



THE VOICE of ELIJAH

Restoring the hearts of the fathers to the children

A Simple Matter of Light and Darkness

If then the advent of the Son comes indeed alike to all, but is for the purpose of judging, and separating the believing from the unbelieving, since, as those who believe do His will agreeably to their own choice, and as, [also] agreeably to their own choice, the disobedient do not consent to His doctrine; it is manifest that His Father has made all in a like condition, each person having a choice of his own, and a free understanding; and that He has regard to all things, and exercises a providence over all, "making His sun to rise upon the evil and on the good, and sending rain upon the just and unjust."

And to as many as continue in their love towards God, does He grant communion with Him. But communion with God is life and light, and the enjoyment of all the benefits which He has in store. But on as many as, according to their own choice, depart from God. He inflicts that separation from Himself which they have chosen of their own accord. But separation from God is death, and separation from light is darkness; and separation from God consists in the loss of all the benefits which He has in store.

Those, therefore, who cast away by apostasy these forementioned things, being in fact destitute of all good, do experience every kind of punishment. God, however, does not punish them immediately of Himself, but that punishment falls upon them because they are destitute of all that is good. Now, good things are eternal and without end with God, and therefore the loss of these is also eternal and never-ending.

It is in this matter just as occurs in the case of a flood of light: those who have blinded themselves, or have been blinded by others, are for ever deprived of the enjoyment of light. It is not, [however], that the light has inflicted upon them the penalty of blindness, but it is that the blindness itself has brought calamity upon them: and therefore the Lord declared, "He that believeth in Me is not condemned," that is, is not separated from God, for he

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is united to God through faith. On the other hand, He says, "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God;" that is, he separated himself from God of his own accord. "For this is the condemnation, that light is come into this world, and men have loved darkness rather than light. For every one who doeth evil hateth the light, and cometh, not to the light, lest his deeds should be reprobed. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that he has wrought them in God."

Inasmuch, then, as in this world (οἷον) some persons betake themselves to the light, and by faith unite themselves with God, but others shun the light, and separate themselves from God, the Word of God comes preparing a fit habitation for both. For those indeed who are in the light, that they may derive enjoyment from it, and from the good things contained in it; but for those in darkness, that they may partake in its calamities. And on this account He says, that those upon the right hand are called into the kingdom of heaven, but that those on the left He will send into eternal fire; for they have deprived themselves of all good.

And for this reason the apostle says: "Because they received not the love of God, that they might be saved, therefore God shall also send them the operation of error, that they may believe a lie, that they all may be judged who have not believed the truth, but consented to unrighteousness." For when he (Antichrist) is come, and of his own accord concentrates in his own person the apostasy, and accomplishes whatever he shall do according to his own will and choice, sitting also in the temple of God, so that his dupes may adore him as the Christ; wherefore also shall he deservedly "be cast into the lake of fire."

Irenæus, "Against Heresies," Book 6, Chaps. xxvii–xxviii, in Roberts and Donaldson (Eds.), *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (1867), Vol. 1, pp. 556–557.

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A Note From the Editor

By now, most of you should have received notification in the mail of our upcoming seminar. If you didn't, I'm extending a personal invitation to each of you right now. And I'm going to tell you everything you need to know so that you can make plans to attend.

If you are new to *The Voice of Elijah*®, the first thing you need to know is that seminars are not something we hold on a regular basis. Although we would ideally like to hold one every year or two, things haven't worked out that way in the past (and they probably won't in the near future). Our small staff has enough trouble keeping up with current obligations without adding to our workload by holding regular seminars. Nevertheless, if God takes us in that direction (and He might) we trust He will provide the means by which we can accomplish that task. But that's the future.

This is only our third seminar in twelve years, which is why you should take advantage of it. Realistically, most of our subscribers can't or won't do so. However, for those who would like to meet the staff of *The Voice of Elijah*® and, more importantly, hear Larry Harper expound on the Scriptures in a way you have never heard before, this is your opportunity. That's why I hope you will seize the opportunity and attend if at all possible. But enough of that. Let's talk about the seminar itself.

Prophecy and the Parables of Jesus

Let me ask you a few questions. Did you know that the parables of Jesus are directly linked to Old Testament prophecy? Did you know that many, if not most, of Jesus' parables relate specifically to the End Times? Did you know that many of the prophecies that are cryptically stated in the Old Testament also relate to the End Times? And finally, did you know that parables are the key that unlocks the mystery of what the Prophets have said in the Old Testament? If you failed to answer any or all of these questions in the affirmative, then the upcoming seminar—*Prophecy and the Parables of Jesus*—is something you should seriously consider attending.

Here is the vital information. The seminar will be held at the Hampton Inn & Suites at 1700 Rodeo Drive in Mesquite, Texas on October 12–13, 2002. The registration fee is \$25 per person or \$40 per couple. This entitles each attendee to receive a syllabus the day of the seminar. The seminar will run all day Saturday, October 12 (beginning at 9 a.m.) and conclude with a half-day session (ending around noon) on Sunday, October 13. The half-day session on Sunday should give most out-of-town travelers sufficient time to get home for work on Monday. That Monday is Columbus Day holiday (for those who may not have the day off.)

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Overnight accommodations at Hampton Inn are available at a group rate of \$69 per room. Those needing accommodations should not contact Hampton Inn directly but should instead contact us and we will handle everything from our end to secure the group rate. Just tell us on the registration form (in this newsletter) which nights you will be staying and we will handle the rest.

If you plan to attend the seminar or think there is a strong possibility that you might, please let us know no later than July 15. You will not be obligating yourself in any way should you contact us because you can easily cancel at any time should your plans change. All you have to do is notify us that you won't be attending the seminar and we will gladly refund your money.

The reason for the deadline is to give us a general idea how many will be attending so that we can plan accordingly. That doesn't mean you can't attend if you fail to notify us by July 15. However, once we reach the maximum seating capacity of the room, registration will be closed. The best we can do at that point is put you on a waiting list in case others cancel. If you contact us by July 15, however, you are guaranteed a place in the seminar—even if that means securing a larger room. So keep that in mind.

If you would like to attend the *Prophecy and the Parables of Jesus* seminar, please fill out the registration form included with this newsletter (or the one you received in the mail) and send it to us, along with a check for your registration fee. Please let us know whether you will need hotel accommodations so that we can reserve a room for you. There is no need to send a deposit for your room at this time. We will contact you at a later date to confirm that you still plan to attend. If a room deposit is required, your room deposit, like your registration fee, will be refundable should you later decide not to attend.

As you can see, we are trying to make your attendance at the *Prophecy and the Parables of Jesus* seminar as painless and hassle-free as possible. Although that is not reason enough to attend, here are a couple of good reasons why you should consider it. First, The Elijah Project will not be making audio

tapes or transcripts of the seminar available to the public or even to seminar attendees as they did with the last seminar. This means if you don't attend the seminar you can't possibly hear what those who do attend the seminar will hear—at least not right away. One reason The Elijah Project won't be producing audio tapes is because much of the information from the seminar will eventually find its way into the fourth volume of The Resurrection Theology Series entitled, *Prophecy and the Parables of Jesus* (sound familiar?). For obvious reasons The Elijah Project doesn't want to release too much information from the seminar until this volume is complete, which won't be for quite some time.

Another good reason to attend the seminar is because there is nothing quite as dynamic as hearing a legitimate Teacher expound on the Scriptures. And Larry Harper is a legitimate Teacher called by God. For reasons that I can't fully explain (but reasons that God fully understands) there is also greater power in the spoken word than there is in the written word. That's not meant to be a criticism of the written word. I'm simply pointing out that there is a difference between hearing The Teaching as it was meant to be taught—that is, as an oral Teaching or a spoken word—versus reading it in written form. I can't explain the difference between the two because the only way to appreciate the difference is to experience it. And I can tell you from my own experience that Larry speaks with an authoritative power—a power that resides in the Living Word of God—that even he doesn't fully realize.

Believe me, there is a greater dynamic to the Living Word of God when True Believers hear it spoken than there is to anything that is written. One can only imagine the power of that Living Word as it came forth from the mouths of the Apostles in the days of the Early Church. Larry does not claim to be an Apostle, but if you would like to experience the dynamic of hearing the Living Word of God proclaimed by a legitimate Teacher, you need to be at this seminar. Don't miss it.

Allen Fries

The Righteous and the Wicked: One Simple Distinction Lies Between Them

The term *evildoer* has been bandied about quite a bit recently, so it is only logical that some folks would go to the Scriptures to see what they have to say about those who *do evil*. I know I did. And I was surprised to find that the leaders of the Jews in the time of Christ demanded that Pilate execute Jesus because they thought He was an “evildoer”:

They led Jesus therefore from Caiaphas into the Praetorium, and it was early; and they themselves did not enter into the Praetorium in order that they might not be defiled, but might eat the Passover. Pilate therefore went out to them, and said, “What accusation do you bring against this Man?” They answered and said to him, “If this Man were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him up to you.”
(John 18:28–30)

That passage amazes me. Does it you? I didn’t think anyone would have ever characterized Jesus Christ as an “evildoer.” *Deranged?* Maybe. *Demented?* Perhaps. *Demon possessed?* Certainly (John 7:20, 8:48). But *evildoer*? No way. Yet when I saw what the Jews told Pilate, I quickly realized that folks today who use the term *evildoer* may be doing the same thing. They could be referring to somebody who doesn’t think like they do or act the way they think he should act. That’s all the more reason to see what the Scriptures have to say about *evildoers*. But you can do that yourself. I have something else on my mind.

When I saw that one’s definition of the term *evildoer* apparently depends on one’s definition of *evil*, I got to thinking: What if there are other biblical terms like *evildoer* that folks today are using rather loosely?

That’s when my thinking suddenly turned serious: What if Satan has me thinking one thing about some esoteric biblical term when the term actually *means* something that no one would ever suspect? Knowing what we already know about the effect Satan’s lies have had—and still have—on Christian beliefs, that shouldn’t be surprising. At least I hope it isn’t, because that is exactly the case with the term *wicked*.

Now I’m not sure I know the difference between *wicked* and *evil*. Do you? Or maybe you just think you do? Why would God use two different terms to refer to essentially the same thing? Perhaps He only used one term with that *meaning* and the other one *means* something entirely different than what one would expect. Did that possibility ever occur to you? Probably not. Most folks like to think they already know everything they need to know about the Scriptures. That belief provides them psychological security. That’s why some folks get downright angry whenever someone disputes something they firmly believe—even if they have never thought about the belief for more than two seconds.

You know the type: They heard some fool thing somewhere from someone and have long since forgotten who or where it was. Yet they will defend their asinine beliefs to the End because that’s the way they are—ignorant and stubborn. Unfortunately, simpletons like things simple, so they tend to believe whatever they hear first. Consequently, the Truth doesn’t stand a chance if it gets there too late. They won’t even consider the possibility that something might be true if they have to think about it. But here I am getting off track again. So let me put away my raggedy old soapbox and get on with the task at hand.

The Prophet who wrote Psalm 10 accurately described the “wicked” in his psalm:

Why dost Thou stand afar off, O LORD?
 Why dost Thou hide {Thyself} in times of trouble?
 In pride **the wicked** hotly pursue the afflicted;
 Let them be caught in the plots which they have devised.
 For **the wicked** boasts of his heart's desire,
 And the greedy man curses {and} spurns the LORD.
The wicked, in the haughtiness of his countenance,
 does not seek {Him.}
 All his thoughts are, "There is no God."
 His ways prosper at all times;
 Thy judgments are on high, out of his sight;
 As for all his adversaries, he snorts at them.
 He says to himself, "I shall not be moved;
 Throughout all generations I shall not be in adversity."
 His mouth is full of curses and deceit and oppression;
 Under his tongue is mischief and **wickedness**.
 He sits in the lurking places of the villages;
 In the hiding places he kills the innocent;
 His eyes stealthily watch for the unfortunate.
 He lurks in a hiding place as a lion in his lair;
 He lurks to catch the afflicted;
 He catches the afflicted when he draws him into his net.
 He crouches, he bows down,
 And the unfortunate fall by his mighty ones.
 He says to himself, "God has forgotten;
 He has hidden His face; He will never see it."
 Arise, O LORD; O God, lift up Thy hand.
 Do not forget the afflicted.
 Why has **the wicked** spurned God?
 He has said to himself, "Thou wilt not require {it}."
 Thou hast seen {it}, for Thou hast beheld mischief and
 vexation to take it into Thy hand.
 The unfortunate commits {himself} to Thee;
 Thou hast been the helper of the orphan.
 Break the arm of **the wicked** and the evildoer,
 Seek out his **wickedness** until Thou dost find none.
 The LORD is King forever and ever;
 Nations have perished from His land.
 O LORD, Thou hast heard the desire of the humble;
 Thou wilt strengthen their heart,
 Thou wilt incline Thine ear
 To vindicate the orphan and the oppressed,
 That man who is of the earth may cause terror no more.
 (Psalm 10:1–18)

It is impossible to understand what the Prophet had in mind when he wrote that psalm simply because the Hebrew term translated "wicked" actually means

something much more specific. However, Satan does not want you to understand the true *meaning* of that Hebrew term. If you did, you would be able to see that it aptly describes every descendant of the first Adam—except Christ, of course. But the *significance* of the Virgin Birth is another story. We can discuss that another time.

I'll give you my own translation of Psalm 10 a bit later. You might find it extremely interesting, once you know what the Prophet is *talking about*. But before I can do that, I need to explain the *meaning* and *significance* of the two Hebrew terms that are routinely translated "righteous" and "wicked." Needless to say, that will involve a bit of *parabolic imagery* and maybe a Hebrew idiom or two. So bear with me; I'll try to make my explanation as brief as I can without taking shortcuts.

The Righteous and the Wicked

When we look at what the Hebrew Scriptures say about the "wicked," it is immediately obvious that the Hebrew terms translated "righteous" and "wicked" are antonyms. They are contrasted in contexts like these:

The LORD tests **the righteous and the wicked**,
 And the one who loves violence His soul hates.
 (Psalm 11:5)

The curse of the LORD is on the house of **the wicked**,
 But He blesses the dwelling of **the righteous**.
 (Proverbs 3:33)

The memory of **the righteous** is blessed,
 But the name of **the wicked** will rot.
 (Proverbs 10:7)

And the word of the LORD came to me saying, "Son of man, set your face toward Jerusalem, and speak against the sanctuaries, and prophesy against the land of Israel; and say to the land of Israel, 'Thus says the LORD, "Behold, I am against you; and I shall draw My sword out of its sheath and cut off from you **the righteous and the wicked**. Because I shall cut off from you **the righteous and the wicked**, therefore My sword shall go forth from its sheath against all flesh from south {to} north. Thus all flesh will know that I, the LORD, have drawn My sword out of its sheath. It will not return {to its sheath} again.'"
 (Ezekiel 21:1–5)

If you look up the English term *righteous* in any dictionary, you will invariably find something like “free from guilt or sin” given as one definition. That is because the term *righteous* derives from the Middle English term *rightwise*, which meant “free from guilt or sin” and had essentially the same meaning as the term *just*. That fact comes through in the dictionary Noah Webster published in 1828, where his purpose was to define terms used in the English translation of the Scriptures. He says the term *righteous* means “just; accordant to the divine law.”

But the tale doesn’t end there, because the English terms *righteous* and *just* in the King James Version are customarily used to translate the same Hebrew and Greek terms. So we need to take into account the definition of the term *just* as well. But when one looks at the definition Noah Webster gave for the word *just*, one finds he displayed a decided ambivalence as to whether that term always refers to the state of being “free from guilt or sin.” He says it sometimes refers to the act of “living in exact conformity to the divine will.” In other words, he infers that one has to do something to be *righteous* and *just*. But that is only because, over the past four hundred years or so, Satan has worked hard to obscure the original meaning of the two English terms *righteous* and *just*.

Since those two terms started out as synonyms, Satan twisted them both the same way. Consequently, if you look in Webster’s Dictionary today, you will find something like “acting in accord with divine or moral law” listed as a primary definition of the term *righteous*. That definition of the biblical term is a lie that came straight out of the Pits of Hell. In his letter to the Galatians, the Apostle Paul is absolutely adamant that all anyone needs to do to be *righteous* is believe the Truth. If that is true, righteousness would not be the result of any action on our part; it would be entirely dependent on whether or not we choose to believe the Truth:

You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed {as} crucified? This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? Does He then, who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? Even so Abraham

BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS. Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, {saying}, “ALL THE NATIONS SHALL BE BLESSED IN YOU.” So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer. For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, “CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT ABIDE BY ALL THINGS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW, TO PERFORM THEM.” Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, “THE RIGHTEOUS MAN SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.” However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, “HE WHO PRACTICES THEM SHALL LIVE BY THEM.” Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, “CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE”—in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.
(Galatians 3:1–14)

My point is, the English terms *righteous* and *just* were accurate translations of the original Hebrew and Greek terms when they were first used to translate the Scriptures. Unfortunately, they retain only a residual of the original meaning “free from guilt or sin” that they had at that time. Therefore, our first task must be to go back and recover the meaning of the original Greek and Hebrew terms. Then we can use different English terms to translate them, terms that more accurately reflect the meaning of the Hebrew and Greek originals.

Dozens of passages in the Old Testament clearly demonstrate that “the righteous” and “the wicked” are exact opposites, but they don’t give a clue as to what might be the meaning or significance of the Hebrew terms translated “righteous” and “wicked.” For that information, we have to look elsewhere. When we do, this next passage sticks out like a sore thumb. In it, Abraham draws God into negotiations regarding His destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. At issue is the question of how much “collateral damage” God will find acceptable when He finally metes out His wrath. That is, how many of “the righteous” does it take to shield “the wicked” from destruction:

And Abraham came near and said, “Wilt Thou indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; wilt Thou

indeed sweep {it} away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous who are in it? Far be it from Thee to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous and the wicked are {treated} alike. Far be it from Thee! Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?" So the LORD said, "If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare the whole place on their account." And Abraham answered and said, "Now behold, I have ventured to speak to the Lord, although I am {but} dust and ashes. Suppose the fifty righteous are lacking five, wilt Thou destroy the whole city because of five?" And He said, "I will not destroy {it} if I find forty-five there." And he spoke to Him yet again and said, "Suppose forty are found there?" And He said, "I will not do {it} on account of the forty." Then he said, "Oh may the Lord not be angry, and I shall speak; suppose thirty are found there?" And He said, "I will not do {it} if I find thirty there." And he said, "Now behold, I have ventured to speak to the Lord; suppose twenty are found there?" And He said, "I will not destroy {it} on account of the twenty." Then he said, "Oh may the Lord not be angry, and I shall speak only this once; suppose ten are found there?" And He said, "I will not destroy {it} on account of the ten." And as soon as He had finished speaking to Abraham the LORD departed; and Abraham returned to his place.
(Genesis 18:23–33)

In that passage, the Master Prophet Moses—in typical cryptic fashion—provides a fairly good clue as to the *meaning* of the Hebrew terms that are normally translated "righteous" and "wicked." Take another look at what Abraham said to God:

And Abraham came near and said, "Wilt Thou indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; wilt Thou indeed sweep {it} away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous who are in it? Far be it from Thee to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous and the wicked are {treated} alike. Far be it from Thee! Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?"
(Genesis 18:23–25)

One could easily assume that Abraham's reference to God as "the Judge of all the earth" is nothing more than a casual comment on God's sense of fairness

and justice. But anyone who does that will go on living in total ignorance of what the Hebrew adjectives translated "righteous" and "wicked" actually *mean*. The Truth is, Abraham's argument against God's destruction of "the righteous" along with "the wicked" is based on a *parabolic image* in which He is depicted as "the Judge of all the earth." That is why he refers to God as such. The Hebrew terms translated "righteous" and "wicked" are technical terms, taken directly from the legal setting in which they were commonly used to denote one's guilt or innocence after a judge had rendered judgment. That is, the Hebrew term normally translated "righteous" actually *means* "innocent" and the term translated "wicked" *means* "guilty." But you needn't take my word for it. The biblical evidence for that conclusion is overwhelming—and really not all that difficult to understand.

The Truth in regard to Satan's deception comes to light quickly in several passages where the translation "righteous" or "wicked" doesn't actually fit the context. In some of those instances, the true *meaning* of the two Hebrew adjectives can be readily deduced by simply observing how the verbs from the corresponding roots are used. In the following passage, the Hebrew verb translated "acquit" comes from the same root as the adjective translated "righteous":

*"Keep far from a false charge, and do not kill the innocent or the righteous, for I will not **acquit** the guilty."*
(Exodus 23:7)

There is a whole lot more to that verse than meets the eye. The most easily explained is that the adjective translated "guilty" is the same Hebrew term that is ordinarily translated "wicked" everywhere else. In this case, the translator realized that the verse is drawing a contrast between those who are legally "innocent" and those who are "guilty." Since he could not in good conscience resort to the essentially *meaningless* translation "wicked," he was forced to settle for an accurate translation of the Hebrew original. Unfortunately, he still managed to use the goofy term *righteous* instead of *innocent* because he had already used that term to translate a word that *means* "blameless." Here is what that verse actually says:

"Stay far away from a false statement—so that you do not kill the blameless and innocent—because I will not declare

the guilty innocent.
(Exodus 23:7) —my interim translation

The connection between a Hebrew noun with the meaning “innocent” and a verb which means “to acquit” may not be immediately obvious. But consider what a judge does when he “acquits” someone: He declares them innocent. That is precisely the connection between the Hebrew adjective that is normally translated “righteous” and the Hebrew verb that is regularly translated “acquit.” The same sort of relationship exists between the Hebrew adjective translated “wicked” and its cognate verb, which is frequently translated “condemn.” The adjective means “guilty.” So rather than using the English term *condemn* to translate the Hebrew verb, a better translation would be “declare guilty.” Considering the legal nuance of the English word *condemn*, that translation would fit all legal contexts, rather than just death penalty cases.

Take a look at the following passage. In it one finds both adjectives and verbs from the Hebrew roots with the meaning “innocent” and “guilty.” Yet you can see from the translation that Satan has translators concealing the Truth by blindly using archaic terms like *justify*, *righteous*, and *wicked* even in a context where more meaningful legal terms would make better sense:

“If there is a dispute between men and they go to court, and the judges decide their case, and they justify the righteous and condemn the wicked, then it shall be if the wicked man deserves to be beaten, the judge shall then make him lie down and be beaten in his presence with the number of stripes according to his guilt. He may beat him forty times {but} no more, lest he beat him with many more stripes than these, and your brother be degraded in your eyes.”
(Deuteronomy 25:1–3)

This is what that passage actually says:

“When there is a lawsuit between men and they {the plaintiff and defendant} come for the verdict and they {the Levites} judge them, they will declare the innocent, innocent and they will declare the guilty, guilty. Then, if the guilty is the son of the strike {an idiomatic expression which means something like ‘deserves to be struck’}, the judge shall make him lie down and shall strike him in his {the innocent man’s} presence with a number in accordance with his guilt. He may strike him forty {times}. He

must not continue lest he continue to strike many strikes beyond these and your brother be disgraced in your eyes.”
(Deuteronomy 25:1–3) —my interim translation

As you can see, that passage has nothing at all to do with anyone necessarily being “righteous” or “wicked” in the theological sense that we tend to think of when we hear terms related to “righteousness” and “wickedness.” The passage is instead concerned with nothing more than a judge’s verdict as to *guilt* and *innocence* in regard to one particular case. The same is true of every other place in the Hebrew Scriptures where the various forms of those two Hebrew roots appear. But it is only when one understands the *parabolic imagery* standing behind the terms that some of the statements of the Prophets begin to make sense. That is, if you are not aware that God has a legal case pending against you, me, and every other inhabitant of Planet Earth, you aren’t likely to get the point that Moses and the other Prophets of Israel make in regard to “the righteous” and “the wicked.”

The Suit God’s Brought Against Us

The Prophet Hosea lays out the case that God has against us in fairly stark terms:

*Listen to the word of the LORD, O sons of Israel,
For the LORD has a case
against the inhabitants of the land,
Because there is no faithfulness or kindness
Or knowledge of God in the land.
{There is} swearing, deception, murder, stealing, and adultery.
They employ violence, so that bloodshed follows bloodshed.
Therefore the land mourns,
And everyone who lives in it languishes
Along with the beasts of the field and the birds of the sky;
And also the fish of the sea disappear.*
(Hosea 4:1–3)

Unfortunately, the translator has obscured the main thrust of that passage by translating the Hebrew word for “earth” as “land.” (See “Questions & Answers,” *The Voice of Elijah*®, January 2001 and “Questions & Answers,” *The Voice of Elijah*®, October 1998.) While the Hebrew term ‘*eret*’ does mean that in some contexts, in the Creation Account it clearly refers to the planet Earth. And Hosea’s mention of birds, beasts, and fish in this

case is a fairly strong indication that he is alluding to God being upset with all of mankind because their ignorance of the Truth has somehow disrupted His Creation. If you are aware that the sixth “day” of Creation is not yet complete, you should be able to understand how that is. (See “Questions & Answers,” *The Voice of Elijah*®, July 1997 and July 2001.)

Hosea outlines the basis for God’s “lawsuit” through the parallelism he uses in the first verse, in which he identifies “the Truth” as “knowledge of God”:

*Hear the Word of His Majesty, O sons of Israel,
Because His Majesty has a lawsuit
against the inhabitants of the Earth,
Because there is no Truth and there is no lovingkindness,
There is no knowledge of God in the Earth.
(Hosea 4:1) —my interim translation*

The Prophet then goes on to detail some of the sinful acts that stem from mankind’s total lack of insight into “*The Mystery*” of God. If you keep in mind that sin is always the result of fools acting in accordance with the lies they believe, it is easy to see that the actions of sinful men are completely ancillary to the basis on which God has brought charges against us: We don’t know the Truth concerning Who He is and what He has done.

Now I realize that some abject idiot is bound to object to my translation of the Hebrew ‘*en ‘emeth* as “there is no Truth.” So before we go on, let me take the wind out of the moron’s sails by pointing out the fact that the Hebrew word ‘*emeth* is translated “truth” dozens of times in the Old Testament. The translators of the King James Version translated it that way fairly consistently back in 1611. They even translated it as “truth” in Hosea 4:1 as I did. But translators today use “truth” as a translation only in those places where “faithfulness” or some other vague concept clearly can’t get the job done. For example, Joseph’s statement to his brothers doesn’t allow much room for doubt that ‘*emeth* actually means “truth” rather than “faithful”:

*“Send one of you that he may get your brother, while you remain confined, that your words may be tested, whether there is truth in you. But if not, by the life of Pharaoh, surely you are spies.”
(Genesis 42:16)*

The same sort of inescapable conclusion applies to these passages:

*Then the woman said to Elijah, “Now I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in your mouth is **truth**.”
(1 Kings 17:24)*

*Then the king said to him, “How many times must I adjure you to speak to me nothing but the **truth** in the name of the LORD?”
(1 Kings 22:16)*

A brief survey of any biblical concordance will show you that even today the Hebrew word ‘*emeth* is translated “truth,” especially where it occurs with the word that I translated “lovingkindness” in Hosea 4:1 above. Here are some passages where the two occur together:

*Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed,
“The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious,
slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and **truth**.”
(Exodus 34:6)*

*“And now may the LORD show **lovingkindness and truth** to you; and I also will show this goodness to you, because you have done this thing.”
(2 Samuel 2:6)*

*I have not hidden Thy righteousness within my heart;
I have spoken of Thy faithfulness and Thy salvation;
I have not concealed Thy **lovingkindness and Thy truth**
from the great congregation.
Thou, O LORD, wilt not withhold Thy compassion from me;
Thy **lovingkindness and Thy truth**
will continually preserve me.
(Psalm 40:10–11)*

*He will send from heaven and save me;
He reproaches him who tramples upon me.
Selah.*

*God will send forth His **lovingkindness and His truth**.
(Psalm 57:3)*

*He will abide before God forever;
Appoint **lovingkindness and truth**,*

that they may preserve him.
(Psalm 61:7)

I could go on showing you passages where the Hebrew word *'emeth* is translated "truth" in the New American Standard Bible. But why should I bother? It is frequently translated "truth" because that is what it means. However, since Satan is a liar, his distortion of the meaning of the Hebrew word for *truth* is not surprising. He has been working hard to change the meaning of a whole bunch of English words over the past four hundred years—the word *faith* being a prime example. (See "Satan's Fools Are Satan's Tools," *The Voice of Elijah*®, April 1994.) It makes sense that he would also try to distort the perceived meaning of a few key Hebrew words as well.

My point is, the Prophet Hosea would have us understand that God's lawsuit against us is based on our lack of insight into "the Truth," which he defines as "knowledge of God." That information is essential to an accurate understanding of *The Teaching*. At the very least, it provides a basic understanding of the Prophet Jeremiah's indictment of the *parabolic harlot* Babylon in this passage:

Sharpen the arrows, fill the quivers!
The LORD has aroused the spirit of the kings of the Medes,
Because His purpose is against Babylon to destroy it;
For it is the vengeance of the LORD,
 vengeance for His temple.
Lift up a signal against the walls of Babylon;
Post a strong guard,
Station sentries,
Place men in ambush!
For the LORD has both purposed and performed
What He spoke concerning the inhabitants of Babylon.
O you who dwell by many waters,
Abundant in treasures,
Your end has come,
The measure of your end.
The LORD of hosts has sworn by Himself:
"Surely I will fill you with a population like locusts,
And they will cry out with shouts of victory over you."
{It is} He who made the earth by His power,
Who established the world by His wisdom,
And by His understanding
 He stretched out the heavens.
When He utters His voice,

{there is} a tumult of waters in the heavens,
And He causes the clouds to ascend
 from the end of the earth;
He makes lightning for the rain,
And brings forth the wind from His storehouses.
All mankind is stupid, devoid of knowledge;
Every goldsmith is put to shame by his idols,
For his molten images are deceitful,
And there is no breath in them.
They are worthless, a work of mockery;
In the time of their punishment they will perish.
The portion of Jacob is not like these;
For the Maker of all is He,
And of the tribe of His inheritance;
The LORD of hosts is His name.
(Jeremiah 51:11–19)

Jeremiah evidently considered that last little bit of poetry to be fairly *significant*. He repeats it in another context where it is obvious that the focus of God's wrath is mankind's ignorance of the Truth concerning Who He is and what He has done:

There is none like Thee, O LORD;
Thou art great, and great is Thy name in might.
Who would not fear Thee, O King of the nations?
Indeed it is Thy due!
For among all the wise men of the nations,
And in all their kingdoms,
There is none like Thee.
But they are altogether stupid and foolish
{In their} discipline of delusion—their idol is wood!
Beaten silver is brought from Tarshish,
And gold from Uphaz,
The work of a craftsman and of the hands of a goldsmith;
Violet and purple are their clothing;
They are all the work of skilled men.
But the LORD is the true God;
He is the living God and the everlasting King.
At His wrath the earth quakes,
And the nations cannot endure His indignation.
Thus you shall say to them, "The gods that did not make
the heavens and the earth shall perish from the earth and
from under the heavens."
{It is} He who made the earth by His power,
Who established the world by His wisdom;
And by His understanding
 He has stretched out the heavens.

When He utters His voice,
 {there is} a tumult of waters in the heavens,
 And He causes the clouds to ascend
 from the end of the earth;
 He makes lightning for the rain,
 And brings out the wind from His storehouses.
 Every man is stupid, devoid of knowledge;
 Every goldsmith is put to shame by his idols;
 For his molten images are deceitful,
 And there is no breath in them.
 They are worthless, a work of mockery;
 In the time of their punishment they will perish.
 The portion of Jacob is not like these;
 For the Maker of all is He,
 And Israel is the tribe of His inheritance;
 The LORD of hosts is His name.
 (Jeremiah 10:6–16)

In another passage, Jeremiah plainly outlines the bleak future that we face because we lack a knowledge of the Truth. He tells us that when Judgment Day arrives—when the time comes for God’s “lawsuit” to be settled—“the wicked” (those who are found “guilty” of not knowing the Truth) are destined for destruction:

“Therefore you shall prophesy against them all these words, and you shall say to them,
 ‘The LORD will roar from on high,
 And utter His voice from His holy habitation;
 He will roar mightily against His fold.
 He will shout like those who tread {the grapes,}
 Against all the inhabitants of the earth.
 A clamor has come to the end of the earth,
 Because the LORD has a controversy with the nations.
 He is entering into judgment with all flesh;
 As for the wicked,
 He has given them to the sword,’ declares the LORD.”
 Thus says the LORD of hosts,
 “Behold, evil is going forth
 From nation to nation,
 And a great storm is being stirred up
 From the remotest parts of the earth.
 And those slain by the LORD on that day shall be from one
 end of the earth to the other. They shall not be lamented,
 gathered, or buried; they shall be like dung on the face of
 the ground.
 Wail, you shepherds, and cry;
 And wallow {in ashes,} you masters of the flock;

For the days of your slaughter
 and your dispersions have come,
 And you shall fall like a choice vessel.
 Flight shall perish from the shepherds,
 And escape from the masters of the flock.
 {Hear} the sound of the cry of the shepherds,
 And the wailing of the masters of the flock!
 For the LORD is destroying their pasture,
 And the peaceful folds are made silent
 Because of the fierce anger of the LORD.
 He has left His hiding place like the lion;
 For their land has become a horror
 Because of the fierceness of the oppressing {sword,}
 And because of His fierce anger.”
 (Jeremiah 25:30–38)

Here is a translation of verse 31 that not only makes it easier to see Jeremiah is *talking about* the same “lawsuit” that Hosea mentions; it also discloses that God is going to “judge all flesh” because of His “lawsuit” against us. He will then destroy “the wicked,” that is, those who are found guilty as charged:

“An uproar has come upon the end of the earth.
 Because His Majesty has a lawsuit against the nations,
He will judge all flesh.
As for the guilty, He will put them to the sword,”
 says His Majesty.
 (Jeremiah 25:31) —my interim translation

Hosea and Jeremiah are not the only Prophets who *talk about* the *parabolic* “lawsuit” God has brought against mankind. The Prophet Micah also mentions it. However, he addresses his remarks concerning the End of the Age to Israel—that is, to Jesus Christ, the *parabolic* Firstborn Son of God Who, in *parabolic pantomime*, bore the brunt of God’s wrath against the man Adam so “*The Remnant*” of Israel could escape unscathed. The point of his statements has to do with the fact that the descendants of the man Jacob did the same thing the descendants of the man Adam had done: They lost insight into the Truth of *The Teaching* they once had. Therefore, as part of the *parabolic pantomime* in which Israel *parabolically* depicts the history of the man Adam, God brought suit against them:

“**And it will be in that day,**” declares the LORD,
 “That I will cut off your horses from among you

*And destroy your chariots.
 I will also cut off the cities of your land
 And tear down all your fortifications.
 I will cut off sorceries from your hand,
 And you will have fortunetellers no more.
 I will cut off your carved images
 And your {sacred} pillars from among you,
 So that you will no longer bow down
 To the work of your hands.
 I will root out your Asherim from among you
 And destroy your cities.
**And I will execute vengeance in anger and wrath
 On the nations which have not obeyed.**"
 Hear now what the LORD is saying,
 "Arise, plead your case before the mountains,
 And let the hills hear your voice.
 Listen, you mountains, to the indictment of the LORD,
 And you enduring foundations of the earth,
 Because the LORD has a case against His people;
 Even with Israel He will dispute.
 My people, what have I done to you,
 And how have I wearied you?
 Answer Me.
 Indeed, I brought you up from the land of Egypt
 And ransomed you from the house of slavery,
 And I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.
 My people, remember now
 What Balak king of Moab counseled
 And what Balaam son of Beor answered him,
 {And} from Shittim to Gilgal,
 In order that you might know the righteous acts of the LORD."
 (Micah 5:10–6:5)*

Here is my own translation of Micah 6:1–2. I have tried to make it easier for you to see that Micah is *talk- ing about* the same "lawsuit" as Hosea and Jeremiah:

*Hear now what His Majesty is saying:
 "Arise! Present the lawsuit to the mountains,
 And make the hills hear Your voice!
 Hear, O mountains, the lawsuit of His Majesty,
 Even the ever-flowing foundations of the earth,
**Because His Majesty has a lawsuit with His People;
 He will litigate with Israel.**"
 (Micah 6:1–2) —my interim translation*

Micah goes on to *talk about* how the sons of Israel gave up the Truth of *The Teaching of Moses*. But what he

says is not all that important to our discussion here. So I will explain those things in the second volume of *The Mystery of Scripture*.

Salvation Is By Faith Alone

According to the *parabolic imagery* of *The Teaching*, God plans to bring each and every one of us into court on Judgment Day to respond to the charge that we do not know—and believe—the Truth of *The Teaching* that Adam and Eve carried with them when they left the Garden of Eden. And nobody has a gnat's chance in a hurricane of being acquitted if they don't actually know—and believe—the Truth. That's because, just as the Protestant Reformers clearly stated, salvation is by faith—belief—alone. Unfortunately, the one thing the Reformers intuitively sensed but failed to state clearly is the most fundamental truth of all: Salvation is by faith *in the Truth* that God concealed and revealed in the Scriptures. All that anyone will ever get by believing a lie concerning that Truth is a one-way ticket to Hell. That's why the Apostle Paul makes such a big deal of the fact that those who perish at the End will be deceived by the Antichrist because they "did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved":

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

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

(2 Thessalonians 2:1–12)

Now I am fairly certain that some well-meaning soul with a fairly good grasp of systematic theology will eventually come along and hasten to inform me that the “acquittal” of “the innocent” on Judgment Day has nothing to do with the fact that their firm belief in some *objective Truth* proves that they are innocent of all charges. Rather, it has to do with the sacrificial blood of Jesus Christ which provides atonement for anyone who believes.

Since every True Believer has—to one extent or another—been indoctrinated in the concept of the substitutionary atonement of Christ, I should probably take this opportunity to explain a bit about the *parabolic imagery* that stands behind the death of Jesus Christ as the sacrificial Lamb of God. Then I can show you how the *parabolic imagery* concerning His death fits together with the *parabolic imagery* in which God is “the Judge of all the earth.” To do that, I will use the *parabolic statements* that the Prophet Isaiah makes in Isaiah 53.

Most Jewish folks are aware that Isaiah 53 is describing the death of Israel, the Suffering Servant of God. Most Christian folks are unaware that the Jews understand that Truth. But they are well aware of the fact that Isaiah 53 is describing the death of Jesus Christ, the Suffering Servant of God. Most Jews are aware that Christians believe that, but they choose not to believe it. So the only thing that both camps agree on is the fact that Isaiah 53 describes the death of the Suffering Servant of God. The Truth is, both Christians and Jews understand half of the Truth. And, as any rational person will readily admit, a half-truth is a whole lie.

The Prophet Isaiah is explaining how the death of Corporate Israel—Jesus Christ, the sacrificial Lamb of God—would one day atone for the sins of those who believed the message God had given him to preach. He even mentions how the *parabolic image* of the death of Jesus Christ as a sacrifice fits together with the *parabolic image* of God dragging us into court to see if we know the Truth:

Who has believed our message?

And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot,

And like a root out of parched ground;

He has no {stately} form or majesty

That we should look upon Him,

Nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him.

He was despised and forsaken of men,

A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;

And like one from whom men hide their face,

He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

Surely our griefs He Himself bore,

And our sorrows He carried;

Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken,

Smitten of God, and afflicted.

But He was pierced through for our transgressions,

He was crushed for our iniquities;

The chastening for our well-being {fell} upon Him,

And by His scourging we are healed.

All of us like sheep have gone astray,

Each of us has turned to his own way;

But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all

To fall on Him.

He was oppressed and He was afflicted,

Yet He did not open His mouth;

Like a lamb that is led to slaughter,

And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers,

So He did not open His mouth.

By oppression and judgment He was taken away;

And as for His generation, who considered

That He was cut off out of the land of the living,

For the transgression of my people

to whom the stroke {was due?}

His grave was assigned with wicked men,

Yet He was with a rich man in His death,

Because He had done no violence,

Nor was there any deceit in His mouth.

But the LORD was pleased

To crush Him, putting {Him} to grief;

If He would render Himself {as} a guilt offering,

He will see {His} offspring,

He will prolong {His} days,

And the good pleasure of the LORD

will prosper in His hand.

As a result of the anguish of His soul,

He will see {it} and be satisfied;

By His knowledge the Righteous One,

My Servant, will justify the many,

As He will bear their iniquities.
 Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great,
 And He will divide the booty with the strong;
 Because He poured out Himself to death,
 And was numbered with the transgressors;
Yet He Himself bore the sin of many,
And interceded for the transgressors.
 (Isaiah 53:1–12)

The Jews know full well that the Suffering Servant described in that passage is Israel. But they fail to understand the *significance* of that Truth. The Suffering Servant Who dies as a sacrifice for the sins of “The Many” is *Corporate* Israel—that is, Jesus Christ, the Firstborn Son of God, the One Who became *Corporate* Israel when all the other Jews were “cut off from” Israel. (See *Not All Israel Is Israel*.) If you noticed Isaiah’s mention of “The Many” in verse 11, you may have already sensed that the only way out of this maze has something to do with the covenant relationship between “The One” and “The Many.” And it does. But before I explain that, let me give you a little clearer translation of verses 10–12:

But His Majesty desired to crush Him—make {Him} weak.
If He would offer His soul as a guilt offering,
He would see seed,
He would prolong days.
And the desire of His Majesty will succeed in His hand.
Out of the trouble of His soul,
He will see {the Truth} and be satisfied.
By His knowledge {of the Truth}
An Innocent One, My Servant,
 will declare the Many innocent.
And He will bear their iniquity.
Therefore, I will allot Him a portion among the Many.
And He will apportion plunder with the Numerous,
Because He poured out His soul to death,
And was counted with transgressors,
And He carried {the} sin of {the} Many,
And intervened for the transgressors.
 (Isaiah 53:10–12) —my interim translation

If you read those three verses carefully, you may be able to see that Isaiah refers to two different *parabolic images*. He first indicates “The Many” will gain acquittal—that is, a declaration of innocence—through Christ’s knowledge of the Truth: “By His knowledge {of

the Truth} An Innocent One, My Servant, will declare the Many innocent.” He is referring to the fact that Christ *delivered* the Truth to His disciples when He *handed down* *The Teaching* to them after His Resurrection (Luke 24). But then, in a separate statement, Isaiah says “He will bear their iniquity.” In that, he is referring to the death of Christ as the sacrificial Lamb of God.

Isaiah makes those two distinct statements because he has in mind two completely separate *parabolic images*. However, both images are depicted by the sacrificial rituals of the priesthood. In the first *parabolic image*, “The Many” in Israel become members of, and are united with, “The One”—*Corporate* Israel—through their knowledge of, and belief in, the Truth. The union of “The Many” with “The One” is *parabolically* depicted in the death of *Corporate* Israel (Jesus Christ) as a Passover sacrifice. (See *The Passover Parable*.) In the second *parabolic image*, the sins of “The Many” are transferred to “The One” through their confession of sin. The atonement of the sins of “The Many” is *parabolically* symbolized by the death of *Corporate* Israel as either a burnt offering, a sin offering, or a guilt offering—which is why Isaiah mentions the guilt offering in verse 10.

The *parabolic imagery* of *The Teaching of Moses* that Isaiah uses in Isaiah 53 comes directly out of the Mosaic regulations governing the priesthood. Consequently, it is impossible to understand what Isaiah says in that chapter if one does not know that the priestly rituals were *parabolic pantomimes*. (See *The Mystery of Scripture, Volume 1*.) Beyond that, however, it is preposterous to think that one can understand the *meaning* and *significance* of those sacrificial rituals if one does not know what they are *parabolically* depicting.

Embedded in the *parabolic imagery* which stands behind the sacrificial rituals of the priesthood is a subtle distinction that Moses draws between two entirely different types of blood sacrifices. The burnt offering, sin offering, and guilt offering were one type of blood sacrifice. Their specific purpose was to provide atonement for sin. In contrast to these atonement sacrifices, however, there were also various peace offerings—votive, thanksgiving, and freewill offerings—which were a quite different type of blood sacrifice. The peace offerings were essentially covenant offerings, intended to celebrate the covenant relationship in some way. Knowing that, one should not be surprised to find that the Hebrew Scriptures indicate the Passover sacrifice was a peace offering.

According to the first *parabolic image* of *The Teaching* that Isaiah had in mind, the True Believer becomes a member of the Body of Jesus Christ by hearing and believing the Truth of the Gospel message. By that I *mean* hearing and believing the true Gospel, not the nonsense Satan has so many miniscule-minded morons spouting today. At the point of his honest belief in the Truth, the True Believer becomes a member of *Corporate Israel*—the Body of Jesus Christ. That union occurs when he accepts the terms of the New Covenant and *parabolically* participates in the Passover meal. *Parabolically* speaking, the person who truly believes not only eats the “flesh” of Christ but also drinks His “blood.” That is, with childlike faith he consumes the Word of God he has heard rather than just considering it as an intellectual possibility. As a result, his belief in the Word of God makes him one with the One Who is the Word of God. That is, he *parabolically* becomes a member of the Body of Jesus Christ, the *Living Word* of God. All of that is accomplished through faith—belief.

Immediately after a person becomes one with Jesus Christ by believing the Truth of the Gospel, one extremely *significant* thing happens: His union with the One that Isaiah calls “the Holy One of Israel” immediately makes him aware of the awesome horror of his sinful condition. As a result, he feels the heavy conviction of the Holy Spirit driving him to confess his sin. According to the *parabolic imagery* of *The Teaching*, any confession of sin on the part of “The Many” transfers their sins to “The One”—*Corporate Israel*. That is true whether it is an initial confession of sin by a new Believer or the confession of a Believer many years after being born again. Whenever “The Many” confess their sins, they are immediately forgiven because the sacrificial death of “The One” has already provided atonement—a substitutionary atonement—for their sins.

The point is, confession of sin is not what makes a person a member of the Body of Jesus Christ—that is, a member of *Corporate Israel*. A simple, honest, sincere belief in the Truth of the Gospel does that. And the *parabolic imagery* associated with a Believer believing the Truth is that of the Passover sacrifice rather than one of the three atonement sacrifices. Continued confession of sin does provide the means whereby one can avoid being “cut off from” *Corporate Israel*. However, such confession is effective only if one continues to believe the Truth. Therefore, faith (continued belief) in the Truth is the sole foundation on which the process of

salvation rests. That is why, according to the *parabolic image* of Judgment Day, the specific charge God will bring against us is that we lack insight into the Truth. Those who know and believe the Truth will be declared innocent on that Great Day because, through continued belief in the Truth, they have remained members of Christ—*Corporate Israel*. Those who don’t believe will be declared guilty because they are not members of Christ. But, since we all act in accordance with what we believe, our deeds will provide evidence as to what we believe just as Paul states in this passage:

And do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment upon those who practice such things and do the same {yourself,} that you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance? But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who WILL RENDER TO EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS: to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation.

(Romans 2:3–8)

Paul appears to imply that the innocent and the guilty *do* something to deserve their fate—“obey the truth” or “obey unrighteousness.” What he *means* by those two phrases is not only confused by the ambiguous term *unrighteousness* but also by the translator’s unfortunate choice of the word *obey* to translate a Greek term that actually *means* “persuade.” Paul is actually inferring that the charge God has brought against us has to do with whether or not we know the Truth. Here is my translation of verses 5–8:

But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart, you are saving up wrath for yourself in a day of wrath and revelation of the just judgment of God, who WILL GIVE TO EACH ONE ACCORDING TO HIS WORKS. To those who are seeking glory and honor and immortality through patience of good work, eternal life; but to those who are contentious and are not persuaded by the truth but have been persuaded by the wrong, wrath, and anger.

(Romans 2:5–8) —my interim translation

That is not the only passage in the New Testament that discloses the basis for God's judgment is whether one has an understanding of, and belief in, the Truth of *The Teaching*. Referring to Himself *parabolically* as the *Living Word of God*, Jesus explains how the *parabolic images* of light (knowledge of the Truth) and darkness (belief in Satan's lies) relate to Judgment Day:

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who practices the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God."
(John 3:16–21)

On another occasion, Jesus again *talks about* the basis on which God will determine guilt or innocence. As you read what He says, keep in mind that He is speaking *parabolically* concerning the role that He—the *Living Word of God*—will play in judging whether someone is worthy of eternal life:

Jesus therefore answered and was saying to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless {it is} something He sees the Father doing; for whatever {the Father} does, these things the Son also does in like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and greater works than these will He show Him, that you may marvel. For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes. For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son, in order that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death

into life. Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear shall live. For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is {the} Son of Man. Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; those who did the good {deeds} to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil {deeds} to a resurrection of judgment. I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. If I {alone} bear witness of Myself, My testimony is not true. There is another who bears witness of Me, and I know that the testimony which He bears of Me is true. You have sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. But the witness which I receive is not from man, but I say these things that you may be saved. He was the lamp that was burning and was shining and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light. But the witness which I have is greater than {that of} John; for the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish, the very works that I do, bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me. And the Father who sent Me, He has borne witness of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form. And you do not have His word abiding in you, for you do not believe Him whom He sent. You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that bear witness of Me; and you are unwilling to come to Me, that you may have life."
(John 5:19–40)

Psalm 10

Now that you know the basis on which God will judge guilt and innocence on that Great Day, let's take another look at what the Prophet said in Psalm 10:

*Your Majesty, Why do You stand at a distance?
Why do You hide during times of inaccessibility?
In pride, the guilty hotly pursues the blameless;
Let them be captured in the opinions they have considered.
Because the guilty boasts concerning the lust of his soul;
And one who extorts blesses one who spurns His Majesty.
The guilty—when his face is haughty—
will not make inquiry {concerning God.}*

All of his opinions are, "There is no God!"
 His ways are firm at all times.
Your judgments are on high—out of his sight.
 All are his adversaries; he sniffs at them!
 He has said in his heart:
 "I will not be moved for generation after generation,
 Because {I} am not in evil."
 His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and oppression.
 Under his tongue are trouble and iniquity.
 He sits in ambush of villages.
 In the hiding places, he kills **the innocent**.
 His eyes conceal themselves for the hapless.
 He sets ambush in the hiding place like a lion in a thicket.
 He sets ambush to snatch the blameless.
 He snatches the blameless by dragging him in his net.
 He oppresses; he humbles.
 And the hapless fall by his powerful ones.
 He has said in his heart:
 "God has forgotten;
 He has hidden his face;
 He will never see."
 Arise, Your Majesty!
 O God, raise up Your Hand!
 Don't forget the afflicted!
 Why does **the guilty** despise God?
 {Because} he has said in his heart:
 "You will not make inquiry!"
 You see because You take note of trouble and grief,
 To take {them} into Your Hand.
 The hapless entrusts an orphan to You.
 {Because} You have been helping.
 Break the arm of **the guilty** and the evil.
 You will make inquiry concerning his guilt
 {even if} You do not find.
 His Majesty is King at 'olam,
 When Gentiles perish from His Earth!
 Your Majesty,
 You have heard the desire of those who are afflicted.
 You will prepare their heart;
You will incline Your ear
To judge orphan and oppressed
 So that a man from the earth cannot continue to terrify.
 (Psalm 10:1–18) —my interim translation

In that psalm, the Prophet provides a fairly good description of the person God will declare guilty on Judgment Day. But he makes it clear that the guilty are what they are because they think things are the way

they want them to be. He begins by asking God why He has hidden Himself in the Hebrew Scriptures:

*Your Majesty, Why do You stand at a distance?
 Why do You hide during times of inaccessibility?
 (Psalm 10:1) —my interim translation*

The Prophet then turns his attention to the guilty and explains that God is going to use their own thoughts against them:

*In pride, **the guilty** hotly pursues the blameless;
 Let them be captured in the opinions they have considered.
 (Psalm 10:2) —my interim translation*

Two verses later, the Prophet describes the arrogant attitude that the guilty person exhibits in regard to an accurate knowledge of God. He insists the guilty have no interest in seeking the Truth. Instead, because Judgment Day has not already arrived, they ignorantly assume that any mention of the angry God of Israel is just a myth. More than that, they reject even the mere insinuation that God would judge them since—as they believe—they are "not in evil":

***The guilty**—when his face is haughty—
 will not make inquiry {concerning God.}
 All of his opinions are, "There is no God!"
 His ways are firm at all times.
Your judgments are on high—out of his sight.
 All are his adversaries; he sniffs at them!
 He has said in his heart,
 "I will not be moved for generation after generation,
 Because {I} am not in evil."
 (Psalm 10:4–6) —my interim translation*

As you can see from what the Prophet says, it would never occur to the person who lacks insight into the Truth that what he thinks about God is not true. That is, "His ways are firm at all times." I assume that, on the basis of what I told you in *The Way, The Truth, The Life*, you understand "his ways" is an idiomatic reference to what the guilty person thinks. Just as "*The Way of the Lord*" is what God thinks/believes to be true, "the way" of any other individual is what he thinks/believes to be true. Now that you know that, you might find it interesting to see what the Prophet who wrote the Book of Proverbs has to say about "the

way of the wicked" (that is, the beliefs of the person who lacks knowledge of *The Teaching*). Just keep in mind that the Prophet who wrote that book intentionally encrypted what he wrote by speaking *parabolically*.

Having laid out the basic mind-set of "the guilty" in regard to God, the Prophet who wrote Psalm 10 next turns his attention to what the guilty have to say about God. It is not difficult to understand what he says if you keep in mind that he is *parabolically* describing the detrimental effect the lies espoused by the guilty have on those who are honestly seeking to know the Truth:

*His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and oppression.
Under his tongue are trouble and iniquity.
He sits in ambush of villages.
In the hiding places, he kills **the innocent**.
His eyes conceal themselves for **the hapless**.
He sets ambush in the hiding place like a lion in a thicket.
He sets ambush to snatch **the blameless**.
He snatches **the blameless** by dragging him in his net.
He oppresses; he humbles.
And **the hapless** fall by his powerful ones.
(Psalm 10:7–10) —my interim translation*

In that passage, the Prophet is ridiculing those who use the Scriptures to preach a god other than the angry God of Israel. Lamebrains who do that ignorantly claim to be explaining the Scriptures, thereby revealing the God Who has hidden Himself in them. The Truth is, they are only revealing their own mind, and as a result are masquerading as the God they claim to reveal. To fully appreciate the terminology and the *parabolic imagery* the Prophet uses, one must be aware of what the Prophets have said concerning the Lord being LIKE a lion hiding in a thicket until the Day of Revelation, when the *Living Word* Who has hidden Himself in the printed Word will finally manifest Himself to all. Jeremiah is speaking in terms of the same *parabolic imagery* the psalmist uses when he says this:

*Thus says the LORD of hosts,
"Behold, evil is going forth
From nation to nation,
And a great storm is being stirred up
From the remotest parts of the earth.
And those slain by the LORD on that day shall be from one
end of the earth to the other. They shall not be lamented,
gathered, or buried; they shall be like dung on the face of*

*the ground.
Wail, you shepherds, and cry;
And wallow {in ashes,} you masters of the flock;
For the days of your slaughter
and your dispersions have come,
And you shall fall like a choice vessel.
**Flight shall perish from the shepherds,
And escape from the masters of the flock.**
{Hear} **the sound of the cry of the shepherds,
And the wailing of the masters of the flock!**
**For the LORD is destroying their pasture,
And the peaceful folds are made silent
Because of the fierce anger of the LORD.**
He has left His hiding place like the lion;
For their land has become a horror
Because of the fierceness of the oppressing {sword,}
And because of His fierce anger."
(Jeremiah 25:32–38)*

Following his indictment of all the imbeciles who have used the Scriptures to slice themselves into little pieces down through the centuries, the Prophet describes yet another erroneous belief that drives everyone who lacks an accurate knowledge of God:

*He has said in his heart:
"God has forgotten;
He has hidden his face;
He will never see."
(Psalm 10:11) —my interim translation*

After entreating God not to forget His *promise*, the Prophet mentions the single most monstrous lie that every person who lacks a knowledge of the Truth firmly believes. He tells us they do not believe God will ever inquire as to the content of their faith:

*Why does **the guilty** despise God?
{Because} he has said in his heart:
"You will not make inquiry!"
(Psalm 10:13) —my interim translation*

Two verses later, the Prophet insists that God will indeed make just such an inquiry—when Jesus Christ becomes King of Kings at 'olam, that is, at the time of "the burning" (see "Questions & Answers," *The Voice of Elijah*®, July 2000 and "Questions & Answers," *The Voice of Elijah*®, October 2000):

Break the arm of *the guilty* and the evil.

You will make inquiry concerning his guilt

{even if} You do not find.

His Majesty is King at 'olam,

When Gentiles have perished from His earth!

(Psalm 10:15–16) —my interim translation

Summary

The Prophet who wrote Psalm 10 obviously understood the motives of those whom God will declare guilty as charged on Judgment Day. But just to make sure you don't misunderstand my motives, let me make them perfectly clear: My purpose is to make sure that I have done what God called me to do by providing the insight you need. What you do with the information I provide is entirely up to you. If it is true and you choose not to believe it, God will certainly find you guilty on that Great Day. So let me briefly summarize what I have presented here.

Whenever you come across “the righteous” in the Scriptures, mentally cross out those two words and read “the innocent” instead. As you do that, think in terms of the *parabolic image* in which those who understand and believe the Truth will be found innocent on Judgment Day. Likewise, wherever you find “the wicked,” mentally replace those two words with “the guilty” and think in terms of the parable in which Jesus describes the Judgment:

*“But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. And all the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave Me {something} to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.’ Then **the righteous** will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You drink? And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? And when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ And the King will answer and say to*

*them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, {even} the least {of them,} you did it to Me.’ Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry, and you gave Me {nothing} to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink; I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me.’ Then they themselves also will answer, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?’ Then He will answer them, saying, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.’ And these will go away into eternal punishment, but **the righteous** into eternal life.”*
(Matthew 25:31–46)

For the benefit of those who understand and believe *The Teaching*, let me remind you of what the Prophet Malachi said about the coming of that Day:

*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.*
(Malachi 3:16–4:3)

Like Malachi said, those who “have insight” at the End (Dan. 12:3, 10) “will again distinguish between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him.” Now how do you suppose they will be able to do that? ■



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

Scattered Showers: On various occasions over the past eleven and a half years, I have mentioned how the Prophets used the *parabolic image* of “rain” to depict the Prophets’ restoration of *The Teaching*. Perhaps the most familiar passage in which that image occurs is this one:

So rejoice, O sons of Zion,
 And be glad in the LORD your God;
 For He has given you the early rain
 for {your} vindication.
 And He has poured down for you the rain,
 The early and latter rain as before.
 And the threshing floors will be full of grain,
 And the vats will overflow with the new wine and oil.
 Then I will make up to you for the years
 That the swarming locust has eaten,
 The creeping locust, the stripping locust,
 and the gnawing locust,
 My great army which I sent among you.
 And you shall have plenty to eat and be satisfied,
 And praise the name of the LORD your God,
 Who has dealt wondrously with you;
 Then My people will never be put to shame.
 Thus you will know that I am in the midst of Israel,
 And that I am the LORD your God
 And there is no other;
 And My people will never be put to shame.
 And it will come about after this
 That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind;

And your sons and daughters will prophesy,
 Your old men will dream dreams,
 Your young men will see visions.
 And even on the male and female servants
 I will pour out My Spirit in those days.
 And I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth,
 Blood, fire, and columns of smoke.
 The sun will be turned into darkness,
 And the moon into blood,
 Before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.
 And it will come about that
 whoever calls on the name of the LORD
 Will be delivered;
 For on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem
 There will be those who escape,
 As the LORD has said,
 Even among the survivors whom the LORD calls.
 (Joel 2:23–32)

As the Apostle Peter explains, that passage contains a prophecy concerning the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost:

But Peter, taking his stand with the eleven, raised his voice and declared to them: “Men of Judea, and all you who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give heed to my words. For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is {only} the third hour of the day; but this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel:
 ‘AND IT SHALL BE IN THE LAST DAYS,’ God says,
 ‘THAT I WILL POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT
 UPON ALL MANKIND;
 AND YOUR SONS AND YOUR DAUGHTERS SHALL PROPHESY,
 AND YOUR YOUNG MEN SHALL SEE VISIONS,
 AND YOUR OLD MEN SHALL DREAM DREAMS;
 EVEN UPON MY BONDSLAVES, BOTH MEN AND WOMEN,
 I WILL IN THOSE DAYS POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT
 And they shall prophesy.
 AND I WILL GRANT WONDERS IN THE SKY ABOVE,
 AND SIGNS ON THE EARTH BENEATH,
 BLOOD, AND FIRE, AND VAPOR OF SMOKE.
 THE SUN SHALL BE TURNED INTO DARKNESS,
 AND THE MOON INTO BLOOD,
 BEFORE THE GREAT AND GLORIOUS
 DAY OF THE LORD SHALL COME.
 AND IT SHALL BE, THAT EVERYONE WHO CALLS ON
 THE NAME OF THE LORD SHALL BE SAVED.’”
 (Acts 2:14–21)

Some folks claim that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost is the “early rain” that Joel mentions in verse 23. That is not so. As Joel plainly states, those events follow the “rain”:

*“And it will come about after this
That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind;
And your sons and daughters will prophesy,
Your old men will dream dreams,
Your young men will see visions.”
(Joel 2:28)*

It isn’t all that difficult to understand what Joel says about “rain” once you understand he is speaking in terms of the *parabolic imagery* of “Elijah.” Like Jesus said, John the Baptist was an “Elijah”—provided you want to accept it:

*“Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen {anyone} greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. 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 11:11–14)*

That’s an interesting *parabolic image*, isn’t it? John the Baptist restored *The Teaching* after a long drought—just LIKE Elijah—thereby heralding the First Advent of Jesus Christ. And Jesus plainly stated—after the death of John the Baptist—that another “Elijah” would one day come along to do the very same thing:

*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.”
(Matthew 17:10–12)*

Jesus made another interesting comment related to the *parabolic image* of “Elijah.” He said this:

“But I say to you in truth, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the sky was shut up

*for three years and six months, when a great famine came over all the land.”
(Luke 4:25)*

One has to wonder how Jesus knew the drought lasted three and a half years. The Scriptures are not that specific:

*Now it came about {after} many days, that the word of the LORD came to Elijah in the third year, saying, “Go, show yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the face of the earth.”
(1 Kings 18:1)*

Nonetheless, James confirms what Jesus said:

*Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months.
(James 5:17)*

Both Jesus and James knew that Elijah’s drought lasted three and a half years because they understood the *parabolic image* of the “Elijah” who will herald the Second Coming of Jesus Christ as Malachi says (Mal. 4). The drought of Elijah began right after the “early rain” in October/November and ended “in the third year” with the “latter rain” in April/May. *Parabolically* speaking, the restoration of *The Teaching* in the time of Christ is the “early rain” that Joel mentions. The restoration of *The Teaching* right before the End of the Age is the “latter rain.” According to the *parabolic image* of “Elijah,” the two thousand years between the “early rain” and the “latter rain” have been (*parabolically*) LIKE a three-and-a-half year drought. During that time, the “planting of the Lord” has pretty much shriveled up and died while Satan’s “tares” have flourished. That is about to change. The restoration of *The Teaching* at the End of the Age will be followed by the same kind of outpouring of the Holy Spirit that followed the “early rain.”

By the way, I assume you are aware that we are still waiting for the Gulf War to end with the death of Saddam Hussein, just as Isaiah said it would. (See “Prophet Predicts Death of Hussein,” *The Voice of Elijah*®, October 1990.) I also assume you realize the declared intention of the Bush administration is—as the President said recently—to “take him out.” It will be interesting to see how things develop. ■



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: You have said on several occasions that Jesus Christ died as a curse under the terms of the Old Covenant (Gal. 3:13) but that He was resurrected under the terms of the New Covenant. In the first instance, Corporate Israel (in the Person of Jesus Christ) was put to death because Corporate Israel broke the terms of the Old Covenant, thereby invoking the curse that was set forth in that covenant. In the second instance, Jesus Christ, as an individual Member of Israel, was resurrected because He fully abided by the terms of the New Covenant that He accepted at the time of His Baptism. My question relates to the latter issue. Since we all act in accordance with our beliefs, wouldn't it be accurate to say that Jesus Christ was ultimately saved through faith? After all, wasn't it His faith in the Word of God—The Teaching—that kept Him from sinning and prompted Him to always do what God required? Is it an oversimplification to say that the faith that saved Jesus Christ is the same faith in The Teaching that Christians are expected to have?

Elijah: The short answer to your question is: Yes, it is an oversimplification to say that the faith that saved Jesus Christ is the same faith in *The Teaching* that Christians are expected to have. But the short answer to your question is itself an oversimplification of an extremely complex part of *The Teaching*.

Certainly, it would be accurate to say that Jesus Christ was *saved*—that is, *delivered* from death by being resurrected from the dead—*because of His faith in The Teaching*. However, it is possible to say that only because His actions were determined by what He believed in the same way that our actions are determined by what we believe. However, it would be a complete distortion of the Truth to say that Christ was *saved*—resurrected from the dead—*through faith* in the same way that we are *saved through faith*. To say that would be to imply that Christ's deliverance from death was accomplished under the same terms as our own—which it was not. So let me explain how the two differ.

Jesus Christ came into possession of *the promise* under the terms of the Old Covenant when all the rest of the Jews were "cut off from" Israel and He became Corporate Israel. That Covenant demanded that He die for the sins of "all Israel." He was resurrected so that He could *inherit what was promised* because He met the conditions of the *first* New Covenant. Conversely, True Believers *inherit the promise* and *what was promised* under the terms of the *second* New Covenant—which Jesus ratified with His disciples the night before He died.

The New Covenant which Jesus Christ accepted when He was baptized by John the Baptist required that the individual member of Corporate Israel *adhere completely* to the terms set forth in that New Covenant. The Truth is, the New Covenant that Jesus Christ accepted had exactly the same terms as the *first* Old Covenant that Corporate Israel accepted at Mt. Sinai (Ex. 19–24). That is, it made no provision for atonement of any kind. It was a covenant in which deliverance from death—that is, *the fulfillment of the promise*—was based entirely on what the Apostle Paul calls "works of law" (Rom. 3:20, 28; Gal. 2:16, 3:2, 5, 10). Therefore, Jesus Christ was held to a much higher standard than those who would later become the individual members of His Body. He had to adhere completely to the terms of the Covenant. That is, He could not sin. If He had sinned, He would not have been delivered from death and resurrected to life eternal.

By contrast, the only requirement that God has imposed on the True Believers who are members of the Body of Jesus Christ is the same requirement that He imposed on the individual members of Israel under the terms of the *second* Old Covenant (Ex. 34). That is, we must avoid being "cut off from" Israel. To do that, we

must believe—and continue to believe—the Truth of *The Teaching*. That means we must agree with the Truth and act accordingly when we are confronted with it:

Therefore putting aside all filthiness and {all} that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. 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. If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his {own} heart, this man's religion is worthless. This is pure and undefiled religion in the sight of {our} God and Father, to visit orphans and widows in their distress, {and} to keep oneself unstained by the world. (James 1:21–27)

If a True Believer sins, either inadvertently or intentionally, he does not immediately lose all hope of salvation, as Jesus Christ would have if He had sinned. Not at all. Like the *second* Old Covenant, the *second* New Covenant provides a means of atonement for the members of Israel (the Body of Jesus Christ) so they can avoid being “cut off from” Israel. Therefore, a True Believer has only to demonstrate his belief in the Truth of *The Teaching* by going to God in humble repentance, confessing the fact that he has sinned, and he will be forgiven. His sins are covered because the sins of the individual members of *Corporate* Israel have always been borne by *Corporate* Israel. It is just that simple. However, there is much more to the simple plan of salvation than meets the eye at first glance.

If we sin and are not willing to admit the Truth by acknowledging that we have sinned, we have thereby chosen to go back and “walk in the darkness.” That is, in denying the conviction of the Holy Spirit that tells us we have sinned, we have failed to continue believing the Truth. Consequently, we have voluntarily cut ourselves off from the Body of Jesus Christ, the Word of God. That is what the Apostle John is *talking about* in this passage:

And this is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and {yet} walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. (1 John 1:5–10)

As you can see, faith—belief in the Truth—is the ultimate basis for everyone’s deliverance from death. That includes the deliverance of Jesus Christ. He would not have willingly endured the incredible agony of death on the cross if He had not known—that is, firmly believed—the Truth He saw hidden in the Hebrew Scriptures. However, while it is possible to say that our faith and the faith of Jesus Christ accomplish the same goal, they do not accomplish it in the same way. God required that Jesus Christ have perfect faith. That is, He not only had to believe the Truth, He had to prove His faith by exhibiting complete obedience in accord with what He believed. True Believers are allowed a great deal more leeway. We can exhibit our faith in the Truth through an honest confession of sin. BIG DIFFERENCE.

For the benefit of those who might otherwise take what I have just said and prove themselves to be as crooked as the Serpent, I should mention that God judges according to the intent of the “heart” rather than by what we say. And there are definite limits to His benevolence:

For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain terrifying expectation of judgment, and THE FURY OF A FIRE WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES. Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on {the testimony of} two or three witnesses. How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, “VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY.” And again, “THE LORD WILL

JUDGE HIS PEOPLE." *It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*
(Hebrews 10:26–31)

Editor: *This next question is related to the Parable of the Talents in Matthew 25:13–30. Since you already explained what this parable is talking about in a past issue ("Questions & Answers," The Voice of Elijah®, January 1998) I won't ask you to explain it again. However, there is an ambiguous statement in this parable that I don't understand, even though I generally understand the parable itself. The statement relates to "the Master"—the Lord—"reaping where He did not sow, and gathering where He scattered no seed" (Matthew 25:24, 26). In light of what this parable is talking about, what does this statement mean and how is it possible to reap where one has not sown or scattered seed? What is the significance of this statement as it relates to the End?*

Elijah: Here is the passage you mentioned:

"Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour. For {it is} just like a man {about} to go on a journey, who called his own slaves, and entrusted his possessions to them. And to one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability; and he went on his journey. Immediately the one who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and gained five more talents. In the same manner the one who {had received} the two {talents} gained two more. But he who received the one {talent} went away and dug in the ground, and hid his master's money. Now after a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. And the one who had received the five talents came up and brought five more talents, saying, 'Master, you entrusted five talents to me; see, I have gained five more talents.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things, enter into the joy of your master.' The one also who {had received} the two talents came up and said, 'Master, you entrusted to me two talents; see, I have gained two more talents.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' And the one also who had received the one talent came up and said, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where

*you scattered no {seed.} And I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the ground; see, you have what is yours.' But his master answered and said to him, 'You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I scattered no {seed.} Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my {money} back with interest. Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.' For to everyone who has shall {more} be given, and he shall have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away. And cast out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."
(Matthew 25:13–30)*

Jesus has already answered your question in an earlier parable, where He used the same *parabolic imagery* to explain what God intends to do at the End of the Age. Take a look at what He said:

*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)*

A bit later, Matthew tells us Jesus explained the meaning of the Parable of the Tares to His disciples. He says this:

Then He left the multitudes, and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field." And He answered and said, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man, and the field is the world; and {as for} the good seed, these

are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil {one;} and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the end of the age; and the reapers are angels. **Therefore just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then THE RIGHTEOUS WILL SHINE FORTH AS THE SUN in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.**" (Matthew 13:36–43)

As Jesus explained to His disciples, at the End of the Age, God is going to reap both the wheat which He sowed and tares which Satan sowed. Then, after He has gathered the tares to be burned, He will gather the wheat into His barn. Your inability to understand what Jesus said about God being "a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no {seed}" (Matt. 25:24) indicates that you are probably under the mistaken assumption that Jesus has in mind the *parabolic imagery* in which God is going to reap *parabolic* wheat and gather it into His *parabolic* barn. He isn't. He is referring to God reaping *parabolic* tares and *parabolically* gathering them to be burned.

The Apostle John uses a little bit different *parabolic image* to describe what will happen after the wheat has been reaped and gathered. Nonetheless, the image is still based on the *parabolic image* in which the End of the Age is the conclusion of the "harvest":

And I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and sitting on the cloud {was} one like a son of man, having a golden crown on His head, and a sharp sickle in His hand. And another angel came out of the temple, crying out with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, "Put in your sickle and reap, because the hour to reap has come, because the harvest of the earth is ripe." And He who sat on the cloud swung His sickle over the earth; and the earth was reaped. And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, and he also had a sharp sickle. And another angel, the one who has power over fire, came out from the altar; and he called with a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, "Put in your sharp sickle, and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, because her grapes are ripe." And the angel swung his sickle to the earth, and gathered

{the clusters from} the vine of the earth, and threw them into the great wine press of the wrath of God. And the wine press was trodden outside the city, and blood came out from the wine press, up to the horses' bridles, for a distance of two hundred miles.
(Revelation 14:14–20)

Incidentally, God has already begun the process of "gathering tares" out of His "kingdom." And by the time Satan's delusion has reached its zenith, only those who have a "love of the Truth" will have been "gathered" into God's "barn." Contrary to what they want to believe, the "stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness" don't even stand a chance:

Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to Him, that you may not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. Let no one in any way deceive you, for {it will not come} unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he may be revealed. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains {will do so} until he is taken out of the way. And then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; {that is,} the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. And for this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they might believe what is false, in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.
(2 Thessalonians 2:1–12)

Editor: *Things are heating up in the Middle East between Israel and the Palestinians and the possibility of war seems to grow stronger every day. Do you see the Israelis or the Palestinians as being more at fault in this*

conflict or is there plenty of blame on both sides? With so much hatred existing between the Arab nations and Israel do you have any idea how the Antichrist will go about producing "peace" in this region of the world when there are so many radicals who don't want peace? Do you think he will be able to appease the radicals or will he simply eliminate them?

Elijah: To tell the Truth, I have no idea what Satan has planned. As I believe I indicated in the last issue, I expect the current governments of Saudi Arabia and Egypt to be replaced by more hard-line fundamentalist governments in the near future. I also expect the United States to remove Saddam Hussein—not necessarily through military force—and thereby fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah which I explained before the Gulf War began. (See *The Voice of Elijah*®, October 1990.) Beyond that, I am not willing to speculate.

I certainly don't blame one side in the conflict more than the other. Both are controlled by delusional belief in a carefully crafted lie. On the one hand, Satan has a considerable number of Jews believing the lie that it is still their destiny to occupy the land that God *promised* Abraham. On the other, he has the entire Muslim world believing that the Temple Mount in Jerusalem is one of the three most sacred sites in the world. The fact that those two beliefs are diametrically opposed is sufficient evidence that he plans to keep the controversy alive right up to the time of the Antichrist.

When the Antichrist comes to power in Israel, he will use brute force to accomplish his goals. That is obvious from the fact that he invades Lebanon, Egypt, Libya, and the Sudan. A logical assumption would be that he will impose his will on the Palestinians by whatever means are necessary. He will definitely eliminate anyone who opposes him.

Editor: *Matthew tells us that at the moment of Jesus' death on the cross, "the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom" and that "many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised" and later entered Jerusalem after Jesus' Resurrection (Matt. 27:50–53). What is the significance of all this?*

Elijah: The passage that you referred to says this:

And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "ELI, ELI, LAMA SABACHTHANI?" that is, "MY

GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?" And some of those who were standing there, when they heard it, {began} saying, "This man is calling for Elijah." And immediately one of them ran, and taking a sponge, he filled it with sour wine, and put it on a reed, and gave Him a drink. But the rest {of them} said, "Let us see whether Elijah will come to save Him." And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up {His} spirit. And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom, and the earth shook; and the rocks were split, and the tombs were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the tombs after His resurrection they entered the holy city and appeared to many. Now the centurion, and those who were with him keeping guard over Jesus, when they saw the earthquake and the things that were happening, became very frightened and said, "Truly this was the Son of God!" (Matthew 27:46–54)

Matthew alone reports that both the ripping of the veil in the Temple and the Resurrection of saints during an earthquake occurred at the time of Christ's death. Mark confirms that the veil of the Temple was torn immediately after Christ died, but he does not mention any earthquake. He also indicates that the death of Christ occurred at the ninth hour:

And when the sixth hour had come, darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "ELOI, ELOI, LAMA SABACHTHANI?" which is translated, "MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?" And when some of the bystanders heard it, they {began} saying, "Behold, He is calling for Elijah." And someone ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a reed, and gave Him a drink, saying, "Let us see whether Elijah will come to take Him down." And Jesus uttered a loud cry, and breathed His last. And the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. And when the centurion, who was standing right in front of Him, saw the way He breathed His last, he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God!" (Mark 15:33–39)

Luke confirms Matthew's claim that the death of Christ occurred at the ninth hour, but like Mark he says nothing about an earthquake:

*And it was now about the sixth hour, and darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour, the sun being obscured; and the veil of the temple was torn in two. And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, "Father, INTO THY HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT." And having said this, He breathed His last. Now when the centurion saw what had happened, he {began} praising God, saying, "Certainly this man was innocent."
(Luke 23:44–47)*

Matthew also says an earthquake occurred on Sunday morning, when an angel rolled the stone away from Christ's tomb:

*Now on the next day, which is {the one} after the preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered together with Pilate, and said, "Sir, we remember that when He was still alive that deceiver said, 'After three days I {am to} rise again.' Therefore, give orders for the grave to be made secure until the third day, lest the disciples come and steal Him away and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead,' and the last deception will be worse than the first." Pilate said to them, "You have a guard; go, make it {as} secure as you know how." And they went and made the grave secure, and along with the guard they set a seal on the stone. Now after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first {day} of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the grave. **And behold, a severe earthquake had occurred, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it.**
(Matthew 27:62–28:2)*

The agreements and differences in the three Gospel accounts are important. All three indicate that the veil in the Temple was ripped in two. But only Matthew and Mark say the rip was from top to bottom. Matthew alone reports that the death of Christ was accompanied by an earthquake in which "many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised." He is also the only one who tells us another earthquake occurred at the time of the Resurrection of Christ. That fact indicates he must have seen some special *significance* in those two events. Therefore, we should ask—as you have—what did he see?

First, let me address the issue in regard to the rending of the veil. The author of the Book of Hebrews provides some fairly good clues as to the *meaning* and

significance of the *parabolic image* of the veil. In the following passage, he alludes to the fact that, when Jesus Christ died, He went behind the "veil" LIKE a high priest on the Day of Atonement:

*In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath, in order that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have strong encouragement, we who have fled for refuge in laying hold of the hope set before us. **This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a {hope} both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil, where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.**
(Hebrews 6:17–20)*

Later on, the writer explains the *parabolic imagery* in a bit more detail:

*Now even the first {covenant} had regulations of divine worship and the earthly sanctuary. For there was a tabernacle prepared, the outer one, in which {were} the lampstand and the table and the sacred bread; this is called the holy place. **And behind the second veil, there was a tabernacle which is called the Holy of Holies, having a golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which {was} a golden jar holding the manna, and Aaron's rod which budded, and the tables of the covenant. And above it {were} the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat; but of these things we cannot now speak in detail. Now when these things have been thus prepared, the priests are continually entering the outer tabernacle, performing the divine worship, **but into the second only the high priest {enters}, once a year, not without {taking} blood, which he offers for himself and for the sins of the people committed in ignorance. The Holy Spirit {is} signifying this, that the way into the holy place has not yet been disclosed, while the outer tabernacle is still standing, which {is} a symbol for the present time. Accordingly both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make the worshiper perfect in conscience, since they {relate} only to food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until a time of reformation. But when Christ appeared {as} a high priest of the good things to come, {He entered} through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not*****

made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.
(Hebrews 9:1–12)

Earlier, the writer made a passing reference to another facet of the *parabolic imagery*:

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as {we are, yet} without sin. Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need. For every high priest taken from among men is appointed on behalf of men in things pertaining to God, in order to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins; he can deal gently with the ignorant and misguided, since he himself also is beset with weakness; and because of it he is obligated to offer {sacrifices} for sins, as for the people, so also for himself. And no one takes the honor to himself, but {receives it} when he is called by God, even as Aaron was.
(Hebrews 4:14–5:4)

These various statements concerning the *parabolic image* of the veil don't make a whole lot of sense unless one understands the Canaanite mythology it mocks. You see, when God appeared to Abram, He identified Himself as the Canaanite god El, whose temple was in the Jebusite city of Salem. That's where the *parabolic image* of Melchizedek comes in. He was both king of Salem and high priest of El (Gen. 14:18). In that, he was LIKE Jesus Christ, Who will be both King and High Priest of the New Jerusalem. Yet that is only a small part of the *parabolic imagery*.

When God delivered the sons of Israel from Egypt, He identified Himself to Pharaoh as Osiris, the Egyptian god of the resurrection. (See *The Passover Parable*.) But after Moses brought the sons of Israel to Mt. Sinai, God began to explain how the *parabolic imagery* in which He IS LIKE both El and Osiris fits together. That's where the veil in the Tent of Meeting comes into play.

According to the Canaanites, El lived in a tent on a mountain somewhere in the realm of the gods. That's

why God told Moses to build a tent just like the one He showed him on the Mountain so that He could dwell among the sons of Israel:

“And let them construct a sanctuary for Me, that I may dwell among them. According to all that I am going to show you, {as} the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furniture, just so you shall construct {it.}”
(Exodus 25:8–9)

As part of an elaborate *parabolic pantomime*, God was hidden behind a veil in the inner-most part of the Tent of Meeting, in a place called the Holy of Holies. That veil separated the Holy of Holies—where God dwelt—from the outer part of the tent—where the priests ministered. Only the high priest was allowed to go past that veil and enter the Holy of Holies. Even that was allowed only once a year, on the Day of Atonement, and was itself part of an intricate *parabolic pantomime*:

Now the LORD spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they had approached the presence of the LORD and died. And the LORD said to Moses, “Tell your brother Aaron that he shall not enter at any time into the holy place inside the veil, before the mercy seat which is on the ark, lest he die; for I will appear in the cloud over the mercy seat. Aaron shall enter the holy place with this: with a bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. He shall put on the holy linen tunic, and the linen undergarments shall be next to his body, and he shall be girded with the linen sash, and attired with the linen turban (these are holy garments). Then he shall bathe his body in water and put them on. And he shall take from the congregation of the sons of Israel two male goats for a sin offering and one ram for a burnt offering. Then Aaron shall offer the bull for the sin offering which is for himself, that he may make atonement for himself and for his household. And he shall take the two goats and present them before the LORD at the doorway of the tent of meeting. And Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats, one lot for the LORD and the other lot for the scapegoat. Then Aaron shall offer the goat on which the lot for the LORD fell, and make it a sin offering. But the goat on which the lot for the scapegoat fell, shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make atonement upon it, to send it into the wilderness as the scapegoat. Then Aaron shall offer the bull of the sin offering which is for himself, and make atonement for himself

and for his household, and he shall slaughter the bull of the sin offering which is for himself. And he shall take a firepan full of coals of fire from upon the altar before the LORD, and two handfuls of finely ground sweet incense, and bring {it} inside the veil. And he shall put the incense on the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of incense may cover the mercy seat that is on {the ark of} the testimony, lest he die. Moreover, he shall take some of the blood of the bull and sprinkle {it} with his finger on the mercy seat on the east {side;} also in front of the mercy seat he shall sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times. Then he shall slaughter the goat of the sin offering which is for the people, and bring its blood inside the veil, and do with its blood as he did with the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it on the mercy seat and in front of the mercy seat. And he shall make atonement for the holy place, because of the impurities of the sons of Israel, and because of their transgressions, in regard to all their sins; and thus he shall do for the tent of meeting which abides with them in the midst of their impurities. When he goes in to make atonement in the holy place, no one shall be in the tent of meeting until he comes out, that he may make atonement for himself and for his household and for all the assembly of Israel."

(Leviticus 16:1–17)

The author of the Book of Hebrews indicates that, when Christ died on the cross, He entered the Holy of Holies just LIKE the high priest did on the Day of Atonement. That's an interesting *parabolic image*. But unfortunately, there is a whole lot more to the image than readily meets the eye. In case it did not occur to you, Jesus Christ died as a Passover sacrifice. The Passover was supposed to be observed on the fourteenth day of the first month of the year:

"In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight is the LORD's Passover."

(Leviticus 23:5)

The Day of Atonement was not to be observed until seven months later, on the tenth day of the seventh month:

"And {this} shall be a permanent statute for you: in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall humble your souls, and not do any work, whether the native, or the alien who sojourns among you; for it is on

this day that atonement shall be made for you to cleanse you; you shall be clean from all your sins before the LORD. It is to be a sabbath of solemn rest for you, that you may humble your souls; it is a permanent statute."

(Leviticus 16:29–31)

The question is, How could the death of Jesus Christ occur on both the Passover and the Day of Atonement? The short answer is, It couldn't. But that answer only applies if one is speaking only in terms of a *literal* event. The death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ was certainly a *literal* event. But as I have already explained, it was also part of a *parabolic pantomime* in which Jesus Christ depicted the death and resurrection of the man Adam at the End of the Age. [See "He's Coming in Clouds of Glory (Whatever That Means)," *The Voice of Elijah*®, January 2001.] An important part of the *parabolic imagery* the Prophets used to describe those events is the celebration of the Feast of Booths that occurred every year at the conclusion of the harvest. In God's sacred calendar of events, the Day of Atonement comes on the tenth day of the seventh month, which is right before the Feast of Booths:

"On exactly the fifteenth day of the seventh month, **when you have gathered in the crops of the land**, you shall celebrate the feast of the LORD for seven days, with a rest on the first day and a rest on the eighth day."

(Leviticus 23:39)

Matthew clearly understood the *parabolic significance* of the ripping of the veil in the Temple and the earthquake which resulted in the Resurrection of the saints. He was also aware that they were both just part of a much larger *parabolic pantomime*. The events he records in his Gospel indicate that he knew the entire life of Jesus—not just His death and Resurrection—was a *parabolic pantomime*. In that *parabolic pantomime*, His Resurrection *parabolically* depicts the Resurrection of "The Remnant" of the man Adam—that is, the Resurrection of the members of the Body of Christ—which will occur at the End of the Age. At that time, "The Many" will *literally* pass through the *parabolic* veil of the Tent of Meeting and stand in the presence of God in the same way that "The One" does now. But as the author of the Book of Hebrews states, now that Christ has shown us "The Way" through the veil, it is LIKE we are already able to enter the Holy of Holies:

*Since therefore, brethren, we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, and since {we have} a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled {clean} from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging {one another;} and all the more, as you see the day drawing near.
(Hebrews 10:19–25)*

So what was the *parabolic significance* of the veil? The Truth is hidden in the designation that Moses uses to refer to the Tabernacle. He calls it the “Tent of Meeting”:

*Now Moses used to take the tent and pitch it outside the camp, a good distance from the camp, and he called it the tent of meeting. And it came about, that everyone who sought the LORD would go out to the tent of meeting which was outside the camp. And it came about, whenever Moses went out to the tent, that all the people would arise and stand, each at the entrance of his tent, and gaze after Moses until he entered the tent. And it came about, whenever Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance of the tent; and the LORD would speak with Moses. When all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, all the people would arise and worship, each at the entrance of his tent. Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend. When Moses returned to the camp, his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart from the tent.
(Exodus 33:7–11)*

What are we supposed to gain from that? What “meeting” was held in or at the “tent of meeting”? Who attended the “meeting”? What was the purpose of the “meeting”? The Scriptures provide the answer to at least one of those questions. In the following passage, Moses explains that the sons of Israel were expected to “meet” with God at the doorway of the Tent of Meeting:

*“Now this is what you shall offer on the altar: two one year old lambs each day, continuously. The one lamb you shall offer in the morning, and the other lamb you shall offer at twilight; and there {shall be} one-tenth {of an ephah} of fine flour mixed with one-fourth of a hin of beaten oil, and one-fourth of a hin of wine for a libation with one lamb. “And the other lamb you shall offer at twilight, and shall offer with it the same grain offering as the morning and the same libation, for a soothing aroma, an offering by fire to the LORD. It shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations **at the doorway of the tent of meeting before the LORD, where I will meet with you, to speak to you there. And I will meet there with the sons of Israel, and it shall be consecrated by My glory.**”
(Exodus 29:38–43)*

The phrase “where I will meet with you” has the plural form of the personal pronoun *you*. So now we know that God intended the Tent of Meeting as a place where He would meet with all the sons of Israel. But why? To answer that question, one needs to know what the Canaanites were thinking in regard to the tent in which the god El dwelt. You see, the English word *meeting* doesn’t adequately convey the *meaning* of the Hebrew word that Moses used. True, it does *mean* “meeting.” But Moses used a word with a little more specific *meaning*. And the word he used had a specific connotation attached to it.

In Canaanite mythology, the tent of El was the place where the sons of El *assembled* when some momentous decision had to be made. The *significance* of that bit of information may elude you; so let me explain. The Canaanite word which commonly refers to the *assembly* of the gods who met in the tent of El is exactly the same word that Moses uses when he refers to the “Tent of Meeting (Assembly).” It comes from the same root as the word that is ordinarily translated “assembly” in the Pentateuch. The “assembly of Israel” was the decision-making body in ancient Israel. As representatives of the entire people of Israel, the members of that assembly met at the doorway of the Tent of Assembly to make decisions. Why? Because they were not allowed to go behind the veil in the Holy of Holies where God dwelled.

So what is the *significance* of all this? Just that—according to Canaanite mythology—the *sons of god* “assembled” at the Tent of El, “before the Lord” just as

the sons of Israel did in *parabolic pantomime*. That is the *parabolic imagery* standing behind these two verses:

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them.

(Job 1:6)

Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them to present himself before the LORD.

(Job 2:1)

The interesting thing about the *parabolic imagery* of the Tent of Meeting has to do with the fact that nobody but the high priest was allowed to go in to the place where God dwelled. That was only once a year, and even then he was not allowed to stay for long. Yet in the Canaanite mythology, the sons of El routinely met with El in his tent. Now Corporate Israel was, is, and always will be the *parabolic* Firstborn Son of God. *Parabolically* speaking, the individual members of Corporate Israel are the sons of God. That is where all this talk about the “assembly” of Israel comes in.

The point of the *parabolic pantomime* in which the the sons of Israel met in an “assembly” “before the Lord” at the doorway of the tent has to do with the fact that the sons of Israel were not actually “sons of God.” They were only playing the role of the sons of God in a *parabolic pantomime* that depicts what it will be LIKE for the sons of God when they actually “assemble” at the Tent of Assembly. By the way, did you notice that the author of the Book of Hebrews understood that the *significance* of the veil has to do with the “assembling” of the sons of God? Take another look:

*Since therefore, brethren, we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, and since {we have} a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled {clean} from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, **not forsaking our own assembling together**, as is the habit of some, but encouraging {one another;} and all the more,*

as you see the day drawing near.
(Hebrews 10:19–25)

Now that Jesus Christ has shown us “*The Way*” (which is—incidentally—“a new and living way”) through the veil, we don’t have to stand outside the Tent of Assembly. As sons of God, we can go right in and stand in the very presence of God. But that is, of course, only a *parabolic* description of what it IS LIKE to be born again. If one does not know what reality the veil represents, one has no basis for understanding the *parabolic imagery* associated with the veil. The Prophet Isaiah describes it best:

*And the LORD of hosts will prepare a lavish banquet
for all peoples on this mountain;*

*A banquet of aged wine, choice pieces with marrow,
{And} refined, aged wine.*

*And on this mountain He will swallow up the covering
which is over all peoples,*

Even the veil which is stretched over all nations.

He will swallow up death for all time,

And the Lord GOD will wipe tears away from all faces,

*And He will remove the reproach of His people
from all the earth;*

For the LORD has spoken.

And it will be said in that day,

*“Behold, this is our God for whom we have waited that
He might save us.*

This is the LORD for whom we have waited;

Let us rejoice and be glad in His salvation.”

(Isaiah 25:6–9)

Isaiah is *talking about* the events that occur on the Mountain of God (El) at the End of the Age. I forgot to tell you about the banquet that the sons of God ... Oh well, another time. Did you see how neatly Isaiah used Hebrew parallelism to define the *parabolic meaning* of the veil? It represents *death*. That makes sense, doesn’t it? We can’t see God because He is hiding behind the veil of death. But Jesus Christ *parabolically* did away with that veil when He died on the cross. Therefore, some of those “saints” on the other side were able to come back to this side. But they were just part of a *parabolic pantomime*. The point is, the veil is no longer a hindrance to the sons of God. Those who know “*The Way*” can easily go behind the veil to see God any time they want. Of course, I am only speaking *parabolically*. ■