail—and they shall eat every tree which sprouts for you out of the field.”*  
(Exodus 10:5)

*“He shall also sprinkle some of the blood of the sin offering on the side of the altar, while the rest of the blood shall be drained out at the base of the altar: it is a sin offering.”*  
(Leviticus 5:9)

*But when they arose early the next morning, behold, Dagon had fallen on his face to the ground before the ark of the LORD. And the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands {were} cut off on the threshold; only the trunk of Dagon was left to him.*  
(1 Samuel 5:4)

*Thus they destroyed the cities; and each one threw a stone on every piece of good land and filled it. So they stopped all the springs of water and felled all the good trees, until*

*in Kir-hareseth {only} they left its stones; however, the slingers went about {it} and struck it.*  
(2 Kings 3:25)

*And one of his servants answered and said, “Please, let some {men} take five of the horses which remain, which are left in the city. Behold, they {will be in any case} like all the multitude of Israel who are left in it; behold, they {will be in any case} like all the multitude of Israel who have already perished, so let us send and see.”*  
(2 Kings 7:13)

*Desolation is left in the city,  
And the gate is battered to ruins.*  
(Isaiah 24:12)

You should be able to see from those passages that the Hebrew verb *sha'ar* is used in them with no special significance. That is true even when the verb is used to refer to a remnant of people. The significance of *sha'ar* comes to light only in those passages where the Prophets of Israel speak *parabolically* concerning “The Remnant” that will remain of “The House” of Israel after God has “cut off from” Israel all those who fail to meet His requirements.

Since the verb *sha'ar* could be used to refer to what remained of anything, Isaiah uses it in the following passage to speak cryptically concerning “The Remnant” of God’s Chosen People who will escape the delusion of the Antichrist at the End of the Age:

*Now it will come about in that day  
that the glory of Jacob will fade,  
And the fatness of his flesh will become lean.  
It will be even like the reaper gathering the standing grain,  
As his arm harvests the ears,  
Or it will be like one gleaning ears of grain  
In the valley of Rephaim.  
Yet gleanings will be left in it  
like the shaking of an olive tree,  
Two {or} three olives on the topmost bough,  
Four {or} five on the branches of a fruitful tree,  
Declares the LORD, the God of Israel.  
In that day man will have regard for his Maker,  
And his eyes will look to the Holy One of Israel.  
And he will not have regard for the altars,  
the work of his hands,  
Nor will he look to that which his fingers have made,*

*Even the Asherim and incense stands.  
In that day their strong cities will be  
like forsaken places in the forest,  
Or like branches which they abandoned  
before the sons of Israel;  
And the land will be a desolation.  
For you have forgotten the God of your salvation  
And have not remembered the rock of your refuge.  
Therefore you plant delightful plants  
And set them with vine slips of a strange {god.}  
In the day that you plant {it} you carefully fence {it} in,  
And in the morning you bring your seed to blossom;  
{But} the harvest will be a heap  
In a day of sickness and incurable pain.  
(Isaiah 17:4–11)*

If you can “see” with the eyes of your “heart” that Isaiah is using a *parabolic image* when he depicts “The Remnant” of Israel as the fruit of a plant (which is the Living Word of God), you should also be able to “see” the *parabolic imagery* he has in mind when he says this:

*For you have forgotten the God of your salvation  
And have not remembered the rock of your refuge.  
Therefore you plant delightful plants  
And set them with vine slips of a strange {god.}  
(Isaiah 17:10)*

That passage is (in part) the source from which Jesus drew the *parabolic imagery* He uses in this parable:

*He presented another parable to them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares also among the wheat, and went away. But when the wheat sprang up and bore grain, then the tares became evident also. And the slaves of the landowner came and said to him, ‘Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?’ And he said to them, ‘An enemy has done this!’ And the slaves said to him, ‘Do you want us, then, to go and gather them up?’ But he said, ‘No; lest while you are gathering up the tares, you may root up the wheat with them. Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, “First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn.”’”  
(Matthew 13:24–30)*

The Prophet Jeremiah (by playing on the fact that the word *Adam* and the word *Edom* have the same root) uses much the same *parabolic imagery* to describe the fate of “The Remnant” of the man Adam in this passage:

*Concerning Edom.  
Thus says the LORD of hosts,  
“Is there no longer any wisdom in Teman?  
Has good counsel been lost to the prudent?  
Has their wisdom decayed?  
Flee away, turn back, dwell in the depths,  
O inhabitants of Dedan,  
For I will bring the disaster of Esau upon him  
At the time I punish him.  
If grape gatherers came to you,  
Would they not leave gleanings?  
If thieves {came} by night,  
They would destroy {only} until they had enough.  
But I have stripped Esau bare,  
I have uncovered his hiding places  
So that he will not be able to conceal himself;  
His offspring has been destroyed along with his relatives  
And his neighbors, and he is no more.  
Leave your orphans behind,  
I will keep {them} alive;  
And let your widows trust in Me.”  
For thus says the LORD, “Behold, those who were not sentenced to drink the cup will certainly drink {it,} and are you the one who will be completely acquitted? You will not be acquitted, but you will certainly drink {it.} For I have sworn by Myself,” declares the LORD, “that Bozrah will become an object of horror, a reproach, a ruin and a curse; and all its cities will become perpetual ruins.”  
(Jeremiah 49:7–13)*

The most obvious, yet least understood, use of the *parabolic image* in which “The Remnant” of Israel is depicted as a plant—the Living Word of God—can be found in what the Apostle Paul says concerning Israel in this well-known passage:

*I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says in {the passage about} Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel? “Lord, THEY HAVE KILLED*

THY PROPHETS, THEY HAVE TORN DOWN THINE ALTARS, AND I ALONE AM LEFT, AND THEY ARE SEEKING MY LIFE." But what is the divine response to him? "I HAVE KEPT for Myself SEVEN THOUSAND MEN WHO HAVE NOT BOWED THE KNEE TO BAAL." ***In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to {God's} gracious choice. But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace. What then? That which Israel is seeking for, it has not obtained, but those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened; just as it is written,*** "GOD GAVE THEM A SPIRIT OF STUPOR, EYES TO SEE NOT AND EARS TO HEAR NOT, DOWN TO THIS VERY DAY." And David says, "LET THEIR TABLE BECOME A SNARE AND A TRAP, AND A STUMBLING BLOCK AND A RETRIBUTION TO THEM. LET THEIR EYES BE DARKENED TO SEE NOT, AND BEND THEIR BACKS FOREVER." (Romans 11:1-10)

It is impossible to understand what Paul says in Romans 11 if one is not thinking in terms of the same *parabolic imagery* that he had in mind at the time. So let me explain it for you. The Apostle brings up God's interaction with the Prophet Elijah because he is pointing to the fact that God had already "cut off from" Israel all but 7000 of "The Many" in Israel at that point in history. (See *Not All Israel Is Israel*, pp. 135 ff.) That is an absolutely essential bit of information if you honestly want to understand what Paul says in Romans 11, because he could not have made his point any more clearly than he did:

***In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to {God's} gracious choice.***  
(Romans 11:5)

The difficulty one faces in understanding what Paul says—not just in Romans 11 but throughout his epistles—is, you need to know what he is *talking about* before you start reading. Otherwise, his sometimes perplexing use of terminology can easily leave you confused. For example, in the passage above he is *talking about* "The Remnant" of Israel, but he uses the term *Israel* to refer to Jews who were once a part of Israel but have now been "cut off from" Israel:

***What then? That which Israel is seeking for, it has not obtained, but those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened.***  
(Romans 11:7)

Obviously, Paul cannot have it both ways. If a *remnant* of Israel obtained what Israel was seeking, then Israel must have obtained what it was seeking. That apparent contradiction makes it clear that Paul's statements must always be understood in the context of his overall explanation. They cannot be taken in isolation from everything else he says. That is important to remember simply because Paul is quite often speaking *parabolically*, but he does not take the time to explain the *parabolic imagery* he has in mind. He assumes his readers will remember what he explained about the *parabolic imagery* of *The Apostolic Teaching* when he taught them in person.

If you want to understand what Paul says in Romans 11, you need to know that the *parabolic imagery* standing behind the Prophets' use of the Hebrew idiom "cut off from" is that of a husbandman pruning deadwood from a plant to increase its productivity. The plant from which deadwood is being pruned is always Israel—"The One" Who is the *Living Word* of God. However, in the *parabolic image* Israel is sometimes a tree and at other times a vine. The Prophet Hosea mentions both of those *parabolic images* in what he says here:

*I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your forefathers as the earliest fruit on the fig tree in its first {season.} {But} they came to Baal-peor and devoted themselves to shame, And they became as detestable as that which they loved.*  
(Hosea 9:10)

If you understand the *parabolic imagery* that the Prophets used, you should be able to see that the Prophet Hosea is *making a clear distinction* between Israel, "The One," and "The Many" who are in Israel. Israel is the plant; the members of Israel are the fruit of the plant. That is the same distinction that Paul makes as he continues his explanation concerning "The Remnant" of Israel in Romans 11:

*I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression salvation {has*

come} to the Gentiles, to make them jealous. Now if their transgression be riches for the world and their failure be riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulfillment be! But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, if somehow I might move to jealousy my fellow countrymen and save some of them. For if their rejection be the reconciliation of the world, what will {their} acceptance be but life from the dead? And if the first piece {of dough} be holy, the lump is also; and if the root be holy, the branches are too. But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree, do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, {remember that} it is not you who supports the root, but the root {supports} you. You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in." Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear; for if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will He spare you. Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off. And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in; for God is able to graft them in again. For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more shall these who are the natural {branches} be grafted into their own olive tree? For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery, lest you be wise in your own estimation, that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles has come in; and thus all Israel will be saved; just as it is written,

"THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION,  
HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB."  
"AND THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM,  
WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS."

From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of {God's} choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers; for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. For just as you once were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of their disobedience, so these also now have been disobedient, in order that because of the mercy shown to you they also may now be shown mercy. For God has shut up all in disobedience that He might show mercy to all.  
(Romans 11:11–32)

Paul's point is that most of the members of Israel have already been "cut off from" Israel just as most of Israel was "cut off from" Israel in Elijah's time. Only a remnant of Israel remains as the plant that Israel is. However, the Apostle does not bother to explain that Jesus Christ is "The Remnant" of Israel that remained when all the rest of the Jews were "cut off from" Israel. He only implies it through his use of the *parabolic image* in which "The Remnant" of Israel is the plant that is left after Israel has been pruned.

After Paul explains that his own day is LIKE the time in which Elijah lived, he begins to blend together a couple of different *parabolic images*. As a result, it isn't obvious that he is talking about Jesus Christ as "The Remnant" of Israel. Therefore, let me explain a few things that you need to know to be able to understand the gist of what Paul says.

The first *parabolic image* you need to get firmly fixed in your mind is that in which Israel is "The One." When Israel is viewed from the perspective of "The One," He is always the Firstborn Son of God, "The One" Who is both the King and High Priest of Israel—the legitimate *Heir* to the throne of God. As the Son of God, Israel is inherently holy because He is God's designated Firstborn—the Firstborn of all Creation. The essence of that *parabolic imagery* is clearly outlined in this passage:

*Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Sanctify to Me every first-born, the first offspring of every womb among the sons of Israel, both of man and beast; it belongs to Me."  
(Exodus 13:1–2)*

The second *parabolic image* you should keep in mind as you read what Paul says in Romans 11 is one that you must always hold alongside the first. But you must also be careful not to confuse the two. In that *parabolic image*, Israel is not only "The One," He is also "The Many." Although "The Many" in Israel are inherently unholy, they become holy through their contact with—and their position in—Israel, "The One" Who is holy. That is what Paul is referring to when he says this:

*And if the first piece {of dough} be holy, the lump is also; and if the root be holy, the branches are too.  
(Romans 11:16)*

Now that you know Paul is speaking *parabolically* in Romans 11 in terms of specific *parabolic imagery*

through which he views Israel—that is, (the Body of) Jesus Christ—as both “The One” and “The Many,” you tell me: Which one of those two *parabolic images* did Paul have in mind when he said this about Israel?

*For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery, lest you be wise in your own estimation, that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles has come in; and thus all Israel will be saved; just as it is written,*

*“THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION,*

*HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB.”*

*(Romans 11:25–26)*

The fool who has no interest in the Truth will disregard everything I have just told you and desperately seek refuge in the lie that Satan has disseminated over the past 170 years. (See “Wanna Hear The Whopper The Liar Came Up With? (I Doubt You’ll Believe It!)” *The Voice of Elijah*®, October 1996.) He will adamantly insist that Paul can only be *talking about* the salvation of the Jews in that passage. But knowing what you know about the *meaning* and *significance* of the Hebrew idiom “cut off from,” you already know that is not even a rational alternative.

Paul began Romans 11 by explaining that, just as in the days of Elijah, the Jews in his day have been “cut off from” Israel. That is, as he mentions in verse 7 and again in verse 25, Israel has experienced a “partial hardening.” That “hardening” has resulted in some members of Israel being “cut off from” Israel “until the fulness of the Gentiles has come in.” He then says, “thus all Israel will be saved.” In contrast to the lie that Satan would have us believe, the word *thus* points back to what he has said about Jews being “cut off from” Israel and the Gentiles being “grafted in”: “Thus all Israel”—that is, the Jews and Gentiles who have been “grafted in” to Jesus Christ—“will be saved.”

The Apostle has clearly explained (in terms that anyone who is familiar with the *parabolic imagery* of the Prophets can understand) that, because all of the Jews other than Jesus Christ have been “cut off from” Israel, Jesus Christ is now, in Himself, “The Remnant” of Israel. He has become Israel, “The One,” into which everyone who is to be saved—both Jew and Gentile—must be “grafted” (or regrafted, as the case may be). Speaking *parabolically*, Paul insists that the Gentiles who believe the Gospel are being “grafted into” Israel, “The One,”

and are becoming part of “The Many” in Israel who share in His holiness. Therefore, the Gentiles and Jews who have accepted Christ are now “The Remnant” of Israel. That being the case, it should be obvious—to everyone but those fools who want to go on believing Satan’s lie—that the Jews today have no basis at all on which to stake any claim to *the inheritance of the promise*:

*For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly; neither is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.*

*(Romans 2:28–29)*

I pointed out some of the things the Prophets and Apostles explained in terms of the *parabolic image* of “The Remnant” of Israel to show you that the term *remnant* has no special *meaning*. That is, it *means* nothing more than “that which remains.” The Truth concerning “The Remnant” of Israel has been hidden in the *significance* the Prophets and Apostles attached to their use of the term. When they used the term with reference to “The House” of Israel, they had in mind the *parabolic image* of God “cutting off from” Israel all those who fail to believe the Truth.

That *parabolic imagery* is the very foundation on which the Prophets and Apostles were building when they used the term *remnant*. “The Remnant” of Israel is all those who remain in Israel after God has finished “cutting off from” Israel all those who fail to respond to the Truth. Nothing has changed in the way God deals with Israel. In that respect at least, these days are exactly *LIKE* the days in which the Prophet Elijah preached to a multitude of fools who did not realize they had already been “cut off from” Israel. It will be the same in these Last Days. Nevertheless, there are still some in Israel who will be able to understand and make that crucial distinction—even now:

*Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, and the LORD gave attention and heard {it,} and a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the LORD and who esteem His name. “And they will be Mine,” says the LORD of hosts, “on the day that I prepare {My} own possession, and I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him. So you will again distinguish*

*between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him. For behold, the day is coming, burning like a furnace; and all the arrogant and every evildoer will be chaff; and the day that is coming will set them ablaze," says the LORD of hosts, "so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. But for you who fear My name the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings; and you will go forth and skip about like calves from the stall. And you will tread down the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day which I am preparing," says the LORD of hosts. "Remember the law of Moses My servant, {even the} statutes and ordinances which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel. Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD. And he will restore the hearts of the fathers to {their} children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse."*  
(Malachi 3:16-4:6)

The part about the Lord leaving the damned "neither root nor branch" provides the clue that reveals He is talking about a time when He is going to "cut off from Israel" all those fools who refuse to understand that holiness has nothing at all to do with outward actions. It has to do with maintaining constant contact with "The One" Who is the Holy One of Israel. However, if one does not have insight into that *Living Word of God*, it is impossible to be holy. I say that because holiness is a state of being, a state of mind, a matter of the heart and soul rather than the "I don't smoke and I don't chew" nonsense that Satan has promoted over the past few centuries.

*Editor: We received another question from a Monthly Contributor who wanted to know more about the fifth message of the Scriptures that was recently unsealed. Since you addressed this question in the March 2001 issue of The Voice of Elijah® Update, I'm not going to ask you to explain the same thing here. However, a lot of new subscribers have come on board in recent years and they may not understand what this ministry is all about. Therefore, it might be a good idea to talk about what is going on here at the End of the Age. That is, to talk about the fact that God is now in the process of removing seven seals from "the book" (Rev. 5:1-9) that contains seven hidden messages. You have said repeatedly that "the book" that is now being "opened" is the*

*Hebrew Scriptures, that is, the Old Testament. Can you explain why the Hebrew Scriptures need to be "opened," why they are being "opened" now, and why God hid seven cryptic messages in the Hebrew Scriptures in the first place?*

*Elijah:* Let me begin by listing just a few of the many articles in which I have talked about this topic over the past few years: "Questions & Answers," *The Voice of Elijah®*, July 1995; "Questions & Answers," *The Voice of Elijah®*, July 1996; "Questions & Answers," *The Voice of Elijah®*, October 1997; "We Know the Law Is Holy. But What About the Commandment?" *The Voice of Elijah®*, July 1998; and "The Forecast," *The Voice of Elijah®*, January 1999.)

The passage from the Book of Revelation that you referred to says this:

*And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a book written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?" And no one in heaven, or on the earth, or under the earth, was able to open the book, or to look into it. And I {began} to weep greatly, because no one was found worthy to open the book, or to look into it; and one of the elders said to me, "Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals." And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth. And He came, and He took {it} out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. And when He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, having each one a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to break its seals; for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase for God with Thy blood {men} from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. And Thou hast made them {to be} a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth." And I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and*

might and honor and glory and blessing." And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, "To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, {be} blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever." And the four living creatures kept saying, "Amen." And the elders fell down and worshiped. (Revelation 5:1–14)

That passage of Scripture goes on to explain what happened as Jesus Christ removed each of the seals from "the book," which was actually not a book at all but rather a scroll that had been rolled up and sealed with seven seals along the outside edge so that nobody could read—or change—what had been written on the inside. As I have already mentioned, that "scroll" is nothing more than a *parabolic image* of what the Hebrew Scriptures are LIKE.

The point of the *parabolic image* in which the Hebrew Scriptures are depicted as a scroll that has been sealed with seven seals is easy to understand: The visible writing on the back side of the scroll is the actual text of the Hebrew Scriptures. Anyone who can read Hebrew is perfectly capable of reading that visible text. However, there is much more to the Hebrew Scriptures than just the visible text. The *parabolic* writing hidden on the inside of the scroll is essential to an accurate understanding of the Hebrew Scriptures because it explains the *meaning* and *significance* of the visible text. That is, it is *The Teaching of Moses*—the *oral tradition* which was supposed to accompany the scroll on which the Hebrew Scriptures were written as it was *handed down* from generation to generation. (See *The Mystery of Scripture, Volume 1*.)

Without knowledge of the *oral tradition* (*The Teaching*) that God *delivered* to Moses in the wilderness (and Jesus revealed to His disciples after His Resurrection), one cannot understand the Hebrew Scriptures. As I have repeatedly explained over the past decade, that *oral tradition* was lost around A.D. 200, and the only way that anyone could ever get it back was the same way that Moses and the Apostles got it in the first place—by supernatural revelation. (See *The Way, The Truth, The Life*.) Yet, in spite of the fact that seven seals have prevented anyone from understanding the things hidden in the text of the Hebrew Scriptures, Jesus Christ is now "opening" those seven seals in preparation for Judgment Day. When He has removed the seventh and

final seal, supernatural revelation will no longer be the only way to gain insight into the *meaning* and *significance* of the Hebrew Scriptures. Anyone with the appropriate skill set—provided they are honestly willing to accept the Truth—should be able to read and understand the Hebrew text.

It is important to remember that we are *talking about a parabolic image*; and *parabolic imagery* tells us how one person, place, thing, or event IS LIKE another person, place, thing, or event. Therefore, it is foolish to make too much of a particular *parabolic image*. To avoid that, one needs to know the source of the *parabolic image* and what two things are being compared. In this case, the *parabolic image* of the sealed scroll originated with Moses and was subsequently developed by the other Prophets of Israel. It compares the Hebrew Scriptures to a sealed scroll.

To fully understand the *parabolic imagery* related to the seven seals which are currently being removed from the *parabolic* "scroll" on which the Hebrew Scriptures are written, one must first understand the purpose that seals served in the ancient Near East. So, in response to your Monthly Contributor's question, I will explain a couple of the more obvious functions of seals because those are the ones with which the Prophets were most concerned. In the process, I will also cover a few of the basics concerning seals and the sealing of legal texts in the ancient Near East.

It is not uncommon to hear the virtues of "Roman law" extolled simply because Roman law was "the legal system of ancient Rome which serves as the basis for modern civil law." (*American Heritage Dictionary, Third Edition, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1992.*) While it is true that our current legal system owes much to Roman law, most people are completely unaware of the fact that it owes nearly as much to Akkadian—ancient Babylonian and Assyrian—law. That is because the Roman legal system borrowed many, if not most, of its legal practices from the Akkadians. That will not come as a surprise to anyone who is familiar with ancient history. The Akkadians had a well-developed legal system long before Rome was founded. Therefore, my explanation of why God sealed the Hebrew Scriptures will begin with the legal practices of the Akkadians and then go on to compare those practices to the Roman customs prevailing when John wrote the Book of Revelation.

One of the most essential elements in any legal system is the authentication and validation of legal

documents. That is, every legal system must somehow ensure the authenticity of those documents which come before the court. That is why when you buy a house, the deed is routinely recorded at the county courthouse. When you buy a car, the title is recorded with the Bureau of Motor Vehicles. When you draft and sign a will, your signature must be witnessed by two people and then notarized by a third.

Legal documents are much too important for them to not be validated in some way. Consequently, if you think God will not somehow validate the authenticity of the Word of God the Prophets hid in the Hebrew Scriptures, you obviously have another think coming. The only difficulty is, that thought may not arrive in time to do your eternal soul any good. When the evidence contained in the sealed scroll is presented against you on Judgment Day, it will be obvious that God has the goods on you. Therefore, if you don't know what is in the document that will testify against you, it might be wise for you to show a little more curiosity. That characteristic may well have killed the cat; but you needn't worry. You are not a cat.

The ancient Akkadians had an extremely clever method for validating the authenticity of legal texts and making sure they had not been altered. Akkadian scribes drafted legal documents with a stylus on wet-clay tablets which were then baked in the sun. Therefore, immediately after drafting a legal text, the scribe would wrap the tablet in a thin wet-clay envelope on which he would make a verbatim copy of the text. If a dispute ever arose over whether the wording of a text had been altered, it was a simple matter for the judge to remove the outer envelope and confirm that the clay tablet inside had exactly the same wording.

Unlike the Akkadians, Roman scribes did not write with a wood or metal stylus on wet-clay tablets; they wrote with pen and ink on scrolls made of papyrus. However, they had a legal practice which served exactly the same purpose as the wet-clay envelope technique used by the Akkadians. To prevent a legal text from being altered after it had been composed, the scribe would roll up the scroll and seal the outer edge with one or more seals of wax or clay so that the scroll could not be opened without breaking or removing the seal(s). Quite often, a duplicate copy of the sealed scroll was made and left unsealed so that the text could be read. This fact was duly noted in the sealed copy.

Obviously, a sealed papyrus scroll was not nearly as secure as a clay tablet wrapped in a clay envelope. A broken clay envelope had to be replaced by someone who could also redraft the text. Since every Akkadian scribe had his own distinctive style of writing, a forgery could be detected rather easily. That was not the case with a sealed scroll. A seal on a scroll could easily be removed and replaced by anyone. Therefore, if there was no way to tell whether a seal had been put in place at the time the text was written, tampering with sealed texts would become both widespread and commonplace. To prevent that, and to identify the government administrator who had witnessed the sealing of the scroll, the Romans once again turned to the customs of the Akkadians.

To identify those who were present at the drafting and sealing of a legal text, the Akkadians used cylinder seals and signet rings. Everybody with any status at all in society had his own unique design carved onto a stone cylinder or into a metal ring. The imprint left on wet clay by either of these two devices served the same purpose as a signature does today. However, the seal of a government administrator who witnessed the drafting and sealing of a legal text served an additional purpose. Like the seal of a notary public in our own day, it attested that the administrator had personally been present when the text was written and that he had witnessed the other seal(s) being impressed on the clay. Therefore, you can easily understand why the imprint of the signet ring or cylinder seal of a king provided added weight and *significance* to anything to which it was affixed.

Roman administrators had no reason to continue using the cylinder seals that Akkadian scribes had used. Although such seals were perfect for rolling an imprint across wet clay, they were essentially useless when the medium for writing was a papyrus scroll. However, the Romans did continue to use the signet ring technology which the Akkadians had borrowed from the ancient Sumerians. While the wax or clay used for sealing a papyrus scroll was still soft and pliant, a Roman government administrator would imprint it with the design carved into his signet ring. That prevented people from removing hardened seals and altering sealed texts simply because they could not easily reattach the seals.

If you doubt that the ancients could identify a man by his seal, you obviously need to learn the same

lesson that Judah learned the hard way. Those who are familiar with their Bible already know the story of how Tamar tricked her father-in-law into helping her “build a house” for him. But the role his seal played in that imbroglio is easily overlooked. So here’s the story again, just in case some might have missed it:

*Now after a considerable time Shua’s daughter, the wife of Judah, died; and when the time of mourning was ended, Judah went up to his sheepshearers at Timnah, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite. And it was told to Tamar, “Behold, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep.” So she removed her widow’s garments and covered {herself} with a veil, and wrapped herself, and sat in the gateway of Enaim, which is on the road to Timnah; for she saw that Shelah had grown up, and she had not been given to him as a wife. When Judah saw her, he thought she {was} a harlot, for she had covered her face. So he turned aside to her by the road, and said, “Here now, let me come in to you”; for he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law. And she said, “What will you give me, that you may come in to me?” He said, therefore, “I will send you a kid from the flock.” She said, moreover, “Will you give a pledge until you send {it?}” **And he said, “What pledge shall I give you?” And she said, “Your seal and your cord, and your staff that is in your hand.”** So he gave {them} to her, and went in to her, and she conceived by him. Then she arose and departed, and removed her veil and put on her widow’s garments. (Genesis 38:12–19)*

The major point made in Genesis 38 obviously has to do with “The House” that Tamar’s father-in-law “built” for himself and her two deceased husbands. For the benefit of those who don’t understand the significance of that torrid tale, I’ve already explained a few things about it in articles I have written for this publication over the years as well as in the things I stated in *The Isaiah Seminar*. But that’s another story. Let’s get back to the difficult lesson that Judah learned after treating his seal with such casual disregard:

*When Judah sent the kid by his friend the Adullamite, to receive the pledge from the woman’s hand, he did not find her. And he asked the men of her place, saying, “Where is the temple prostitute who was by the road at Enaim?” But they said, “There has been no temple prostitute here.” So he returned to Judah, and said, “I did not find her; and*

*furthermore, the men of the place said, ‘There has been no temple prostitute here.’” Then Judah said, “Let her keep them, lest we become a laughingstock. After all, I sent this kid, but you did not find her.” Now it was about three months later that Judah was informed, “Your daughter-in-law Tamar has played the harlot, and behold, she is also with child by harlotry.” Then Judah said, “Bring her out and let her be burned!” It was while she was being brought out that she sent to her father-in-law, saying, “I am with child by the man to whom these things belong.” And she said, **“Please examine and see, whose signet ring and cords and staff are these?”** And Judah recognized {them,} and said, “She is more righteous than I, inasmuch as I did not give her to my son Shelah.” And he did not have relations with her again. (Genesis 38:20–26)*

The tremendous importance attached to seals is also evident in the account of Jezebel forging letters to which she signed Ahab’s name and then validated his signature by affixing his seal:

*And Jezebel his wife said to him, “Do you now reign over Israel? Arise, eat bread, and let your heart be joyful; I will give you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.” **So she wrote letters in Ahab’s name and sealed them with his seal,** and sent letters to the elders and to the nobles who were living with Naboth in his city. Now she wrote in the letters, saying, “Proclaim a fast, and seat Naboth at the head of the people; and seat two worthless men before him, and let them testify against him, saying, ‘You cursed God and the king.’ Then take him out and stone him to death.” So the men of his city, the elders and the nobles who lived in his city, did as Jezebel had sent {word} to them, just as it was written in the letters which she had sent them. They proclaimed a fast and seated Naboth at the head of the people. Then the two worthless men came in and sat before him; and the worthless men testified against him, even against Naboth, before the people, saying, “Naboth cursed God and the king.” So they took him outside the city and stoned him to death with stones. (1 Kings 21:7–13)*

That text clearly shows that seals were used to seal scrolls in Israel. The seal on the legal proclamation served not only to authenticate the message sealed inside but also to identify the person who made it. However, Jeremiah confirms that his culture had also

adopted the Akkadian practice of making both an open copy and a sealed copy of legal texts:

*And Jeremiah said, "The word of the LORD came to me, saying, 'Behold, Hanamel the son of Shallum your uncle is coming to you, saying, "Buy for yourself my field which is at Anathoth, for you have the right of redemption to buy {it.}"' Then Hanamel my uncle's son came to me in the court of the guard according to the word of the LORD, and said to me, 'Buy my field, please, that is at Anathoth, which is in the land of Benjamin; for you have the right of possession and the redemption is yours; buy {it} for yourself.' Then I knew that this was the word of the LORD. And I bought the field which was at Anathoth from Hanamel my uncle's son, and I weighed out the silver for him, seventeen shekels of silver. **And I signed and sealed the deed, and called in witnesses,** and weighed out the silver on the scales. Then **I took the deeds of purchase, both the sealed {copy containing} the terms and conditions, and the open {copy};** and I gave the deed of purchase to Baruch the son of Neriah, the son of Mahseiah, in the sight of Hanamel my uncle's {son,} and in the sight of the witnesses who signed the deed of purchase, before all the Jews who were sitting in the court of the guard. And I commanded Baruch in their presence, saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, "Take these deeds, this sealed deed of purchase, and this open deed, and put them in an earthenware jar, that they may last a long time." For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, "Houses and fields and vineyards shall again be bought in this land."'"* (Jeremiah 32:6-15)

Since the Prophets knew of the practice of sealing one copy and leaving another unsealed, it is possible that the scroll in Revelation 5 once had an open copy—which it did. Moses made a copy when he *handed down* *The Teaching of Moses* to the sons of Israel. Jesus Christ made a new copy when He *delivered* *The Apostolic Teaching* to His disciples. However, the fact that John became despondent when he found that nobody was worthy to open the scroll reveals that those two open copies had somehow gotten lost along the way:

*And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a book written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the book and to break its*

*seals?" And no one in heaven, or on the earth, or under the earth, was able to open the book, or to look into it. And I {began} to weep greatly, because no one was found worthy to open the book, or to look into it; and one of the elders said to me, "Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals."*

(Revelation 5:1-5)

Anyone who claims that the Hebrew Scriptures have not been sealed has publicly revealed a profound ignorance of the *parabolic imagery* in the vision that John saw. The sealed scroll he saw in his vision is the Last Will and Testament of God Himself:

*A Roman will, when written, had to be sealed seven times in order to authenticate it.*

(The Expositor's Greek Testament, Vol. 5, p. 383)

Jesus Christ alone was found worthy to open the sealed scroll because He is Israel, the Firstborn Son of God, that is, "The One" Who is the sole legitimate *Heir* to the *Kingdom of God*. Now don't tell me; the fool is already saying to himself, "But God has not died!" (Fools are notorious for stating the obvious, aren't they?) Don't bother telling him we are speaking in terms of the same *parabolic imagery* that Paul uses in Galatians 3; he wouldn't understand anyway. *Parabolic imagery* does not tell us what reality IS; it only tells us what reality IS LIKE.

By the way, "The Many" who *inherit the promise* with Jesus Christ, "The One," are the 144,000 who are "sealed" after the sixth seal is opened (Rev. 6:12-7:8). Whether that number is literal or figurative is completely irrelevant, so I'll leave it to fools to make profound claims regarding it. The only *significance* it holds is the fact that it reveals there are twelve tribes *in* Jesus Christ, "The One" Who is *Corporate* Israel, the Firstborn Son of God and sole legitimate *Heir of the promise*. Any estate divided into twelfths was incontestable under Roman law. (See "Did Jesus Leave a Will?" *The Voice of Elijah*®, July 1991.)

Now that you understand the *parabolic imagery* associated with the opening of the seven seals that have concealed the seven messages the Prophets hid in the Hebrew Scriptures, you need to consider a few of the things the Prophets said about their sealing of the Scriptures. First of all, after Daniel had seen all the

visions he describes in the Book of Daniel, the Lord told him to conceal the *meaning* and *significance* of everything he had seen by *parabolically* sealing up the scroll on which he had written them:

*“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. But as for you, Daniel, **conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time; many will go back and forth, and knowledge will increase.**”*  
(Daniel 12:1–4)

Daniel then overheard a completely incomprehensible discussion of things that had already been sealed. When he asked for an explanation, he was told that what he had heard would remain concealed and sealed up until the End of the Age. At that time, “The Many” would gain insight into what had been hidden:

*As for me, I heard but could not understand; so I said, “My lord, what {will be} the outcome of these {events?}” And he said, “Go {your way,} Daniel, for {these} words are concealed and sealed up until the end time. **Many will be purged, purified and refined; but the wicked will act wickedly, and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand.**”*  
(Daniel 12:8–10)

Daniel is not the only Prophet who states that the things he understood were sealed up and would remain so until the End of the Age. Isaiah says much the same thing in the following passage, although one must first understand the terminology and *parabolic imagery* he is using before it is possible to understand what he is *talking about*:

*Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples. And I will wait for the LORD who is hiding His face from the house of Jacob; I will even look eagerly for Him.*

*Behold, I and the children whom the LORD has given me are for signs and wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, who dwells on Mount Zion. And when they say to you, “Consult the mediums and the spiritists who whisper and mutter,” should not a people consult their God? {Should they consult} the dead on behalf of the living? **To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn.** And they will pass through the land hard-pressed and famished, and it will turn out that when they are hungry, they will be enraged and curse their king and their God as they face upward. Then they will look to the earth, and behold, distress and darkness, the gloom of anguish; and {they will be} driven away into darkness.*  
(Isaiah 8:16–22)

In another passage, Isaiah clearly states that the sons of Israel will not be able to understand the Truth that he understood because “the entire vision shall be to you like the words of a sealed book.” If anyone needs confirmation that the prophecies of Isaiah were sealed in the same way that Daniel’s were sealed, this passage should provide it:

*Be delayed and wait.  
Blind yourselves and be blind.  
They become drunk, but not with wine;  
They stagger, but not with strong drink.  
For the LORD has poured over you a spirit of deep sleep,  
He has shut your eyes, the prophets;  
And He has covered your heads, the seers.  
**And the entire vision shall be to you like the words of a sealed book, which when they give it to the one who is literate, saying, “Please read this,” he will say, “I cannot, for it is sealed.” Then the book will be given to the one who is illiterate, saying, “Please read this.” And he will say, “I cannot read.”** Then the Lord said,  
“Because this people draw near with their words  
And honor Me with their lip service,  
But they remove their hearts far from Me,  
And their reverence for Me  
consists of tradition learned {by rote,}  
Therefore behold, I will once again deal marvelously  
with this people, wondrously marvelous;  
**And the wisdom of their wise men shall perish,  
And the discernment of their discerning men  
shall be concealed.**”*  
(Isaiah 29:9–14)

That translation doesn't accurately reflect what Isaiah actually said because the translator did not know that Isaiah is *talking about* the *parabolic* sealing of the Hebrew Scriptures. If he had, he might not have translated the first part of verse 14 as "Therefore behold, I will once again deal marvelously with this people, wondrously marvelous." A better translation would be something like, "Therefore, I am going to cause this people total incomprehension" because the word he translated "marvelous" actually *means* "difficult to do" or "difficult to understand." That can be seen from the way it is translated in this passage:

*"For this commandment which I command you today is not too **difficult** for you, nor is it out of reach. It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will go up to heaven for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?' Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will cross the sea for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?' But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may observe it."*

*(Deuteronomy 30:11-14)*

If you weren't aware that, in that passage, Moses is *talking about* how easy it is for the True Believer to understand *The Teaching* after he has chosen to believe it, you probably need to review what the Apostle Paul said about that in this next passage, where he quotes what Moses said in the passage above:

*But the righteousness based on faith speaks thus, "DO NOT SAY IN YOUR HEART, 'WHO WILL ASCEND INTO HEAVEN?' (that is, to bring Christ down), or 'WHO WILL DESCEND INTO THE ABYSS?' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead)." But what does it say? "THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, **in your mouth and in your heart**"—that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, that if you confess with your mouth Jesus {as} Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.*

*(Romans 10:6-10)*

Paul is speaking in terms of a *parabolic image* in which Jesus Christ is *The Teaching* that every True Believer believes. In Isaiah 29:9-14, Isaiah is using that same *parabolic image* to explain that *The Teaching* hidden

in the Hebrew Scriptures IS LIKE the message concealed in a sealed scroll. But even without that bit of insight, it should be obvious to anyone who is seeking the Truth that Isaiah is *talking about* an inability on the part of some to understand the Truth. If that were not so, why would the Apostle Paul quote Isaiah 29:14 in a context where that is obviously what he had in mind:

*For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written,*

*"I WILL DESTROY THE WISDOM OF THE WISE, AND THE CLEVERNESS OF THE CLEVER I WILL SET ASIDE."*

*Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not {come to} know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.*

*(1 Corinthians 1:18-21)*

*Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away; but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden {wisdom,} which God predestined before the ages to our glory; {the wisdom} which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; but just as it is written,*

*"THINGS WHICH EYE HAS NOT SEEN*

*AND EAR HAS NOT HEARD,*

*AND {which} HAVE NOT ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN, ALL THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM."*

*For to us God revealed {them} through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. For who among men knows the {thoughts} of a man except the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so the {thoughts} of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual {thoughts} with spiritual {words.} **But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.***

*(1 Corinthians 2:6-14)*

The Truth is, the Hebrew Scriptures are (*parabolically*) LIKE a scroll which has been rolled up and sealed with seven seals so that only the writing on the back is visible. If you are able to “see” that *parabolic imagery* with “the eyes of your heart” (Eph. 1:18), consider this: Each of the seven *parabolic* seals on the Hebrew Scriptures has been imprinted with a different *parabolic image*. The *parabolic images* impressed on those seven *parabolic* seals correspond to seven messages hidden on the inside of the sealed scroll. Over the past ten years, I have explained the *parabolic imagery* associated with the five seals that have already been “opened.” I have been able to do that because, as each seal was “opened,” I could see a bit more of the writing on the inside of the sealed scroll. However, it will not be possible to see everything on the inside of the scroll until the seventh seal is “opened.” At that time, everything in the scroll will become available for viewing.

I already understand the first message—“*The House*”—fairly well because I can not only “see” the *parabolic imagery*, I also know where the message is explained in the Hebrew Scriptures. However, it has always bothered me that although I understand the *parabolic imagery* associated with the other four messages, I have not been able to find where they are hidden. That is because I have only been allowed to understand the *parabolic imagery* and a few of the Hebrew idioms associated with each of those messages.

Only recently have I come to realize that I did not fully understand the *parabolic imagery* in which the Hebrew Scriptures are LIKE a scroll sealed with seven seals. Nobody will be able to read and understand everything in the Hebrew Scriptures until the seventh seal is “opened” and the scroll is unrolled.

On several occasions, I have alluded to the fact that I can clearly “see” the *parabolic imagery* associated with all of the seals that have been “opened” so far. But I have also indicated that I can only vaguely understand where those messages are explained in the Hebrew Scriptures. Nearly six years ago, I said this:

*Fifteen years ago the things I saw in Scriptures were all related to the idiom “build a house.” But I know now that was because Christ had removed only the first seal from the Scriptures. Since then He has removed three other seals. So now we have access to the information hidden in the first four of the seven messages of the Hebrew Scriptures sealed by the seven seals: “The House,” “The*

*Way,” “The Light” and “The Name.” I have a general insight into all four of those messages. In some cases I have specific insight. But I am finding that I quite often lack an understanding of some of the things that I need to know in order to put those four messages together in a way that is coherent and easy to understand.*

*(“Questions & Answers,” **The Voice of Elijah**®, July 1995)*

When I wrote that, I thought that I should be able to understand each message after its seal had been “opened” because that is what happened with the first message. I now know that is not the case. The other messages will remain concealed until the seventh seal is “opened” and access is granted to everything the Prophets sealed up. Even after that final seal comes off, it will probably take some time to publish all of that information. So we apparently have a ways to go before the End of the Age.

Although I erroneously assumed that I should be able to understand each message immediately after its seal was “opened,” I also implied on occasion that I could “see” only the *parabolic imagery* imprinted on each seal. I stated that clearly a couple of years ago when I began to realize something had to be wrong with my assumptions:

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

*(“The Forecast,” **The Voice of Elijah**®, January 1999)*

Over the years, I have been greatly encouraged when I have seen through the lies and mistaken assumptions that Satan has used against me. Now that I know why I have not been able to “see” everything in the Hebrew Scriptures clearly, I have been tremendously encouraged. For years I despaired that I might never be able to understand. I should have known better. Everything is proceeding according to plan—God’s plan. The things I have explained so far have come to me in fits and starts (that’s an idiom) over the past twenty-seven years. God has been setting a rather slow pace so that I would have time to get ready and be prepared when the time comes to explain everything for others. What can I say? I’m a slow learner. ■