



THE VOICE of ELIJAH

Restoring the hearts of the fathers to the children

Like He Says, Wicked Men Don't Understand the Law

Let no one, then, run down law, as if, on account of the penalty, it were not beautiful and good. For shall he who drives away bodily disease appear a benefactor; and shall not he who attempts to deliver the soul from iniquity, as much more appear a friend, as the soul is a more precious thing than the body?

Besides, for the sake of bodily health we submit to incisions, and cauterizations, and medicinal draughts; and he who administers them is called saviour and healer, even though amputating parts, not from grudge or ill-will towards the patient, but as the principles of the art prescribe, so that the sound parts may not perish along with them, and no one accuses the physician's art of wickedness; and shall we not similarly submit, for the soul's sake, to either banishment, or punishment, or bonds, provided only from unrighteousness we shall attain to righteousness?

For the law, in its solicitude for those who obey, trains up to piety, and prescribes what is to be done, and restrains each one from sins, imposing penalties even on lesser sins. But when it sees any one in such a condition as to appear incurable, posting to the last stage of wickedness, then in its solicitude for the rest, that they may not be destroyed by it (just as if amputating a part from the whole body), it condemns such an one to death, as the course most conducive to health.

"Being judged by the Lord," says the apostle, "we are chastened, that we may not be condemned with the world." For the prophet had said before, "Chastening, the LORD hath chastised me, but hath not given me over unto death." "For in order to teach thee His righteousness," it is said, "He chastised thee and tried thee, and made thee to hunger and thirst in the desert land; that all His statutes and His judgments may be known in thy heart, as I command thee this day; and that thou mayest know in

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thine heart, that just as if a man were chastising his son, so the LORD our God shall chastise thee.”

And to prove that example corrects, he says directly to the purpose: “A clever man, when he seeth the wicked punished, will himself be severely chastised, for the fear of the Lord is the source of wisdom.” But it is the highest and most perfect good, when one is able to lead back any one from the practice of evil to virtue and well-doing, which is the very function of the law. So that, when one falls into any incurable evil, —when taken possession of, for example, by wrong or covetousness, —it will be for his good if he is put to death.

For the law is beneficent, being able to make some righteous from unrighteous, if they will only give ear to it, and by releasing others from present evils; for those who have chosen to live temperately and justly, it conducts to immortality. To know the law is characteristic of a good disposition. And again: “Wicked men do not understand the law; but they who seek the LORD shall have understanding in all that is good.”

It is essential, certainly, that the providence which manages all, be both supreme and good. For it is the power of both that dispenses salvation—the one correcting by punishment, as supreme, the other showing kindness in the exercise of beneficence, as a benefactor.

Clement of Alexandria, “The Stromata,” Book i, Chap. xxvii, in Roberts and Donaldson (Eds.), *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (1885), Vol. 2, pp. 339–340.

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A Note From the Editor

In the last issue of *The Voice of Elijah*®, I quoted what the Apostle Peter said about God intending to destroy the civilization of this Earth at the Time of the End and creating new Heavens and a new Earth where righteousness dwells forever. Here is how Peter put it:

But the present heavens and earth by His word are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.... Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, on account of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

(2 Peter 3:7, 11–13)

It may not be obvious from this statement, but Peter clearly understood that God’s Word is all-powerful and that God, through His Word, is going to accomplish all that He promised. Look again at what he said:

*But the present heavens and earth by His word are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.... But **according to His promise** we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.*

(2 Peter 3:7, 13)

Peter did not by accident mention God’s Word and an element of the promise in the same context. He did so because he understood that God’s Word and the promise are inseparable in that the promise is an oral blessing (a spoken word) that God ordained should be handed down from one generation to the next as The Teaching, the spoken Word of God. (See “Questions & Answers” in this issue for more insight into the relationship between the promise, The Teaching, and the Word of God.)

If you are unfamiliar with the concept of the Word of God as an oral Teaching that is to be handed down from one generation to the next via the spoken word, you shouldn’t be. The Church still follows this tradition today. Think about it. Didn’t you learn much of what you currently believe about Christianity from listening to the oral teaching of someone you thought knew the Truth—your parents, a pastor, a Sunday School teacher, or someone like that? In all likelihood most, if not all, of your current doctrinal beliefs were shaped more by what others told you than by what you gleaned from the Scriptures yourself.

I’m not suggesting that you have never read the Bible or that you can’t think for yourself. All I’m saying is that the Church continues to this

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day to proclaim the Word of God via the spoken word (as an oral Teaching) just as it has since the days of the Early Church. I'm also saying that most in the Church today attach greater value to what Church leaders teach them orally than they do to their own interpretation of the Scriptures.

Don't get me wrong. That's not bad; it's good. God has always expected His Word to be handed down from one generation to the next via an oral Teaching. He established the office of Teacher in the Church for this very reason. He knew that His Word needed to be explained to Believers by a Teacher who understood the content of The Teaching he had received from another Teacher. That's what the teacher/disciple relationship that Jesus advocated is all about. (See "Where Are Jesus' Disciples?" *The Voice of Elijah*®, April 1991.)

The problem with the Church today is not the methodology; it's the message. Although many in the Church today still practice the teacher/disciple relationship that Jesus established, it long ago lost an accurate understanding of the only message it was given the authority to teach—The Apostolic Teaching. You see, the Apostles were the first Teachers in the Church and they got their understanding of the message they proclaimed by revelation from Jesus Christ. Only after the Church became so large that the Apostles couldn't do all the teaching themselves did they appoint other Teachers to carry on their work. Here is but one indication of the importance the Early Church attached to The Apostolic Teaching:

And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.
(Acts 2:42)

The Church still devotes itself "to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer," but it lacks an understanding of The Apostolic Teaching. Without that, the Church has no authority to teach God's Word because The Teaching is God's Word. It is an oral Teaching that uses parables—the same tool Jesus used—to convey God's message to True Believers.

Sadly, the Church lost its understanding of The Apostolic Teaching within a century of the death of the last Apostle, John, because it failed to guard the Truth it was entrusted with. By A.D. 200, the Church was no longer handing down the oral Teaching it had received from the Apostles—The Apostolic Teaching—but instead was handing down the oral Teaching of Pretenders who fabricated lies to suit their own thinking. As a result, the Church has been walking in the darkness of its own ignorance for the past 1800 years.

While one might be inclined to think that everything the Apostles taught can be found in the writings of the New Testament, such is not the case. For instance, the Apostle Paul spent a year and a half "teaching the Word of God" to Believers in Corinth (Acts 18:11). Logic alone dictates that the two epistles he later wrote to the Corinthians could not possibly cover everything he taught them during the span of eighteen months. The same logic applies to the three years he spent teaching the Ephesians (Acts 20:31).

The point is, the Scriptures are not The Teaching, nor is The Teaching the Scriptures. They are two separate entities, yet together they provide a system of checks and balances. The Teaching (the spoken Word) provides insight into what the Scriptures (the written Word) are talking about and the Scriptures (the written Word) testify to the fact that The Teaching (the spoken Word) is true (Acts 17:11b).

If this makes sense to you, it's time you discovered what The Teaching is all about. Start by visiting our website (voiceofelijah.org) and examining the extensive information available there. If after reading that information you find the ring of Truth resonating in your mind, purchase *Not All Israel Is Israel* and all back issues of *The Voice of Elijah*® newsletter (see "Comprehensive Package" on the Order Form). Read these materials carefully. If after that you still believe what you have "heard," you are ready to advance beyond the "elementary" elements of The Teaching (Heb. 6:1–2). By that time you should have no doubt where to find the greater knowledge you seek.

Allen Fries

Two Agreements Made: One a “Covenant,” the Other a “Testament”

This is the fourth in a series of articles explaining what the Apostle Paul meant when he talked about law. The first article in this series was published as “We Know the Law Is Holy. But What About the Commandment?” in **The Voice of Elijah**®, July 1998. The second in the series, “There Is Nothing More Amazing Than Dead Men Walking (in ‘The Way’)” appeared in **The Voice of Elijah**®, January 2000. The third article was published under the title “‘The Law’ of This, ‘The Law’ of That, So Much ‘law’ One Can’t Keep Track” in **The Voice of Elijah**®, April 2001. In those three articles and in the current article, I have included my own translation of some of the biblical texts that are most relevant to this topic, not because I consider my translation to be completely accurate at this point, but because it makes it easier for me to explain my current understanding of the meaning of the original Greek text. I will, most likely, continue to make minor changes to my translation as more and more of the parabolic imagery of The Teaching of Moses comes into clearer focus. I plan to publish a complete translation of the epistles of Paul—eventually. In the articles in this series, more than in any of the other articles I have written for **The Voice of Elijah**®, I will refer to things that I have explained in The Next Step program. The reader should not take that as an encouragement to join that program, however, since those things will eventually be published in book form.

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

The second thing you must know is that when Paul says “law,” that is, when he uses *nomos* without the definite article, he is normally referring to the *statutes, judgments, and commandments* that Moses established for the sons of Israel in the wilderness. However, the Jews who translated the Septuagint (ca. 250 B.C.) used the Greek term *nomos* (“law”) to translate the Hebrew term *torah*, which actually means “teaching”). Therefore, Paul uses that same Greek term to refer to *The Teaching of Moses*. But when he does, he always says *o nomos* (“the Law”). That is, he uses *nomos* with the definite article. On occasion, however, he uses that same designation, as the Jews of his day did, to refer to the Pentateuch.

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

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

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

mind when he uses phrases like "in law," "from law," "from works of law," "under law," and "through law."

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

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

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

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

I told you that when Paul says "those from law," he is speaking idiomatically. I even showed you that Jesus uses the same idiomatic expression in John 8:44. I told you that by speaking in terms of that *parabolic image*,

Paul is depicting the Jews of his day as having been engendered "from" their belief in "law"—that is, "from" their belief in the benefit of external rituals—rather than "from" belief in the Truth of "the Law" (*The Teaching*). He is also mockingly alluding to the *parabolic image* in which God has engendered True Believers by writing "the Law" on their "hearts."

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

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

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

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

In the second article in this series ["There Is Nothing More Amazing Than Dead Men Walking (in 'The Way')," *The Voice of Elijah*®, January 2000], I picked up where I left off at the end of the first article. I explained that it is impossible to understand what Paul says in Romans 6–8 if one does not know what he *means* when he says "the sin." Contrary to what most folks today believe, "the transgression" of Adam—that is, his physical act of sin—was not "the sin" that Paul had in mind. As far as Paul is concerned, "the sin" of Adam was his rejection of the Truth. That "sin" ultimately led to "the transgression," by which Paul *means* Adam's physical act of sin.

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

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

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

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

Israel and being resurrected in "*The Man*" Israel. Or as Paul explains the *parabolic imagery*, they joined themselves to one "male" (the physical body of Jesus Christ) so that when He died, they would be "free from the Law" and belong "to another male" (the resurrected Body of Jesus Christ):

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

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

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

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

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

in oldness of what is written.

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

With that passage, I concluded the second article in this series of articles on Paul's use of the Greek term *nomos*, that is, his use of the term translated "law."

In the third article, I continued to explain what Paul had in mind when he *talked about* the differing roles that "law" and "the Law" play in the life of the Believer. (See "'The Law' of This, 'The Law' of That, So Much 'law' One Can't Keep Track," *The Voice of Elijah*®, April 2001.) I told you that, in Romans 7, Paul is describing the roles that "the sin," "the Law," and "law" played in the *parabolic* "death" of his body and the Resurrection of his "spirit" from "the death" when he heard *The Teaching*—that is, when he heard the Truth that is hidden in "the Law."

Speaking in terms of specific *parabolic imagery*, Paul concedes that everybody starts out in the flesh and cannot understand the Truth that is hidden in "the Law" because it is "Spirit." Their innate tendency to reject the Truth ("the sin") controls the flesh and seeks to prevent them from "seeing," much less believing, the Truth. The control that "the sin" has over unbelievers is so absolute that even when someone desperately wants to be free, they are compelled to go on doing what they don't want to do.

Paul continues by stating that the "natural man" can acquire a sufficient understanding of the Truth that is hidden in "the Law" to realize that he is guilty. And in the act of trying to stop sinning, he mentally agrees with "the Law" (*The Teaching*) that stands behind the "law" he is trying to obey. He has thereby *made a distinction* between what he believes in "the inner man" and what "the sin" that controls his flesh would have him believe. He has, therefore, come to understand the true *meaning* of "the Law."

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

In Romans 8, Paul describes the circumstances which come about when one clings firmly to the Truth of *The Teaching* and turns away from "the sin" of the flesh—that is, the innate tendency we all have to immediately reject the Truth:

For the Law of the Spirit of the life {which is} in Christ has freed me from the Law of the sin and the death. For the inability of the Law, in which it was weak because of the flesh, the {Living} God, sending His Own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and on account of sin, condemned the sin in the flesh, so that the requirement of the Law could be accomplished in us—those who are walking not in accordance with flesh but in accordance with spirit. For those who are in accordance with flesh think about the things of the flesh, but those {who are} in accordance with spirit {think about} the things of the Spirit. For the flesh's way of thinking is death, but the Spirit's way of thinking is life and peace, because the flesh's way of thinking is a hatred toward God, for it cannot submit to the Law of the {Living} God, for it is not able. So those who are in flesh are not able to please God. Yet you are not in flesh, but in spirit, if a Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have a Spirit of Christ, he is not {a part} of Him. Yet if Christ is in you, the body is indeed dead because of sin, but the spirit is alive because of what is required. But if the Spirit of the One Who raised the Jesus from those who are dead dwells in you, the One Who raised Jesus from those who are dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of His Spirit dwelling in you. So therefore, brothers, we are not indebted to the flesh—to live in accordance with flesh. For if you live in accordance with the flesh, you are going to die, but if by spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

(Romans 8:2–13) —my interim translation

I concluded the third article with a summary of the things Paul explains in his letter to the church at Rome. And that brings us to the things he wrote to the Galatians.

"The Law" and "law" in Galatians

The point that Paul makes in the Book of Romans is actually quite simple: The person who has seen and believed the Truth of *the promise* that Abraham believed—*The Teaching*—has the freedom to choose

where he will live. He can either live in the "Spirit" of "the Law"—*The Teaching*—which dwells in his "inner man," or he can go back to living in the flesh. If he chooses to live in the flesh, "law" governs what he can and cannot do. That is exactly the same point he makes to Peter in the second chapter of the Book of Galatians:

"But—knowing that a man is not acquitted from works of law but because of a belief of Jesus Christ—we also believed into Jesus Christ, so that we could be acquitted from a belief of Christ and not from works of law, because not all flesh will be acquitted from works of law. But if, while seeking to be acquitted in Christ, even we ourselves are found sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not! For if I build again these things that I did away with, I show myself {to be} a violator. For I died to law because of law so that I could live to God. I have been crucified with Christ, and I am no longer living, but Christ is living in me; and the {life} which I now live in flesh I live in belief—the {belief} of the Son of the {Living} God, the One Who loved me and delivered Himself up for me. I am not setting aside the grace of the {Living} God. For if acquittal is because of law, then Christ died for nothing."
(Galatians 2:16–21) —my interim translation

Translators continue to obscure the meaning of that passage because they fail to understand the distinction Paul consistently makes between "law" and "the Law." As I have stated previously, when Paul says "the Law" he is referring to either *The Teaching of Moses* that can be found in the Pentateuch, or the Jews' understanding of the Pentateuch. In this case, he makes no mention of "the Law." He has in mind only "law," that is, the obligations the Mosaic Covenant placed on Corporate Israel, *the Heir of the promise*.

[Pay close attention to what I said. I capitalized *heir* because the Mosaic Covenant laid the obligation for observing "law" on Corporate Israel. The obligation of the individual members of Israel in regard to "law" derived from their position *in Israel*. If a member of Israel sinned, "all Israel" became guilty. However, the Mosaic Covenant made provision for the forgiveness of the sins of the individual members of Israel. It made no provision for the sins of Corporate Israel. Read the Prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. They tell you God demanded that Corporate Israel die as a sacrifice for His Own sins. In case you missed it, I have just

explained the circumstances under which Jesus Christ died for your sins. If you can see the *parabolic imagery*, you should be able to understand. In the Hebrew Scriptures, Corporate Israel was a legal fiction. He could not sin. Consequently, His sin accrued from the sins of His individual members. The same principle applied to Jesus Christ when He became Corporate Israel. (See *Not All Israel Is Israel*.)]

Paul's argument in the Book of Galatians is based on the *parabolic imagery* of *The Teaching* in which the Believer is *in Christ (in Israel)* and Christ (the Word of God) is *in the Believer*. He brings those two *parabolic images* together in this passage:

And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, {engaged} in evil deeds, yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach—if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister. Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body (which is the church) in filling up that which is lacking in Christ's afflictions. Of {this church} I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, that I might fully carry out the {preaching of} the word of God, {that is,} the mystery which has been hidden from the {past} ages and generations; but has now been manifested to His saints, to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.
(Colossians 1:21–27)

Although I don't have time to explain the details here, the *parabolic imagery* standing behind *in Christ* and *Christ in you* are actually one and the same. That is so because, as Paul explains later on in Galatians, every Believer becomes what Jesus Christ was before He died—an *heir of the promise*. As a result, the Holy Spirit indwells the Believer just as He resided in Jesus Christ, *the Heir of the promise*. That is what Paul is *talking about* in this passage:

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His

grace, which He lavished upon us. In all wisdom and insight He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, {that is}, **the summing up of all things in Christ**, things in the heavens and things upon the earth. **In Him also we have obtained an inheritance**, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. **In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of {God's own} possession, to the praise of His glory.**
(Ephesians 1:7–14)

In Galatians 2:16–21, Paul's statements are rooted in the *parabolic imagery* in which individual Believers become members of *Corporate Israel* as a result of their belief in the Truth of the Gospel. When Believers believe "into Jesus Christ," that is, when they become members of the Body of Jesus Christ, they are freed from any need to work for their salvation—that is, to observe "law"—because Jesus Christ has already died and obtained salvation for all who are *in Him*. That is, for all who are *in Israel*. Christ accomplished salvation for "all Israel" under the terms of the New Covenant "from works of law," that is, by meeting the obligations of the Mosaic "law" which the New Covenant imposed on *the Heir of the promise*. Therefore, anyone who insists that one must still observe some "law" to be saved has rejected the "acquittal" that Jesus Christ attained for the members of Israel "from works of law." Unfortunately, "not all flesh will be acquitted from works of law." Only One will be. And, of course, "The Many" who are in "The One."

Speaking in terms of his own *parabolic death in Christ*, Paul contends that "I died to law because of law so that I could live to God." He has in mind the fact that because Jesus Christ—*Corporate Israel*—died just as "law" demanded, His death freed those *in Him* from the demands of "law." That is the same *parabolic imagery* he has in mind in Romans 6:

Therefore, what will we say? Should we remain in the sin so that the favor would increase? Certainly not! We who

have died to the sin? How can we still live in it? Or do you not know that as many as have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore, we have been buried with Him because of the baptism into the death so that just as Christ was raised from the dead because of the glory of the Father, so also we could walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together with {Him} in the likeness of His death, we shall certainly be in the resurrection, knowing this: that our old man was crucified with {Him} in order that the body of the sin would be abolished so that we would no longer be enslaved to the sin. For the one who has died has been acquitted from the sin.
(Romans 6:1–7) —my interim translation

Paul continues driving home the point that the Believer gains absolutely nothing "from works of law" because the only thing God requires for anyone to be acquitted on Judgment Day is membership *in Israel*. And that position can be acquired only "from hearing with belief":

Foolish Galatians! Who cast a spell on you, for whose eyes Jesus Christ was written beforehand as having been crucified? This only I wish to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit from works of law or from hearing with belief? Are you so senseless? Having begun in spirit, are you now finishing in flesh? Did you suffer so many things to no avail (if indeed it was to no avail)? Therefore, does the One who provides the Spirit to you and works miracles among you {do it} from works of law or from hearing with belief?
(Galatians 3:1–5) —my interim translation

The basic difficulty with understanding a plan of salvation based solely on "hearing with belief" has to do with the fact that it requires the Believer to believe a definite *content* to be saved. That may seem self-evident to anyone who has not been totally deceived by Satan. But most folks today want to believe what they choose to believe. Consequently, they can't quite grasp it. So think about it logically: If one is not required to believe a definite *content* to be saved, belief cannot be the basis for salvation. After all, everybody believes something about God. Ergo, if one can believe whatever one chooses to believe and still be saved, the concept of salvation by faith has no *meaning*. Everyone will be saved just because everyone believes something. Even those

who believe they must work for their salvation. Hence, it is obvious that one cannot be saved by believing whatever they want to believe. They must believe a definite *content*, whatever that is.

From what Paul has stated earlier in Galatians, the definite *content* that one must believe to be saved can only be the message he *received* by revelation:

I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; which is {really} not another; only there are some who are disturbing you, and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed.

(Galatians 1:6–9)

As Paul emphatically asserts in Galatians 2:16–3:5, salvation can only be attained by “hearing with belief” and not “from works of law.” But he is not yet finished with his argument in that regard. First, he points to what Moses wrote about Abraham “the believer” as evidence that Christian Believers are now the true members of Israel:

Just as Abraham BELIEVED THE {Living} GOD AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS WHAT IS REQUIRED. Consequently, we know that those who are from belief are sons of Abraham. And the Scripture—seeing beforehand that the {Living} God would acquit the Gentiles from belief—preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham that “ALL THE GENTILES WILL BE BLESSED IN YOU.” Therefore, those from belief will be blessed with Abraham the believer.

(Galatians 3:6–9) —my interim translation

Keep in mind the context in which Paul makes that statement. He has been arguing that salvation is not “from works of law” but from “hearing with belief.” Now he begins to use the phrase “from belief.” This is not the first time we have seen him use that phrase. He did so in this passage as well:

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

attained} what is required. For if those from law are heirs, the belief {of Abraham} has been emptied and the promise abolished. For the Law produces wrath. But where no law exists, neither does violation. For this reason {it is} from belief, so that—in accordance with favor for the purpose of confirming the promise to all the Seed—{it is} not only to the One from the Law, but also to the one from belief—{that is} Abraham, who is father of us all—just as it is written, that “I HAVE MADE YOU A FATHER OF MANY GENTILES” in the view of the One he believed—God, the One Who brings the dead to life and gives a name to those who don’t exist as though they exist—who believed contrary to hope—against hope—so that he might become father of many Gentiles in accordance with what had been said, “THIS IS WHAT YOUR SEED SHALL BE.”

(Romans 4:13–18) —my interim translation

As I explained in the first article in this series, Paul is speaking *parabolically* when he uses the phrase “from belief.” (See “We Know the Law Is Holy. But What About the Commandment?” *The Voice of Elijah*®, July 1998.) He has in mind those who are legitimate *heirs of the promise* because they came into possession of *the promise* “from belief,” that is, by being *parabolically* born again when they believed *the promise*. They are, therefore, the only children of Abraham whom God has not “cut off from” the lineage of Abraham as He “cut off” Ishmael and the Jews. (See *Not All Israel Is Israel*.)

I mention the *parabolic imagery* inherent in the phrase “from belief” only because it is impossible to understand what Paul says about “law” and *the promise* in Galatians 3–4 if one does not understand the *parabolic imagery* he has in mind:

For everyone who is from works of law is under a curse. For it is written that “CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT REMAIN IN ALL THE THINGS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW TO DO THEM.” But it is obvious that no one in law will be acquitted by the {Living} God because “THE INNOCENT ONE WILL LIVE FROM BELIEF.” Yet the Law is not from belief. Rather, “THE ONE WHO DOES THESE THINGS WILL LIVE IN THEM.” Christ set us free from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us, because it is written, “CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE,” so that the blessing of Abraham could come to the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, so that we could receive the promise of the Spirit because of our belief.

(Galatians 3:10–14) —my interim translation

Paul is using the phrase "from works of law" in this passage with the same sense that he used the phrase "from law" in Romans. It describes those who are not engendered "from belief." He is also using the phrase "in law" to refer to those who are not "in the Law"—that is, *in Christ*, the One Who is *The Teaching*. (See "We Know the Law Is Holy. But What About the Commandment?" *The Voice of Elijah*®, July 1998.) He refers to the Pentateuch as "the Law" because he is referring back to "the book of the Law" mentioned in Deuteronomy 27:26, which he quoted to make his point concerning salvation by belief in *the promise*.

In the wisdom of God, Paul used an extremely precise vocabulary to explain the Truth that Jesus Christ revealed to him. Nowhere is an understanding of the terminology he used more important than it is in the Book of Galatians. Paul's statements concerning "the Law" are difficult to understand only because he repeatedly equates the *oral tradition* of the Jews with the written text of the Pentateuch, which he calls "the Law" or "the letter." But he confuses the issue by also using "the Law," as well as "the Spirit," to refer to the *oral tradition*—*The Apostolic Teaching*—that he and the other Apostles *handed down* to the Church. That *oral tradition* is the Truth that Moses concealed in "the Law." Paul's confusing use of "the Law" makes it impossible for commentators to understand passages like this one:

*Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as {coming} from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, who also made us adequate {as} servants of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.
(2 Corinthians 3:5-6)*

Paul mentions the "new covenant" in that passage to point out the fact that God did not write any "letter" on stone tablets when He made the New Covenant with Israel, that is, with Jesus Christ, the sole remaining Member of Israel. Instead, He sent His "Spirit"—*The Teaching*—into the "heart" of Jesus Christ just as Jeremiah had promised He would:

*"But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them, and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people."
(Jeremiah 31:33)*

As the author of the Book of Hebrews understood full well, the "Spirit" which descended on Jesus as a dove when He was baptized by John was a *fulfillment of that promise*. The *parabolic pantomime* symbolized God writing the true *meaning and significance* of His "laws" on the tablet of Jesus' "heart" (mind):

But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises. For if that first {covenant} had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second. For finding fault with them, He says,

*"BEHOLD, DAYS ARE COMING, SAYS THE LORD,
WHEN I WILL EFFECT A NEW COVENANT
WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AND WITH THE HOUSE OF JUDAH;
NOT LIKE THE COVENANT WHICH I MADE WITH THEIR FATHERS
ON THE DAY WHEN I TOOK THEM BY THE HAND
TO LEAD THEM OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT;
FOR THEY DID NOT CONTINUE IN MY COVENANT,
AND I DID NOT CARE FOR THEM, SAYS THE LORD.
FOR THIS IS THE COVENANT*

*THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL
AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD:
I WILL PUT MY LAWS INTO THEIR MINDS,
AND I WILL WRITE THEM UPON THEIR HEARTS.
AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD,
AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE."
(Hebrews 8:6-10)*

In *talking about* the death of Jesus Christ under the curse of "the Law" in Galatians 3:10-14, Paul is clearly envisioning *parabolic imagery* in which Jesus Christ became *Corporate Israel* when God "cut off from" Israel all the other members of Israel. (See *Not All Israel Is Israel*, pp. 189-190.) Although Jesus Christ thereby came to hold sole title to *the promise*, His status as the sole remaining Member of *Corporate Israel* signed His death warrant and consigned Him to die on the cross. That is so because the Old Covenant contained curses which were to be invoked should *Corporate Israel* not adhere to the terms of that covenant. The only way *Corporate Israel* could die was if every member of Israel had either died or been "cut off from" Israel. Since the curses of the Old Covenant demanded that *Corporate Israel* die as a sacrifice for the sins of all those *in Israel*, Jesus Christ had to be killed. God could not allow Him to die of old age or natural causes.

The Man Died; "The Man" Remained

I have, on occasion, mentioned the fact that Jesus Christ—as the *Heir of the promise*—died under the terms of the Old Covenant and was resurrected under the terms of the New. The same applies to every other *heir of the promise*. I explained above the *parabolic imagery* that describes how Christ came to die under the curse of "the Law." So let me quickly outline how the New Covenant fits into the *parabolic* picture. Perhaps that will help you understand what Paul says to the Galatians.

Like the Old Covenant, the New Covenant conveys both a *blessing* and a curse. That is so because it differs from the Old Covenant only in the fact that it is made with the individual member of Israel rather than with *Corporate* Israel. (See "If You Plan to Reap What You Sow, You Had Better Watch What You Plant," *The Voice of Elijah*®, April 1998.) Knowing that, you should be able to see that Jesus Christ accepted the terms of the New Covenant not as *Corporate* Israel but as the sole remaining Member of Israel. He, therefore, had an obligation to observe the Mosaic "law" under the terms of both covenants. However, God intentionally left a loophole open for the untold millions who have obtained salvation by faith in the centuries since Christ died. You need to know what that loophole is so that you can take advantage of it.

Jesus Christ knew He had already been consigned to die under the curse of the Old Covenant. So He staged a *parabolic pantomime* the night before He died. As *Corporate* Israel, He made a New Covenant with twelve men who had been "cut off from" Israel. The only problem with that action was this: *Corporate* Israel was specifically prohibited from entering into such a covenant under the terms of the Old Covenant:

"You shall *make no covenant* with them or with their gods."
(Exodus 23:32)

"Watch yourself that you *make no covenant* with the inhabitants of the land into which you are going, lest it become a snare in your midst."
(Exodus 34:12)

"When the LORD your God shall bring you into the land where you are entering to possess it, and shall clear away

*many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and stronger than you, and when the LORD your God shall deliver them before you, and you shall defeat them, then you shall utterly destroy them. You shall **make no covenant** with them and show no favor to them."*
(Deuteronomy 7:1–2)

Under the terms of the New Covenant that Jesus ratified with the Twelve, He *parabolically* became "one" with them, thereby allowing those disciples to regain their position as members of *Corporate* Israel. By that action, *Corporate* Israel transgressed the terms of the Old Covenant and became guilty. However, as an individual *in Israel*, Jesus Christ could not transgress the terms of the New Covenant since that covenant did not provide the means for an individual to add members to his own body. In that way, Jesus Christ became guilty of the sins of these men (and an untold number of others) under the Old Covenant, yet he remained totally free from all guilt under the New. Thus, although the curse of the Old Covenant demanded His death (because He had become *Corporate* Israel), His adherence to the terms of the New Covenant required that He be resurrected to *inherit what was promised*.

According to the terms of the New Covenant that Jesus Christ made with the Twelve, anyone could become "one" with Him—that is, anyone could become a member of *Corporate* Israel—in the same way that those twelve men had. All that Christ required was that each new member be "sanctified"—be made holy—by accepting the terms of the New Covenant He offered. Those terms are actually quite simple. They state that all anyone needs to do is believe the Truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which is the part of *The Teaching* that explains how one can *inherit the promise* from Jesus Christ—the *Heir of the promise*. Belief in that Truth "sanctifies" the one who believes. Jesus *talks about* those things in this passage:

"I manifested Thy name to the men whom Thou gavest Me out of the world; Thine they were, and Thou gavest them to Me, and they have kept Thy word. Now they have come to know that everything Thou hast given Me is from Thee; for the words which Thou gavest Me I have given to them; and they received {them,} and truly understood that I came forth from Thee, and they believed that Thou

didst send Me. I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom Thou hast given Me; for they are Thine; and all things that are Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine; and I have been glorified in them. And I am no more in the world; and {yet} they themselves are in the world, and I come to Thee. **Holy Father, keep them in Thy name, {the name} which Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, even as We {are.}** While I was with them, I was keeping them in Thy name which Thou hast given Me; and I guarded them, and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. But now I come to Thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy made full in themselves. I have given them Thy word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I do not ask Thee to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil {one.} They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. **Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth.** As Thou didst send Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. **And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.** I do not ask in behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, {art} in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me. **And the glory which Thou hast given Me I have given to them; that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, that the world may know that Thou didst send Me, and didst love them, even as Thou didst love Me.**"
(John 17:6–23)

Covenant? Or Testament?

The *parabolic imagery* in which the New Covenant is both a covenant and a testament derives from the fact that the Old Covenant was not one covenant, but two (Ex. 20 and 34). God imposed specific obligations on Jesus Christ when He accepted the terms of the New Covenant and was baptized by John. That covenant was identical to the first Old Covenant except that it was ratified with the individual members of Israel rather than with *Corporate* Israel. Unfortunately, none of them, except for Jesus Christ, could adhere to the conditions it set. But that New Covenant is not the New Covenant under which Believers *inherit the*

promise. Not at all. They *inherit* under the terms of the second New Covenant, the one that Jesus made with His disciples at the Last Supper. Does that confuse you? It should. God planned it that way. That *parabolic pantomime* describes how the New Covenant IS LIKE the "testament" God made with Abraham in Genesis 15:

*Brothers, I speak with respect to a man: Just as nobody can set aside a ratified testament of a man or add a codicil {to it}, the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his Seed. It does not say "and to the seeds," as to many, but as to one—"and to your Seed"—which is Christ. But I am saying this: The Law—which came four hundred and thirty years later—cannot invalidate a testament previously ratified by the {Living} God so as to render **the promise ineffective**. For if **the inheritance** is from law, it is no longer from a **promise**. Yet the {Living} God granted it to Abraham by means of a **promise**. (Galatians 3:15–18) —my interim translation*

If you still don't understand what Paul *meant* by what he said in that passage, consider this: The Hebrew term *berith*, which is normally translated "covenant" in the Old Testament, actually *means* something more general like "legal agreement." That Hebrew term was used to refer to such things as marriage contracts, treaties, and a legal agreement widely known today as the *last will and testament*. And the Greek term translated "covenant" in the New Testament was commonly used to refer to a "testament" as well. So what don't you understand in what Paul said?

In the passage above, Paul is explaining that the "covenant" God made with Abraham in Genesis 15 was, in essence, a will. It promised specific things to Abraham and to the Man Jesus Christ. Consequently, if you want to know what was in the *last will and testament* of God Himself, you now know where to start looking. Check it out. You will find that the "covenant" described in Genesis 15 imposed no obligations whatsoever on Abraham. It just *promised* him a few things would be his even if God had to die to make that happen. Just remember that "covenants" were sometimes *oral* rather than *written*. (I thought perhaps I should mention that for the benefit of those morons who might otherwise assume that Moses was a legal stenographer who sat in on Abraham's session with God.)

Paul's point is based on the fact that *the promise* had been *handed down* from one *heir of the promise* to

the next until Jacob came into possession of it. Then he scattered it. That is, he distributed various parts of it to his sons and grandsons (Gen. 48–49) instead of *handing it down* to just one *heir of the promise* as his father Isaac (Gen. 27) and grandfather Abraham (Gen. 25:5–6) had done. So "law" was instituted by Moses only because Jacob made a mistake. As Moses records in "the Law," God made *Corporate Israel* the *Heir of the promise* so that *the promise* could not be broken up. He imposed conditions—"laws"—on *Corporate Israel*, it's true. But those "laws" were designed to make sure *the promise* was lacking nothing when it came into the possession of Jesus Christ, Who would then *inherit what was promised*. If you don't understand those things, I suggest you read what I have written in that regard. Better yet, you should read what the Apostle Paul wrote.

According to what Paul says in the following passage, a primary function of the Old Covenant was to make *Corporate Israel* a *mediator* who *handed down the promise* from God Himself to Himself. His point is, a person does not normally need somebody to hold a valuable in escrow for him to ensure that he gets what he has coming to him. But this was a unique case. After Jacob did what he did to *the promise*, God parked it with *Corporate Israel*—a legal entity that could die only if God allowed it and one that could not transfer *the promise* to anyone else (until He died, of course, which is the loophole through which Jesus Christ drove that proverbial truck and transferred *the promise* to any and all who, with simple childlike faith, believed the Gospel):

So why the Law? It was added on account of transgressions until the Seed would come to Whom it {what was promised} had been promised, having been directed in{to} the hand of a mediator by means of messengers. The mediator is not for one, yet the {Living} God is One. Is the Law therefore against the promises of the {Living} God? Certainly not! For if a law had been given which was able to give life, the acquittal certainly would have been from law. Instead, the Scripture has declared everyone a prisoner under sin so that the promise could be given—from belief of Jesus Christ—to those who believe. Yet before the belief {of Christ} came, we were held as prisoner under law, being locked up with respect to the belief which was going to be revealed, with the result that the Law has become our tutor in Christ, so that we could be acquitted from belief. But, the belief {of

Christ} having come, we are no longer under a tutor. (Galatians 3:19–25) —my interim translation

That passage is one of the most difficult to understand in all of the Greek Scriptures. But that is only because of the confusing way that Paul uses the designation "the Law." To understand what he *meant*, it is imperative that the reader assume his mind-set. I have had a go at that several times already, but let me see if I can somehow succinctly state what is in his mind.

To Paul, "the Law" is the first five books of the Bible—what Christians today call "the Pentateuch." The Jews still call those five books "the *Torah*" because they believe them to be the *written Torah* that God gave to Moses. But Paul knew that Moses had sealed up the Truth in "the Law" so that there are two entirely different ways that text can be read. Therefore, he refers to both of those interpretations of the Pentateuch as "the Law" as well. The first of the two interpretations of the biblical text is what Paul occasionally also calls "the letter." That is what the Jews think the text says. In calling that understanding of the text "the Law," Paul is actually equating "the Law" with not only the *written Torah*, but also with the *oral Torah* which the Pharisees claimed they were *handing down*.

The other way of reading the Pentateuch, which Paul sometimes refers to as "the Spirit," is what the biblical text actually *means*. Therefore, Paul sometimes uses "the Law" to refer to *The Apostolic Teaching*, which is the *oral tradition* the Apostles *received* from Jesus Christ by revelation and *handed down* to the Apostolic Church.

Since the Jews were calling the Pentateuch "the *Torah*" and Paul knew that the Hebrew term *torah* actually *means* "teaching" rather than "law," he saw no problem at all in referring to both *The Apostolic Teaching* and the teaching of the Pharisees as "the Law." After all, Moses had intentionally sealed up the Truth in what he wrote so that ignorant men who have no interest in the Truth would believe a lie rather than the Truth. And Paul knew that God had planned it so that both of those "teachings" came out of "the Law" that Moses wrote—that is, out of the Pentateuch. The only difficulty Paul saw with that was this: *The Apostolic Teaching* was the Truth, while the *oral tradition* of the Pharisees was a lie.

In explaining God's purpose in intentionally deceiving those who desperately want to believe a lie, Paul makes the same point in Galatians that he made in

his letter to the Romans: "The Law" of Moses—the Pentateuch—was a tutor; that is, it was *meant* to teach ignorant men about the awful bondage of sin and their need for someone to *deliver* them:

Therefore, what will we say? The Law is sin? Certainly not! Instead, I would not have known sin except because of law. For I would not have known about desiring if the Law had not said, "YOU WILL NOT DESIRE." But the sin, receiving an opportunity because of the commandment, produced in me every desire. For outside of law sin is dead. Yet I was alive outside of law once, but when the commandment came, sin came to life, and I died—{when} the commandment which was for life was found by me, it was for death. For the sin, receiving an opportunity because of the commandment, deceived me, and because of it {the commandment} killed {me}. So then, the Law is indeed holy, and the commandment holy and what is right and good. Therefore did the good {thing} become death in me? Certainly not! Instead, the sin—so that it could be made visible as sin—produced death in me because of the good {thing}.

(Romans 7:7–13) —my interim translation

It is essential that one understand the *significance* of what Paul says about "the Law" as a tutor that leads to belief in Jesus Christ. Paul knows full well that the Hebrew Scriptures are a historical record of what happened to *the promise* as it made its way down from Adam to Jesus Christ, the *Heir of the promise*. That historical record also includes an explanation of how the sorry situation came about in which men have been entrapped since God *delivered the promise* to Adam. Unfortunately, it is possible for one to have a complete understanding of everything in that history of *the promise* and still not know that Jesus Christ is the *Heir of the promise*. That is exactly what happened to some Jews living in Ephesus after Jesus Christ had already *inherited what was promised*. They understood and believed what John had explained about *the promise*, but they didn't know that Jesus Christ had already *inherited what was promised*:

And it came about that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper country came to Ephesus, and found some disciples, and he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they {said} to him, "No, we have not even heard whether there

is a Holy Spirit." And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" And they said, "Into John's baptism." And Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus." And when they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

(Acts 19:1–5)

Understand what I am saying: It is possible for someone to accurately understand the Truth that Moses and the other Prophets of Israel concealed in the Hebrew Scriptures and yet still not know that Jesus Christ is the *fulfillment of the promise*. That knowledge can come only from an Evangelist who preaches the part of *The Teaching* known as "the Gospel." However, if one has heard someone explain the true *meaning* and *significance* of everything in the Hebrew Scriptures and also understands and believes that Jesus Christ is the *Heir of the promise*, that person has no further need of instruction. That is why Paul says this:

The Law has become our tutor in Christ, so that we could be acquitted from faith. But, the belief {of Christ} having come, we are no longer under a tutor.

(Galatians 3:24–25) —my interim translation

The Heirs of the Promise

Anyone who hears and responds to the Truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ immediately becomes a member of Israel, the Firstborn Son of God—the One Who is the *Heir of the promise*. Or according to the *parabolic imagery* that Paul repeatedly uses in his letters to the churches, they become members of the Body of Jesus Christ:

*For you are all sons of God because of the belief in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek. There is neither slave nor free. There is neither male nor female. For all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you are {a member} of Christ, then you {all together} are Abraham's Seed, heirs in accordance with promise. But I say, for as long a time as **the Heir** is a {minor} child, He is no different than a slave {in spite of} being Lord of all. Instead, He is under a guardian or trustee until the set time of the Father. Likewise also, when we were children, we were held as slaves under the elements of*

the world. But when the fullness of the time came, the {Living} God sent His Son, born from a woman, born under law, so that He could set free those under law, so that we could **receive** the adoption.

(Galatians 3:26–4:5) —my interim translation

Pay close attention to the words I capitalized in that passage. Paul is not making a general statement concerning how it is with an *inheritance* being held in trust for a minor child when he says this:

But I say, for as long a time as **the Heir** is a {minor}child, He is no different than a slave {in spite of} being Lord of all. Instead, He is under a guardian or trustee until the set time of the Father.

(Galatians 4:1–2) —my interim translation

Paul is speaking *parabolically* concerning what happened to *Corporate* Israel, the *Heir of the promise*. His explanation is based on the fact that the "laws" of the Mosaic Covenant provide a detailed list of what the *Heir of the promise* was required to do before He could *inherit what was promised*. In that, they were LIKE a "guardian or trustee" whose function was to protect *the promise* until *Corporate* Israel became One Person in the Person of Jesus Christ and was fully prepared to *inherit what was promised*. Make a note of that. It is important. Under the terms of the Mosaic Covenant, an individual member of Israel could never *inherit what was promised* by obeying any "law." The best that he could do was avoid being "cut off from" Israel and, in so doing, retain his position *in Israel*. That is why Paul vehemently argues against the idiotic notion that a person gains any favor at all with God by slavishly adhering to a list of do's and don'ts.

As Paul explains, *Corporate* Israel remained "under law" until "the fullness of the time came" and Jesus Christ, Who was born "under law," was crucified at "the set time of the Father." When Christ died, "all Israel" became free from "law." And all those who "have been baptized into Christ" *parabolically* became "Abraham's Seed, heirs in accordance with *promise*."

I have already told you how Gentile Believers are able to become members of *Corporate* Israel, that is, members of the Body of Jesus Christ. They do so by accepting the terms of the New Covenant that Jesus Christ made with His twelve disciples. Since Jesus Christ, the *Heir of the promise*, has already *inherited*

what was promised, the members of His Body *parabolically* participate in the new life He now lives. Paul has already explained that in Romans 6:

Therefore, what will we say? Should we remain in the sin so that the favor would increase? Certainly not! We who have died to the sin? How can we still live in it? Or do you not know that as many as have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore, we have been buried with Him because of the baptism into the death so that just as Christ was raised from the dead because of the glory of the Father, so also we could walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together with {Him} in the likeness of His death, we shall certainly be in the Resurrection, knowing this: that our old man was crucified with {Him} in order that the body of the sin would be abolished so that we would no longer be enslaved to the sin. For the one who has died has been acquitted from the sin.

(Romans 6:1–7) —my interim translation

When Paul uses the phrase "baptized into Christ," he is not referring to a *literal*, physical baptism with water. That ritual is nothing more than a *parabolic pantomime* that *parabolically* depicts a greater reality. Paul is instead pointing to the *parabolic* "baptism with fire" in the cloud that Paul mentions in this passage:

For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and all ate the same spiritual food; and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ.

(1 Corinthians 10:1–4)

If the Truth hasn't yet gotten through to you, let me state it plainly: Jesus and the Apostles constantly spoke in terms of an intricate *parabolic image*, one that originated with Moses and was taken up by the other Prophets of Israel. In that *parabolic imagery*, they depicted the death and Resurrection of *Corporate* Israel, the Firstborn Son of God, the One Whom *the promise* had for centuries stated God would send to *inherit what was promised*. Paul is not stating anything new in what he says concerning *the promise*. He is, in fact, just summarizing things the Prophets explain in more detail. ■



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.

I haven't paid all that much attention to Arabs and Islamic folks until recently. Have you? I mean, I've known a few personally over the years and have always felt toward them the same way that I feel to the adherents of any religion—even Christianity: They don't stand much of a chance of getting into Heaven because they don't know which way the "Wind" is blowing and don't want to. But the goings-on of Arab fanatics since last September have made me realize that I should have paid more attention all along. Satan obviously plans to use Arab zealots to force the governments of all the western nations—not just the United States—to dance to his tune. That being the case, perhaps we should all hum that particular melody and learn lyrics so that we won't be caught completely off-guard when the time comes to pay the fiddler.

I have been well aware of the fact that, according to Islamic teaching, Jesus Christ will return at the End to establish His kingdom. Muslims even expect Him to show up in Jerusalem. But I never took the time to look into the matter any more than that because I assumed it was not all that important. I now know better. Satan started preparing that part of his final assault on the Word of God way back in A.D. 632. That's when he appeared to the prophet Muhammad, the founder of Islam, and pretended to be Gabriel, the archangel of God. Since that time, he has been assiduously cultivating the mind-set of a huge portion of the world's population, steadily preparing them to believe that his appearance as

the Messiah of the Jews is nothing less than the Return of Jesus Christ—in the flesh. Consequently, to understand the general course of events over the next several years, one definitely needs to know what Muslims are thinking concerning the End.

Muslims believe that the prophet Muhammad prophesied a saviour they call "al-Mahdi" would appear before the End, establish the *Kingdom of God* on Earth, and the supremacy of Islam over all other religions. According to the prophet Muhammad, one will be able to identify "al-Mahdi" from the following specific characteristics:

1. He is an Arab from the tribe of Banû Hāshim.
2. He is a descendant of Husayn, son of Fatima, daughter of the prophet Muhammad.
3. He will appear in Mecca.
4. He will be helped by the Prophet, Jesus of Nazareth, who will descend to the Earth soon after he appears and will help him establish the Kingdom of God on Earth. True Christians will follow Jesus and accept "al-Mahdi," thereby becoming Muslims.

How does all of this fit into Satan's delusion? That's difficult to know, especially since Irenæus and Hippolytus don't say a whole lot about those things. But it should be obvious that the Antichrist will need someone in the Arab League to hold that coalition of Arab nations together for him, especially after he takes action against three of its members. Don't be surprised if that person turns out to be a man the masses call "Imam al-Mahdi."

Hippolytus does say that the two horns on the second "beast" described in Revelation 13 are two men. (See *The Advent of Christ and AntiChrist*, p. 173.) Whether that account is describing a restructuring of the kingdom of the Antichrist is unclear at this point. We'll just have to wait and see what "image" develops:

And I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spoke as a dragon. And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence. And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed. (Revelation 13:11-12) ■



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

Editor: *In the Book of Daniel there are two separate accounts of True Believers being tested by being thrown (literally) into the fire and into the lions' den. As you know, I'm talking about Daniel and three of his cohorts, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These two stories intrigue me because both events appear to be parabolic pantomimes that have application for True Believers at the End who must face down the parabolic "king of Babylon." Are these parabolic pantomimes that apply to the End of the Age and if so what are True Believers expected to learn from them?*

Elijah: You're on the right track, but headed in the wrong direction. Before I explain what I mean by that, let's take a look at the accounts you mentioned. The first is in Daniel 3:

Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, the height of which {was} sixty cubits {and} its width six cubits; he set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent {word} to assemble the satraps, the prefects and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates and all the rulers of the provinces to come to the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up. Then the satraps, the prefects and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates

and all the rulers of the provinces were assembled for the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. Then the herald loudly proclaimed: "To you the command is given, O peoples, nations and {men of every} language, that at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, bagpipe, and all kinds of music, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king has set up. But whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire." Therefore at that time, when all the peoples heard the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, bagpipe, and all kinds of music, all the peoples, nations and {men of every} language fell down {and} worshiped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up. For this reason at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and brought charges against the Jews. They responded and said to Nebuchadnezzar the king: "O king, live forever! You yourself, O king, have made a decree that every man who hears the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, and bagpipe, and all kinds of music, is to fall down and worship the golden image. But whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire. There are certain Jews whom you have appointed over the administration of the province of Babylon, {namely} Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. These men, O king, have disregarded you; they do not serve your gods or worship the golden image which you have set up." Then Nebuchadnezzar in rage and anger gave orders to bring Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego; then these men were brought before the king. Nebuchadnezzar responded and said to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up? Now if you are ready, at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, and bagpipe, and all kinds of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, {very well.} But if you will not worship, you will immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire; and what god is there who can deliver you out of my hands?" Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter. If it be {so,} our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But {even} if {He does} not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your

gods or worship the golden image that you have set up." Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with wrath, and his facial expression was altered toward Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. He answered by giving orders to heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated. And he commanded certain valiant warriors who {were} in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, in order to cast {them} into the furnace of blazing fire. Then these men were tied up in their trousers, their coats, their caps and their {other} clothes, and were cast into the midst of the furnace of blazing fire. For this reason, because the king's command {was} urgent and the furnace had been made extremely hot, the flame of the fire slew those men who carried up Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. But these three men, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, fell into the midst of the furnace of blazing fire {still} tied up. Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astounded and stood up in haste; he responded and said to his high officials, "Was it not three men we cast bound into the midst of the fire?" They answered and said to the king, "Certainly, O king." He answered and said, "Look! I see four men loosed {and} walking {about} in the midst of the fire without harm, and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of {the} gods!" Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the furnace of blazing fire; he responded and said, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, come out, you servants of the Most High God, and come here!" Then Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego came out of the midst of the fire. And the satraps, the prefects, the governors and the king's high officials gathered around {and} saw in regard to these men that the fire had no effect on the bodies of these men nor was the hair of their head singed, nor were their trousers damaged, nor had the smell of fire {even} come upon them.
(Daniel 3:1-27)

I assume your point concerning this passage has to do with John's description of the similar circumstances which will face those who refuse to worship the image of "the beast" and thus face down the Antichrist at the End of the Age:

And I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spoke as a dragon. And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence. And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed. And he performs great signs, so that he even makes fire

come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men. And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life. And there was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast might even speak and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed. And he causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves, to be given a mark on their right hand, or on their forehead, and {he provides} that no one should be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark, {either} the name of the beast or the number of his name.

(Revelation 13:11-17)

The second account you referred to occurs in Daniel 6:

It seemed good to Darius to appoint 120 satraps over the kingdom, that they should be in charge of the whole kingdom, and over them three commissioners (of whom Daniel was one), that these satraps might be accountable to them, and that the king might not suffer loss. Then this Daniel began distinguishing himself among the commissioners and satraps because he possessed an extraordinary spirit, and the king planned to appoint him over the entire kingdom. Then the commissioners and satraps began trying to find a ground of accusation against Daniel in regard to government affairs; but they could find no ground of accusation or {evidence of} corruption, inasmuch as he was faithful, and no negligence or corruption was {to be} found in him. Then these men said, "We shall not find any ground of accusation against this Daniel unless we find {it} against him with regard to the law of his God." Then these commissioners and satraps came by agreement to the king and spoke to him as follows: "King Darius, live forever! All the commissioners of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the high officials and the governors have consulted together that the king should establish a statute and enforce an injunction that anyone who makes a petition to any god or man besides you, O king, for thirty days, shall be cast into the lions' den. Now, O king, establish the injunction and sign the document so that it may not be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which may not be revoked." Therefore King Darius signed the document, that is, the injunction. Now

when Daniel knew that the document was signed, he entered his house (now in his roof chamber he had windows open toward Jerusalem); and he continued kneeling on his knees three times a day, praying and giving thanks before his God, as he had been doing previously. Then these men came by agreement and found Daniel making petition and supplication before his God. Then they approached and spoke before the king about the king's injunction, "Did you not sign an injunction that any man who makes a petition to any god or man besides you, O king, for thirty days, is to be cast into the lions' den?" The king answered and said, "The statement is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which may not be revoked." Then they answered and spoke before the king, "Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or to the injunction which you signed, but keeps making his petition three times a day." Then, as soon as the king heard this statement, he was deeply distressed and set {his} mind on delivering Daniel; and even until sunset he kept exerting himself to rescue him. Then these men came by agreement to the king and said to the king, "Recognize, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians that no injunction or statute which the king establishes may be changed." Then the king gave orders, and Daniel was brought in and cast into the lions' den. The king spoke and said to Daniel, "Your God whom you constantly serve will Himself deliver you." And a stone was brought and laid over the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the signet rings of his nobles, so that nothing might be changed in regard to Daniel. Then the king went off to his palace and spent the night fasting, and no entertainment was brought before him; and his sleep fled from him. Then the king arose with the dawn, at the break of day, and went in haste to the lions' den. And when he had come near the den to Daniel, he cried out with a troubled voice. The king spoke and said to Daniel, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you constantly serve, been able to deliver you from the lions?" Then Daniel spoke to the king, "O king, live forever! My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths, and they have not harmed me, inasmuch as I was found innocent before Him; and also toward you, O king, I have committed no crime." Then the king was very pleased and gave orders for Daniel to be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no injury whatever was found on him, because he had trusted in his God. The king then gave orders, and they brought those men who had

maliciously accused Daniel, and they cast them, their children, and their wives into the lions' den; and they had not reached the bottom of the den before the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones. Then Darius the king wrote to all the peoples, nations, and {men of every} language who were living in all the land: "May your peace abound! I make a decree that in all the dominion of my kingdom men are to fear and tremble before the God of Daniel;

For He is the living God and enduring forever,

And His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed,

And His dominion {will be} forever.

He delivers and rescues and performs signs and wonders

In heaven and on earth,

Who has {also} delivered Daniel from the power of the lions."

(Daniel 6:1-27)

My assumption in regard to this account is that you either have in mind True Believers' delivery from "the lion" that Hippolytus and Irenæus say the Antichrist will claim to be or from "the beast" the Apostle John describes. Either way, you have the right idea but, as I said before, you have drawn the wrong conclusions.

For a specific set of historical events to be *parabolic pantomime*, it must be intentionally orchestrated by God. It must also exhibit the intended purpose of illustrating how "this IS LIKE that." For example, God specifically ordered Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac (Gen. 22). That historical event is clearly a *parabolic pantomime* of the substitutionary death of *the Heir of the promise* as a sacrifice, which is exactly the same *parabolic imagery* underlying the *parabolic pantomime* in which Moses led Israel, the Firstborn Son of God, out of the Land of the Living, through the realm of Seth, the god of the dead, and up to the cosmic Mountain of God. (See *The Passover Parable*.) Both of those *parabolic pantomimes*—and countless others in both the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures—were conducted at the behest of God Himself.

Some of the *parabolic pantomimes* that God orchestrated spanned decades. Others lasted for centuries. The Passover Parable, which is the focal point through which all other *parabolic pantomimes* are viewed, covered more than forty years. The *parabolic pantomime* of the Man Israel covered nearly 2000 years. Most often, however, the Prophets conducted *parabolic pantomimes* of a much more limited scope. But they always did so at the express direction of God Himself.

Since there is no indication that God orchestrated the events recorded in the two accounts you point to in the Book of Daniel, one has no reason to claim they were ever intended as *parabolic pantomime*. However (and this is a major *however*), I will show you that the Prophet Daniel definitely knew God arranged the Babylonian Captivity as a seventy-year long *parabolic pantomime* to illustrate what the death and Resurrection of the Man Jesus Christ IS LIKE. [See “He’s Coming in Clouds of Glory (Whatever That Means),” *The Voice of Elijah*®, January 2001.] So Daniel must have seen the same similarities that you have seen and *meant* for his reader to see them as well.

The question is: What is Daniel’s purpose in describing the two events? What cryptic message is he trying to convey to those who are able to comprehend what he had in mind? To understand that, one need only pay close attention to the recurrent themes in his work. Fortunately, those themes are fairly easy to see if one reads what he wrote in the original languages. Unfortunately, it is sometimes impossible to see those themes in a translation of the biblical text because translators do not always translate the same word the same way every time.

The first—and most dominant—theme in the Book of Daniel is rather difficult to miss, even in the translations—unless of course, one immediately becomes fixated on trying to figure out what all the *parabolic imagery* in the visions *means* rather than just trying to understand what Daniel wrote. The dominant theme in the Book of Daniel has to do with Daniel’s divinely imparted insight into “*The Mystery*” which nobody else could figure out. If one understands what Daniel has said about his insight, it is easy to see that the Book of Daniel is the most likely source of the Apostle Paul’s references to the hidden *meaning* of the Hebrew Scriptures as “*The Mystery*” (Rom. 11:25, 16:25; 1 Cor. 2:7; Eph. 1:9, 3:3–4, 9, 5:32, 6:19; Col. 1:26–27, 2:2, 4:3; 1 Tim. 3:9, 16).

The theme of “*The Mystery*” first arises when Nebuchadnezzar demands that the Babylonian wise men not only interpret his dream for him but that they also validate their interpretation by telling him what he had dreamt (Dan. 2:1–9). When these men fail, Daniel is granted preternatural insight into “*The Mystery*” and thus begins his ministry as a Prophet:

Then Daniel went to his house and informed his friends, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, about the matter, in order

that they might request compassion from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and his friends might not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.
(Daniel 2:17–19)

Daniel mentions his insight into “*The Mystery*” four more times before he falls strangely silent in that regard:

Daniel answered before the king and said, “As for the mystery about which the king has inquired, neither wise men, conjurers, magicians, {nor} diviners are able to declare {it} to the king.”
(Daniel 2:27)

“But as for me, this mystery has not been revealed to me for any wisdom residing in me more than {in} any {other} living man, but for the purpose of making the interpretation known to the king, and that you may understand the thoughts of your mind.”
(Daniel 2:30)

The king answered Daniel and said, “Surely your God is a God of gods and a Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, since you have been able to reveal this mystery.”
(Daniel 2:47)

“O Belshazzar, chief of the magicians, since I know that a spirit of the holy gods is in you and no mystery baffles you, tell {me} the visions of my dream which I have seen, along with its interpretation.”
(Daniel 4:9)

Although Daniel does not use the Aramaic term for *mystery* again, he refrains from doing so only to underscore the *significance* of the term by his silence. Throughout the remainder of his work, he repeatedly indicates that he *received* supernatural insight into the *meaning* and *significance* of the *parabolic images* in the various visions he describes. But his purpose in doing that is to emphasize the fact that he had an unyielding desire to understand the totality of God’s plan—“*The Mystery*”—as it had been revealed by the other Prophets of Israel. That is evident from what he tells us in regard to his ongoing response to the vision he recorded in Chapter 8:

Then I, Daniel, was exhausted and sick for days. Then I got up {again} and carried on the king's business; but I was astounded at the vision, and there was none to explain {it}. In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of Median descent, who was made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans—in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of the years which was {revealed as} the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, {namely,} seventy years.
(Daniel 8:27–9:2)

That last statement becomes extremely intriguing if one stops to consider that Daniel has already stated that he had been given an explanation of the vision he saw in Chapter 8. He tells us that in this passage:

And it came about when I, Daniel, had seen the vision, that I sought to understand it; and behold, standing before me was one who looked like a man. And I heard the voice of a man between {the banks of} Ullai, and he called out and said, "Gabriel, give this {man} an understanding of the vision." So he came near to where I was standing, and when he came I was frightened and fell on my face; but he said to me, "Son of man, understand that the vision pertains to the time of the end." Now while he was talking with me, I sank into a deep sleep with my face to the ground; but he touched me and made me stand upright. And he said, "Behold, I am going to let you know what will occur at the final period of the indignation, for {it} pertains to the appointed time of the end."
(Daniel 8:15–19)

Although Daniel had already *received* an explanation as to how the vision he saw pertained to "the time of the end," he apparently did not understand some of the details in what he had been told. To be specific, he did not understand how the *parabolic imagery* the Prophet Jeremiah had explained concerning the seventy years of the Babylonian Captivity related to his vision of "the time of the end." So he began to pray for insight into the connection between those two things. God responded to Daniel by sending the angel Gabriel to explain what he felt he did not understand:

Now while I was speaking and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God in behalf of the holy

mountain of my God, while I was still speaking in prayer, then the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision previously, came to me in {my} extreme weariness about the time of the evening offering. And he gave {me} instruction and talked with me, and said, "O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you insight with understanding. At the beginning of your supplications the command was issued, and I have come to tell {you,} for you are highly esteemed; so give heed to the message and gain understanding of the vision."
(Daniel 9:20–23)

It is obvious from what Gabriel says to Daniel that he was sent to explain something more about the vision Daniel describes in Chapter 8. But Gabriel's explanation of the vision is short and to the point:

"Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy {place}. So you are to know and discern {that} from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince {there will be} seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end {will come} with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined. And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations {will come} one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate."
(Daniel 9:24–27)

One could argue that Gabriel's explanation of how the seventy years of Israel's captivity in Babylon relates to the vision Daniel saw in Chapter 8 is just about as cryptic as the vision itself. But to do so would only be to admit one's ignorance concerning the *parabolic imagery* the Prophets used to describe the death and Resurrection of the Man Israel—that is, the death and Resurrection of "The Man" Jesus Christ. [See "He's Coming in Clouds of Glory (Whatever That Means)," *The Voice of Elijah*®, January 2001.] However, now that you

know that Gabriel's statement concerning the seventy weeks of Daniel are supposed to explain the *parabolic pantomime* of the seventy years of the Babylonian Captivity, perhaps you can understand why Daniel was told to keep his understanding of those things secret:

*"And the vision of the evenings and mornings
Which has been told is true;
But keep the vision secret,
For {it} pertains to many days {in the future.}"*
(Daniel 8:26)

In Chapter 10, Daniel tells us he once again sought a better understanding of the vision he saw in Chapter 8. He says he had been fasting for three weeks when he finally received a "message" from a divine being he saw in yet another vision. From what he tells us, it appears he had been praying for additional insight because he wanted to know how the *meaning* and *significance* of the Hebrew Scriptures fit together with the vision he saw in Chapter 8. As a result of his prayers, a being with human features appeared in yet another vision to explain what he wanted to know:

And he said to me, "O Daniel, man of high esteem, understand the words that I am about to tell you and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you." And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling. Then he said to me, "Do not be afraid, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart on understanding {this} and on humbling yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia. Now I have come to give you an understanding of what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision pertains to the days yet {future.}"
(Daniel 10:11–14)

It is important that the reader understands that the messenger was sent to explain in more detail things that Daniel still didn't understand about the vision he saw in Chapter 8. That is why, before the messenger launches into an explanation of what will happen at the End of the Age, he prefaces his explanation with this:

*Then {this} one with human appearance touched me again and strengthened me. And he said, "O man of high esteem, do not be afraid. Peace be with you; take courage and be courageous!" Now as soon as he spoke to me, I received strength and said, "May my lord speak, for you have strengthened me." Then he said, "Do you understand why I came to you? But I shall now return to fight against the prince of Persia; so I am going forth, and behold, the prince of Greece is about to come. However, **I will tell you what is inscribed in the writing of truth.** Yet there is no one who stands firmly with me against these {forces} except Michael your prince."
(Daniel 10:18–21)*

The "writing of truth" mentioned in verse 21 can only be the Hebrew Scriptures. For anyone to postulate some other "writing of truth" in this context would be absolutely preposterous. As one of the last Prophets of Israel, Daniel could reasonably be expected to understand the things that Moses and the other Prophets sealed up in their writings. That body of information most definitely included an explanation of how the *parabolic pantomime* of the Babylonian Captivity relates to the *parabolic pantomime* of the Passover Parable, as well as the connection that both of those *parabolic pantomimes* have to events that will occur at the End of the Age. Therefore, as you surmised, Daniel most likely included the accounts that you mentioned to explain what it will be LIKE for True Believers who are made to endure the reign of the *parabolic* "king of Babylon" at the Time of the End. Daniel's point is, they will have insight into the same things that he sought to understand and endure similar circumstances. He alludes to that very thing in the last chapter of his book:

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

One thing that is not apparent in any translation of the Book of Daniel is the very thing that one needs to know in order to understand the *significance* of the

book. Daniel wrote in two different languages: Hebrew and Aramaic. Aramaic was the *lingua franca* of his day just as English is in our own. Every educated person in the ancient Near East at that time could read and speak the Aramaic language. Therefore, Daniel addressed part of his work to the world at large by writing it in Aramaic. The other part—the part which will remain a complete enigma to unbelievers—he wrote in Hebrew, the language which the People of God spoke. Daniel thereby points out the *significance* of what he has written—the Righteous will be able to understand “the writing of truth,” the Wicked will not.

Daniel 2:4b–7:28 is the Aramaic portion of the Book of Daniel. It mocks unbelievers by explaining things they are more or less able to understand. The remainder of the book deals with matters that True Believers—those who have “insight” at the End of the Age—need to know. That portion of the book revolves around Daniel’s desire to understand the vision he saw in Chapter 8. The *significance* of what Daniel says in the Hebrew section of his work is tied to key words like *knowledge, understanding, wisdom, and of course, insight*. It begins with the premise that the Hebrew Scriptures have been sealed.

As I stated, Daniel’s point in the two accounts you mentioned is this: Some will understand the things hidden in the “writing of truth,” some won’t. But I find it interesting that you pointed out only two of the accounts that Daniel intended to encourage True Believers. You may have overlooked the one that almost certainly throws the coming “king of Babylon” into apoplectic fury:

Belshazzar the king held a great feast for a thousand of his nobles, and he was drinking wine in the presence of the thousand. When Belshazzar tasted the wine, he gave orders to bring the gold and silver vessels which Nebuchadnezzar his father had taken out of the temple which {was} in Jerusalem, in order that the king and his nobles, his wives, and his concubines might drink from them. Then they brought the gold vessels that had been taken out of the temple, the house of God which {was} in Jerusalem; and the king and his nobles, his wives, and his concubines drank from them. They drank the wine and praised the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone. Suddenly the fingers of a man’s hand emerged and began writing opposite the lampstand on the plaster of the wall of the king’s palace, and the king saw the back

of the hand that did the writing. Then the king’s face grew pale, and his thoughts alarmed him; and his hip joints went slack, and his knees began knocking together. The king called aloud to bring in the conjurers, the Chaldeans and the diviners. The king spoke and said to the wise men of Babylon, “Any man who can read this inscription and explain its interpretation to me will be clothed with purple, and {have} a necklace of gold around his neck, and have authority as third {ruler} in the kingdom.” Then all the king’s wise men came in, but they could not read the inscription or make known its interpretation to the king. Then King Belshazzar was greatly alarmed, his face grew {even} paler, and his nobles were perplexed. (Daniel 5:1–9)

You can read the remainder of the account for yourself. Daniel goes on to tell how he alone was able to understand the *meaning and significance* of what was written on the wall. The only point I want to make in that regard is this: Satan has already seen the writing on the wall. (That’s an idiom based on the *parabolic imagery* in this account.) Unfortunately, Satan doesn’t want to believe that those who have insight at the End will not only understand the words that were written by the finger of God Himself, but that they will also continue to believe what they understand. If you don’t know the *meaning and significance* of the words that God wrote, perhaps you should read Moses more carefully. He clearly describes the downfall of the Liar.

Editor: *Ephesians 6:12 tells us that the spiritual battle that True Believers face on a daily basis is not against flesh and blood (physical things) but against “the rulers,” “the powers,” “the world forces of this darkness,” and “the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.” Although it’s obvious that Paul is alluding to Satan and his cohorts who seek to influence Believers and make them believe lies rather than the Truth, it’s not so obvious who “the rulers,” “the powers,” and “the world forces of darkness” actually are. Paul appears to have definite beings in mind here, but who are these beings? Are they merely part of Satan’s hierarchy or are they something else?*

Elijah: The verse you refer to occurs in this context:

Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able

to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual {forces} of wickedness in the heavenly {places.} Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand firm therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH, and HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, and having shod YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE; in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil {one.} And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, and {pray} on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel. (Ephesians 6:10–19)

It would be a grave mistake to assume that Paul is intending to spell out some sort of hierarchical listing of spiritual beings in verse 12. He is doing nothing more than emphasizing the awesome, persuasive power that every member of Satan's force wields. He does so by describing their influence in four different ways. That should be obvious from the fact that he repeats the preposition *against* with each new identifier. If one wants to argue that those four prepositional phrases describe different types of spiritual beings, that person faces the daunting task of explaining how some demons and not others are part of "the world forces of this darkness" and "the spiritual {forces} of wickedness in the heavenly {places.}"

The Truth is, all of the members of Satan's force are "rulers" and "powers" because they wield incredible control over those ignorant people who choose to believe their lies. Every one of them is also part of "the world forces of this darkness" and "the spiritual {forces} of wickedness in the heavenly {places.}" But none of them are "flesh and blood." Understand what I am saying. I am not arguing against the notion that there is some sort of hierarchy among the followers of Satan. That would also be a grave mistake. I am merely asserting that Paul is not giving a hierarchical listing of those positions in Ephesians 6:12. He is emphasizing

the power of demons by identifying them in four different ways. Every member of Satan's cohort is a "ruler" and a "power" because they totally dominate the people who believe the lies they are. *Parabolically* speaking, the people they rule live in "this darkness." That is why Paul admonishes Believers to put on such things as Truth, the Gospel, and the Word of God, along with faith, righteousness, and salvation. All of those things have to do with understanding and believing the Truth the Prophets concealed in the Hebrew Scriptures instead of being controlled by a lie *delivered* by a follower of the Liar.

Editor: In Galatians 3:14–29 there are nine specific references by the Apostle Paul to the promise and/or the promises of God. I want to ask you about those references in general and about the promise in particular. Ten years ago when I first read Not All Israel Is Israel, I was inclined to believe that any reference to the promise in the Scriptures was always a reference to the promise that God made Abraham in Genesis 12:1–3. Since that time, however, I have come to understand that God made other promises to other individuals, such as the promise He made to King David in 2 Samuel 7, or the promise of the New Covenant and the promise of the indwelling Holy Spirit that He made known through the Prophet Jeremiah (Jer. 31:31–34). So here is my question: Should we view all of these promises as part of the promise? Also, you have stated on numerous occasions that The Teaching is both the promise and God's Word. While I can see that God's promise is His Word (and vice versa), it still seems that the complexities of The Teaching—God's Word—entail more than just the promise. Would you clarify this issue a bit more?

Elijah: First of all, let me correct something you stated. There are only *eight* references to "*the promise*" or "*the promises*" in Galatians 3:14–29. Three of those (3:14, 17, 22) refer to *the promise*. Two others (3:16, 21) refer to "*the promises*," but the remainder refer to "promise" as a general concept. Verse 19 contains a verb that should be translated "*was promised*." With that out of the way, let me try to answer the questions you asked.

To understand what you want to know, one has to understand what *the promise* is. Only then is it possible to see how every other "promise" in the Hebrew Scriptures is just another facet of *the promise*. The essence of *the promise* is summed up in the following:

*Then God said, "Let Us make a man in Our image, according to Our likeness, so that they may have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the Sea of Waters and over the domesticated animals and over all the Earth and over all the crawling things that crawl on the Earth." Then God created "The Man" in His image. In the image of God He created Him; male and female He created them. Then God **blessed** them and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the Earth and subdue her and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the Sea of Waters and over every living thing that crawls on the Earth."*

(Genesis 1:26–28)—my interim translation

Satan has worked hard to obscure the *meaning* and *significance* of that text because it succinctly outlines the plan of God for the salvation of mankind. The Hebrew and Greek Scriptures are nothing more than an explanation—*The Teaching*—of what God has done—and will do—to accomplish His plan to one day take the Man—both male and female—and create Him in His Own image and likeness. Even a moron should be able to see that God could have accomplished His plan without *promising* anyone He would. Therefore, some event other than God's decision in Genesis 1:26–28 must be involved in the promulgation of *the promise*. That is, He must have told someone exactly what He intended to do and *promised* them that He would accomplish it. And, indeed, He did.

The promise came into being when Adam and Eve were driven from the Garden. At that time, God *promised* them that they would be created in the image and likeness of God if they *believed* and *handed down* to the next generation *the promise* He gave them. That is the essence of *the promise*: The one who believes *the promise* will *inherit what was promised*. Since I have explained these things in *Not All Israel Is Israel*, in previous issues of *The Voice of Elijah*® and *The Voice of Elijah*® *Update*, and in The Next Step program, I see no need to get into them any further here.

Obviously, it is impossible for anyone to understand and believe *the promise* if they believe the lie that Satan has disseminated—that the seven "days" of Creation are complete and that mankind has already been created in the image and likeness of God. That is precisely why Satan crafted the lie that the seven "days" of Creation are seven *literal* days. If those "days" are seven *literal* days, they must already be history.

That is a bald-faced lie. And one has to be willing to see through that lie before one can understand and believe the Truth. However, that is only possible if one has a desire to know the Truth.

Unfortunately, the lies concerning the Creation Account are not the only lies that Satan has promoted. Not by a long shot. Satan's greatest lie is this: It does not matter *what one believes*, it only matters *what one does*. The Apostle Paul's purpose in the Book of Galatians is to refute those who want to believe that lie. He begins by emphasizing the fact that what he preaches is the Truth and one cannot change the Truth without making it into a lie:

I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; which is {really} not another; only there are some who are disturbing you, and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed.

(Galatians 1:6–9)

After Paul establishes the fact that the *content* of saving faith is a simple matter of black and white, he then asserts that the Galatians should believe what he preaches is the Truth because he *received* it "through a revelation of Jesus Christ":

For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but {I received it} through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

(Galatians 1:11–12)

In the second chapter of the Book of Galatians, Paul mentions several other reasons why the Galatians should have confidence that what he preaches is true. That includes the fact that the Apostles in Jerusalem admitted that the Gospel he *received* by revelation was identical to the one they *received* from Jesus Christ Himself:

Then after an interval of fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along also. And it

was because of a revelation that I went up; and I submitted to them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but {I did so} in private to those who were of reputation, for fear that I might be running, or had run, in vain. But not even Titus who was with me, though he was a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. But {it was} because of the false brethren who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to bring us into bondage. **But we did not yield in subjection to them for even an hour, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you.** But from those who were of high reputation (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)—well, those who were of reputation contributed nothing to me. But on the contrary, **seeing that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter {had been} to the circumcised (for He who effectually worked for Peter in {his} apostleship to the circumcised effectually worked for me also to the Gentiles), and recognizing the grace that had been given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we {might go} to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised.**

(Galatians 2:1–9)

In Chapter 3, Paul finally gets to the heart of the matter concerning the fundamental importance of what one believes:

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?

(Galatians 3:1–3)

Now I realize that most folks today can't understand what Paul says here, but that is only because they firmly believe the very thing that he is refuting. And I have to admit that the concept of salvation by faith doesn't make a whole lot of sense to people who don't understand what Paul said about not changing the *content* of the Gospel he gained by revelation. Most "Christians" in the Church today already believe a "gospel" that is a complete distortion of the one that Paul preached. Such is the predicament facing those

who don't understand that the *content* of one's faith is supremely important. Faith—belief—does no good whatsoever if the *content* that one believes is a lie. It is, in fact, extremely detrimental to one's eternal well-being to remain absolutely convinced of something that is not true. That is what Paul is *talking about* in the epistle he wrote to the church in Galatia.

Paul's purpose in Chapters 3 and 4 of Galatians, where he refers to *the promise* that God gave to Abraham, is to swat down the nonsense being taught by those who believed the Pharisaic idiocy that what one does is more important than what one believes. Paul's point is, Abraham did not gain righteousness by being circumcised or by observing the Sabbath. He gained it by believing *the promise* of God:

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.

(Galatians 3:5–9)

Those who do not understand the things that Moses hid in the Pentateuch have no way of knowing that Adam and Eve carried *the promise* with them when they left the Garden. Therefore, it is easy for them to slip off into literalism and claim that the only thing Abraham understood about Jesus Christ was the little bit that Moses recorded in Genesis 12–15. Little do they know that Abraham most likely understood just about as much in regard to God's purpose in the death and Resurrection of the Man as Moses did. He certainly knew that he would not *inherit* the Land that God had *promised* until after he died:

And Abram said, "O Lord GOD, what wilt Thou give me, since I am childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" And Abram said, "Since Thou hast given no offspring to me, one born in my house is my heir." Then behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "This man will not be your heir; but one who shall come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir." And He took

him outside and said, "Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be." Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness. And He said to him, "I am the LORD who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess it." And he said, "O Lord GOD, how may I know that I shall possess it?" So He said to him, "Bring Me a three year old heifer, and a three year old female goat, and a three year old ram, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon." Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, and laid each half opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds. And the birds of prey came down upon the carcasses, and Abram drove them away. Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, terror {and} great darkness fell upon him. And {God} said to Abram, "Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years. But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve; and afterward they will come out with many possessions. And as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age."
(Genesis 15:2–15)

If you can't quite grasp the point of that passage, it may be because translators quite often translate the technical term *inherit* as "possess" in verse 8. The point of the passage is actually quite easy to understand: God *promised* Abram that he would most definitely *inherit* the Promised Land. Abram wants to know how that can be when he has no *heir* to carry on his lineage. So he asks God how he can be sure that he will *inherit*. God responds by swearing under oath that Abram will *inherit what was promised* even after he dies. Perhaps the author of the Book of Hebrews will make it easier for you to see the Truth:

For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, saying, "I WILL SURELY BLESS YOU, AND I WILL SURELY MULTIPLY YOU." And thus, having patiently waited, he obtained the promise. For men swear by one greater {than themselves}, and with them an oath {given} as confirmation is an end of every dispute. 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 6:13–20)*

In this life, Abraham never did *inherit what was promised*. All he ever had in his possession was *the promise*. And he retained possession of that only by believing it was true:

*By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign {land}, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.
(Hebrews 11:8–10)*

In Galatians 3 and 4, Paul has in mind the explanation of *the promise* that God made to Abraham in Genesis 15. There, God explained that Abraham could be certain he would *inherit* the Promised Land because *the Heir of the promise* would be one of his descendants—thereby ensuring that his "house" endured forever. Paul is using Abraham's faith—his belief in *the promise*—as an example of what the True Believer's faith—belief in *the promise*—should be. He could have just as easily pointed to the faith that Abel, Enoch, and Noah had in *the promise*, as the author of the Book of Hebrews did in Hebrews 11:4–7. But Moses did not specifically state that God reckoned the faith of those men to be righteousness. He stated that only in regard to the faith of Abraham. Therefore, Paul keys on that statement in Genesis 15:6 and uses it as a sledgehammer to refute the asinine belief of those Jews who were insisting that Christian Believers must do something more than just believe *the promise*—in this case, be circumcised—to be righteous.

Paul is adamant that the Believer need only believe *the promise*—which is fully explained in *The Teaching*. To make his point, Paul reminds the Galatians

that Abraham believed *the promise* a long time before Moses put in place a *parabolic pantomime* based on a bunch of do's and don'ts:

What I am saying is this: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise. For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise; but God has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise.

(Galatians 3:17–18)

You have already seen that *the promise* is linked to *inheritance* in Genesis 15 and Galatians 3–4, as well as in Hebrews 11. The concept of *the promise* as an *inheritance* is based on the *parabolic image* of the death of God. That *parabolic image* is expressed in the *symbolic ritual* in Genesis 15:9–17, a ritual in which God Himself participated. The point of the ritual is summed up in the abstract statements that God made by means of the *parabolic pantomime*: “I invoke a curse on Myself that will take effect should I not *fulfill the promise*.” “If need be, I will die to *fulfill the promise*.” “I will die rather than not *fulfill the promise*.” You get the idea. Take your pick of those three or try your hand at another. The purpose of the *parabolic pantomime* is to mock those literalists who can't quite get their minds around the fact that the *parabolic pantomimes* of the Scriptures merely describe how “this IS LIKE that.”

The *parabolic imagery* which describes the death of God explains that when God died, *what was promised* immediately became the *inheritance* of the *heirs of the promise*. So I ask the question: When Jesus Christ died on the cross, Who died? God? Or just a man? In trying to answer that question, those literalists who correctly believe that Jesus Christ was both God and man face a conundrum. They know that God cannot die. He lives forever. But they also cannot admit that Jesus Christ was just a man. Therefore, they are forced to come up with some idiotic hocus pocus that will enable them to do theological somersaults on the head of that proverbial pin.

The Truth is, God did not die. The Man Jesus Christ—the incarnate Word of God—died in a *parabolic pantomime*. His *parabolic heirs*, under the terms of His *parabolic will*, *inherit* the only thing He had in His possession at the time of His death—*the promise*. (See “Did Jesus Leave a Will?” *The Voice of Elijah*®, July 1991.)

The author of the Book of Hebrews explains those things clearly enough for anyone to understand if they really want to. But translators don't understand the *parabolic imagery* of the Scriptures; so they quite often obscure what is said by translating the Greek word *διαθήκη* as “covenant” when it actually means “testament”:

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. For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled, sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, in order that since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were {committed} under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. For where a covenant is, there must of necessity be the death of the one who made it. For a covenant is valid {only} when men are dead, for it is never in force while the one who made it lives.

(Hebrews 9:11–17)

The Apostle Paul—who probably also wrote the Book of Hebrews—is referring to the same *parabolic imagery* when he says this to the Galatians:

Brethren, I speak in terms of human relations: even though it is {only} a man's covenant, yet when it has been ratified, no one sets it aside or adds conditions to it. Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as {referring} to many, but {rather} to one, “And to your seed,” that is, Christ. What I am saying is this: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise. For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise; but God has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise.

(Galatians 3:15–18)

According to the *parabolic imagery* of the Passover Parable, the *inheritance of the promise* frees the *heirs of the promise* from the obligation to slavishly “do this and don’t do that” which the Law imposed on *the Heir of the promise*. Paul explains that in this passage:

*For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified; for the Law brings about wrath, but where there is no law, neither is there violation. For this reason {it is} by faith, that {it might be} in accordance with grace, in order that the promise may be certain to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all.
(Romans 4:13–16)*

Paul’s point in Romans is exactly the same one that he makes in his letter to the Galatians: All that *the heirs of the promise* need do under the terms of the New Covenant is continue to believe *the promise*:

*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 3:13–14)*

The phrase “the promise of the Spirit” is an interesting reminder that there are—within *the promise*—a variety of other “promises.” Paul concedes as much when he says these two things about “the promises”:

*Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as {referring} to many, but {rather} to one, “And to your seed,” that is, Christ.
(Galatians 3:16)*

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

Paul is alluding to the fact that, in the course of carrying out *the fulfillment of the promise*, God made numerous *promises* concerning how He would *fulfill the promise*. One of those *promises*, as you pointed out, was *the promise* that the Holy Spirit would indwell the Believer in the same way that it resided in the Man Jesus Christ. Again, that is just *parabolic imagery* that describes the reality of *the promise*—the Word of God—living in the mind—the heart—of the one who has heard *the promise* and truly believes it. The Apostle Paul is using that *parabolic imagery* when he refers to the Holy Spirit as a “pledge of our *inheritance*” in this next passage:

*Blessed {be} the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly {places} in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, which He lavished upon us. In all wisdom and insight He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, {that is}, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things upon the earth. In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of {God’s own} possession, to the praise of His glory.
(Ephesians 1:3–14)*

Now that I have explained those things, let me address the issue of how *The Teaching* and *the promise* are one and the same thing. I have already explained that the writings of the Prophets are a mixture of historical record and prophecy. (See “The Holy Bible:

What Is It? What Does It Mean? Who Wrote It? When and Why?" *The Voice of Elijah*®, April 1997.) But just to refresh your memory, let me point out what I said about the connection between history and prophecy:

The five books of the Bible that Moses wrote explained not only what God was going to do but also what God had already done. Since the Hebrew Scriptures are nothing more than an extension of the Pentateuch, they exhibit those same characteristics. Therefore, if you want to understand the nature and purpose of the Hebrew Scriptures, you must first get it firmly fixed in your mind that they make a clear distinction between what God has done and what He is going to do.

The information in the Scriptures related to what God has done is historical record. The information concerning what He is going to do is prophecy. History explains the known; prophecy explains the unknown.

Think about it: When God first made *the promise* to Adam and Eve, it was nothing more than an explanation of *what He was going to do*. That is, it was entirely prophecy. So *The Teaching* was originally a prophetic promise—*the promise*—that God would do certain things. As *the promise* moved through time, however, God continually worked to move history toward *the fulfillment of the promise*. As He worked, things in *The Teaching* which had until then been nothing more than prophecy suddenly became history. But *The Teaching* was still nothing more than an explanation concerning the past and future history of *the promise*. (Interesting side question for all those who are enamored with the literal theory of interpretation: How can God be resting on the seventh "day" of Creation if He is still working to *fulfill the promise*?)

When Moses produced the Pentateuch by writing down his understanding of *the promise*, God had already done a variety of things to move history toward *the fulfillment of the promise*. So Moses wove those historical events into his historical record of God's *fulfillment of the promise*. But those things in *The Teaching* that were yet to be accomplished remained prophecy—which Moses recorded in exactly the same way that he recorded the history of *the promise*.

Does *The Teaching*—*the promise*—change when some parts of the prophecy become history? Of course not! The only thing that changes is prophecy becomes history. Sure, more and more things in *The Teaching* that

have long been prophecy gradually become historical events. But that does not change *The Teaching* which explains *the promise*. As *the promise* moves through time, it merely moves history closer to the time of *the fulfillment of the promise*. That makes *the fulfillment of the promise* that much more certain.

The New Testament is largely a historical record of how God turned prophecy concerning *the promise* into a history of *the fulfillment of the promise*. However, there are still some historical events *promised* in *The Teaching* that must become history before *the fulfillment of the promise* is complete. The Apostle John provides a parabolic description of those events in the Book of Revelation. Those things have already begun to occur in our own time. When all of the things the Prophets have explained concerning how God intends to bring about *the fulfillment of the promise* are finally realized, then "The Mystery" will be finished just as the angel said to the Apostle John:

And when the seven peals of thunder had spoken, I was about to write; and I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Seal up the things which the seven peals of thunder have spoken, and do not write them." And the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land lifted up his right hand to heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, WHO CREATED HEAVEN AND THE THINGS IN IT, AND THE EARTH AND THE THINGS IN IT, AND THE SEA AND THE THINGS IN IT, that there shall be delay no longer, but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then the mystery of God is finished, as He preached to His servants the prophets.
(Revelation 10:4–7)

Editor: The final question is from a subscriber who would like to know the meaning of the Hebrew word selah that is used extensively in the Psalms and three times in the Book of Habakkuk. He would also like to know if there is significance to this term as it relates to the passages where it occurs, or is its use merely a musical/ poetical device as many scholars assert?

Elijah: Nobody knows what the Hebrew term *selah* means, much less what it signifies. So don't believe anyone who insists they do. They are merely speculating. The best that I can do is tell you to pay close attention to those texts where it occurs. But you should be doing that anyway. ■