



THE VOICE of ELIJAH

Restoring the hearts of the fathers to the children

Did He Say, "Flesh and Bones"?

But vain in every respect are they who despise the entire dispensation of God, and disallow the salvation of the flesh, and treat with contempt its regeneration, maintaining that it is not capable of incorruption. But if this indeed do not attain salvation, then neither did the Lord redeem us with His blood, nor is the cup of the Eucharist the communion of His blood, nor the bread which we break the communion of His body. For blood can only come from veins and flesh, and whatsoever else makes up the substance of man, such as the Word of God was actually made.

By His own blood he redeemed us, as also His apostle declares, "In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the remission of sins." And as we are His members, we are also nourished by means of the creation (and He Himself grants the creation to us, for He causes His sun to rise, and sends rain when He wills). He has acknowledged the cup (which is a part of the creation) as His own blood, from which He bestows our blood; and the bread (also a part of the creation) He has established as His own body, from which He gives increase to our bodies.

When, therefore, the mingled cup and the manufactured bread receives the Word of God, and the Eucharist of the blood and the body of Christ is made, from which things the substance of our flesh is increased and supported, how can they affirm that the flesh is incapable of receiving the gift of God, which is life eternal, which [flesh] is nourished from the body and blood of the Lord, and is a member of Him? —even as the blessed Paul declares in his Epistle to the Ephesians, that "we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones."

He does not speak these words of some spiritual and invisible man, for a spirit has not bones nor flesh; but [he refers to] that dispensation [by which the Lord became] an actual man, consisting of flesh, and nerves, and bones,

Continued on back cover

Continued from front cover

—that [flesh] which is nourished by the cup which is His blood, and receives increase from the bread which is His body.

And just as a cutting from the vine planted in the ground fructifies in its season, or as a corn of wheat falling into the earth and becoming decomposed, rises with manifold increase by the Spirit of God, who contains all things, and then, through the wisdom of God, serves for the use of men, and having received the Word of God, becomes the Eucharist, which is the body and blood of Christ; so also our bodies, being nourished by it, and deposited in the earth, and suffering decomposition there, shall rise at their appointed time, the Word of God granting them resurrection to the glory of God, even the Father, who freely gives to this mortal immortality, and to this corruptible incorruption, because the strength of God is made perfect in weakness, in order that we may never become puffed up, as if we had life from ourselves, and exalted against God, our minds becoming ungrateful; but learning by experience that we possess eternal duration from the excelling power of this Being, not from our own nature, we may neither undervalue that glory which surrounds God as He is, nor be ignorant of our own nature, but that we may know what God can effect, and what benefits man receives, and thus never wander from the true comprehension of things as they are, that is, both with regard to God and with regard to man.

And might it not be the case, perhaps, as I have already observed, that for this purpose God permitted our resolution into the common dust of mortality, that we, being instructed by every mode, may be accurate in all things for the future, being ignorant neither of God nor of ourselves?

Irenæus, "Against Heresies," Book 6, Chap. ii, in Roberts and Donaldson (Eds.), *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (1867), Vol. 1, p. 528.

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Allen Friess, Executive Editor
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A Note From the Editor

In the past three issues of *The Voice of Elijah*®, I have talked about the fact that we humans lie to ourselves for a variety of reasons. Sometimes we do so because we don't want to carry around the emotional baggage—guilt, shame, fear, etc.—the Truth can heap on a person, and sometimes we do so because we like the emotional high—joy, happiness, peace, etc.—that believing some particular lie produces within us. Most “Christians” experience the latter feelings (much more so than the former) each Sunday morning because of the various lies they hear preached week after week. We will examine one of those lies in a moment.

One of the lies, or misconceptions, we have already looked at is the belief that the Scriptures are the Word of God. In the April 2004 issue of *The Voice of Elijah*®, I pointed out that to the Early Church the oral Teaching of the Apostles—The Apostolic Teaching—was the Word of God (Acts 2:42), not the Scriptures. Although the Word of God the Apostles taught the Early Church was rooted in the Old Testament, it was (and still is) only cryptically stated there. That means The Apostolic Teaching was (and still is) the oral explanation of the message—the Word of God—that is concealed in the Hebrew Scriptures (the Old Testament). The Old Testament is not the actual Word of God, however, because long before the Hebrew Scriptures existed the Word of God already existed (John 1:1–14) and was being handed down via the spoken word as an oral Teaching/tradition.

Ultimately, the Scriptures testify to the fact that The Teaching is true by providing objective evidence—a written text—that validates the Truth of God's Word (as taught by a Teacher) in the minds of True Believers. Anyone who claims The Teaching is not the Word of God and tries to use the Scriptures to prove that point will one day find the Scriptures testifying against them as a “witness” (Deut. 31:26) in God's High Court on Judgment Day. The Scriptures will testify that they chose to reject The Teaching (despite having access to the objective evidence the Scriptures provide) because they preferred to believe Satan's lies.

The notion that anyone can read and understand the message of the Scriptures is another lie the Church perpetuates. If that were actually true, God would not have instituted the teacher/disciple relationship in the Church, and Jesus would not have found it necessary to “open the minds” of His disciples to understand the Scriptures (Luke 24:44–45). The fact that there is a mystery to the Scriptures explains why God always intended His Word to be handed down as an oral Teaching, which is The Teaching. Ironically, the Church today still hands down an oral Teaching/tradition that is communicated verbally from the pulpit and on “Christian” radio on a daily and weekly basis. Unfortunately, that “teaching” often has little basis in fact or in the Scriptures.

For instance, one of the major lies handed down in the Church today is the teaching that God has unconditional love for everyone.

Continued on page 29

Continued from inside front cover

Since the Scriptures always provide objective evidence in support of the Truth, it would undoubtedly support this belief if it were true. Unfortunately, it doesn't because it isn't. The fact that the word *unconditional* is not found anywhere in the Scriptures is only the first of many problems facing those who defend this belief. That's why they are forced to assume God's "unconditional" love is spoken of in this verse:

*"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."
(John 3:16)*

Let's clarify something right now. God does love the whole of what He created, and that would include Adam and Eve (who eventually created the rest of humanity). To assume, however, that God has unconditional love for every *individual* sinner on the basis of this verse alone not only requires a quantum leap of faith, it fails to take into account the fact that God makes a clear distinction between individuals on the basis of their beliefs. As the above verse clearly implies, those individuals who believe in the Son will attain eternal life, but those who don't will "perish."

The fact that God makes a clear distinction between Believers and unbelievers—that is, between those to whom He grants eternal life and those He sends to Hell—greatly diminishes His "unconditional" love for everyone, don't you think? Beyond that, trying to explain how God could have unconditional love for everyone and still consign people to eternal torment in Hell when He has the prerogative to not do so defies explanation. Even sinful humans wouldn't inflict unrelenting punishment on someone for whom they have unconditional love. Yet we are to believe God would do so? I don't think so.

Fortunately, we don't have to rely on logic alone to discern the Truth of this matter. To anyone willing to believe the Truth, the Scriptures provide sufficient evidence that God does not have unconditional love for everyone, but instead actually hates

the wicked. Listen to what the psalmist says about God in these verses:

*For Thou art not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness;
No evil dwells with Thee.
The boastful shall not stand before Thine eyes;
Thou dost hate all who do iniquity.
(Psalm 5:4-5)*

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

The Hebrew word translated "hate/hates" in these two verses actually means "hate." It is not some ambiguous term that translators didn't understand. That's why they were forced to state the fact that God hates the Wicked—that is, the guilty—even though that concept destroys the notion that God has unconditional love for everyone.

Jesus Himself made two statements (among others) that also refute this notion, albeit in a less obvious fashion:

*"He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him."
(John 14:21)*

*Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him."
(John 14:23)*

Did you notice the conditional aspect of receiving the Father's love in both of these verses? The fact is, if God loved everyone with unconditional love, there would be no reason for Jesus to say God "shall" or "will" love a person because He would already love that person. That clearly eliminates the notion that God already loves everyone unconditionally. Let him who has ears hear.

Allen Friedman

And Now Let Me Tell You What I Am Going to Do to My Vineyard

This is the fourth in a series of articles in which I will eventually explain the meaning of all of Jesus' parables. My purpose is to show that the parables of Jesus do not stand alone as isolated units. Each one of them is related in some way to an ongoing discourse in which Jesus was privately explaining The Teaching to His disciples.

The series actually began with a question in the "Questions & Answers" section of the January 1998 issue of **The Voice of Elijah**®. I was asked to explain what Jesus was talking about in the Parable of the Talents (Matt. 25:14–30), which I did.

Then, in the "Questions & Answers" section of the April 1998 issue, I was asked to explain the meaning of the Parable of the Sower. I did that in the article "If You Plan to Reap What You Sow, You Had Better Watch What You Plant," which was the first in this series on the parables of Jesus.

The second article in the series appeared in the October 1998 issue of **The Voice of Elijah**® with the title "I Tell You What: Odds Are, You'll Never Beat God at His Shell Game." In that article, I explained the parables in which Jesus uses parabolic imagery which depicts Him as the Son of God.

The third article in the series was published in the October 2003 issue of **The Voice of Elijah**® as "Glory Be! What's That I See?" In that article, I explained the parables of Jesus in which He uses the parabolic image of God's "harvest."

In this, the fourth article of the series, I will explain what Jesus had in mind when He referred to Himself as "the Son of the man," which phrase is normally translated as "the Son of Man." Not surprisingly, He is appealing to the fact that He has taken on the image and likeness of Adam. But that is only part of the story.

For the past fourteen years, I have been tiptoeing gingerly around various and sundry issues—making all sorts of vague and unexplained comments—because the time has not yet come for me to explain openly some particular facet of the Truth the Prophets concealed in the Scriptures. More often than not when I do that, I know where the treasure is buried and of what sort it is, but not everything related to it. So I simply state something sufficient to remind myself of what I have seen and then move on. This is, after all, a work in progress. Insight into one thing depends on insight into another, which depends on insight into another, which depends on insight into another, But you get the idea. I spend a lot of time just trying to keep my head from spinning.

Imagine where we would be in our understanding of the Scriptures if it were not for the phenomenal insight into the Truth that lies hidden in Genesis 1:26–27. Without that one little bit of absolutely astounding information concerning God's creation of the Second "Adam" on the sixth *parabolic* "day" of Creation and the impending arrival of the seventh *parabolic* "day" of Creation, it would be impossible for us to understand why the Prophets and Apostles refer to both the first and Last Adam as "the man." And one could not even begin to understand why Jesus would *parabolically* refer to Himself as "the Son of the man," which is what I will explain here.

In the article "If You Plan to Reap What You Sow, You Had Better Watch What You Plant" (*The Voice of Elijah*®, April 1998), I briefly mentioned that Matthew shows us in the ninth chapter of his Gospel where Jesus began explaining the *parabolic imagery* in which He is viewed as the *Seed of the Living Word of God*. He did that right before He gave His disciples authority

over unclean spirits. Over the course of the next eight chapters, Matthew then reveals that Jesus continued to explain that *parabolic imagery* to His disciples and finally summed up His explanation with a *parabolic pantomime* of His Resurrection in Chapter 17.

The Question: "Who Do You Say I Am?"

Insight into some of the passages of Scripture that Jesus was undoubtedly explaining to His disciples can be found right in the middle of His explanation of the *parabolic imagery* in which He is viewed as the *Seed* of the *Living Word* of God. Matthew tells us that, during that time, Jesus had the following exchange with His disciples:

But Jesus, coming into the parts of Caesarea Philippi, was asking His disciples saying, "Who do 'the men' say 'the Son of the man' is?" They said, "Some say John the Baptist; others, Elijah; but others, Jeremiah or one of the Prophets." He says to them, "But who do you say I am?" Responding, Simon Peter said, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God!" Responding, Jesus said to him: "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, because flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father, Who is in Heaven. But I also say to you that you are a 'rock,' and on this 'Rock' I will 'build' My Ekklesia, and the 'gates' of Hades will not restrain it. I will give you the 'keys' of the Kingdom of Heaven; and the one you 'bind' on Earth will be bound in Heaven, and the one you 'loose' on Earth will be loosed in Heaven." Then He gave them orders that they should tell no one that He is the Messiah.

(Matthew 16:13–20) —my interim translation

The *meaning* and *significance* of that passage has been twisted and distorted so often by theologically minded, but pathologically twisted and distorted, Pretenders that it is difficult to know where to begin explaining it. First, let me point out that the Greek term *Ekklesia*, which is commonly translated "church" in the New Testament, is exactly the same term the Jews in the time of Christ used to refer to themselves as members of Israel. At least they did until Christians began using the term to refer to themselves as members of Israel. Then the Jews switched to using a Greek term that is normally translated "synagogue."

You might want to keep what I just told you about the Jews claiming to be the "Church" in mind; it

could come in handy if some inquiring mind ever wants to know why the Judaizers—"false brethren" who slipped into the "Church" (Gal. 2:4) that Christ "built" on *The Rock*—insisted Gentile Christians had to be circumcised. There would be no logical reason for anyone to think a Gentile Believer would have to be circumcised if the "Church" did not in some way view itself as the continuation of Israel. But I have already explained how that came about in *Not All Israel Is Israel*. There I told you that all the Jews except Jesus Christ were "cut off from" Israel. In that way, Jesus Christ became *Corporate* Israel; and Believers "in Christ" *literally* become members of Israel when they *parabolically* become members of His Body. Paul puts it this way:

For the Jew is not in the visible, neither {is} circumcision in the visible—in flesh. But the Jew is in the hidden—and circumcision of a heart is in a spirit, not {in} what is written—whose praise is not from men but from God.
(Romans 2:28–29) —my interim translation

The second thing you should note about Matthew's account is the fact that the conversation Jesus had with His disciples was initiated when He asked them a simple question: "Who do '*the men*' say '*the Son of the man*' is?" I will return to the *parabolic imagery* related to "the Son of the man" that stands behind His question a bit later. Right now, I want to explain what Jesus *meant* by what He said to His disciples on that occasion.

By phrasing His question the way He did, Jesus intentionally emphasized "the men" and "the Son of the man" because He already knew what Simon's response would be when He asked the second question, "But who do *you* say I am?" Needless to say, His disciples' response to His first question as well as the assumption on which His second question is based clearly identify Him as "the Son of the man." So it is not surprising that, in an enthusiastic response to His second question, Simon tells Him, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God!"

Jesus immediately informs Simon that he is only able to recognize that He, "the Son of the man," is also the Messiah of Israel because God has granted him insight into that particular facet of *The Word of Truth* (*The Teaching*). But Matthew does not feel any need at all to tell his reader that Simon was able to recognize Jesus as the Messiah because Jesus had been explaining

the *parabolic imagery* related to the title “the Son of the man” over the course of the previous several days. He assumes anyone with insight into *The Teaching* will already know that Simon Peter did not reach up like a magician and pull that information out of thin air. Neither does Matthew tell us Jesus has been explaining the *meaning* and *significance* of various passages in the Scriptures where the Prophets *talk about* “the Son of the man.” But if one knows where the Prophets *talk about* such things, that fact could not be more obvious.

After Simon energetically answers His second question, Jesus begins to speak *parabolically* in terms of Himself (the *Living Word of God/The Teaching*) as *The Rock* that God is. If you want to understand what the Prophets have said using the *parabolic imagery* in which *The Teaching of Moses* is *The Rock*, you should probably begin by reviewing what the psalmist has to say in that regard. For now, we are focused on Matthew 16:13–20, so an explanation of that *parabolic image* will have to await a more appropriate occasion.

In a short, quick *parabolic pantomime*, Jesus changes Simon’s name to *petros* (“Peter”), a Greek term that *means* “a rock,” to indicate that Peter’s knowledge of and belief in the Truth of *The Teaching* he has heard has made him *LIKE The Rock* of the *Living Word of God (The Teaching)* he has believed. Simon evidently held fond memories of that moment. I say that only because he begins his first epistle with “Peter” and his second with “Simon Peter.” You may have already noticed that Matthew also calls him “Simon Peter” in the passage above.

After Jesus changes Simon’s name to better reflect the change in thinking that Simon has experienced by understanding and believing what Jesus had already explained from the Scriptures, Jesus then uses the Hebrew idiom “build a house” (which *literally means* “engender a son”) to remind His disciples of the parable He had told them earlier about the “wise Man” Who “built His House” on *The Rock* (Matt. 7:24–27). He tells His disciples that, just as He explained when He told them that parable, He is going to “build” His *Ekklesia* (that is, the “assembly” which is “*The House*” of Israel—the Firstborn Son of God that the Body of Jesus Christ is) on *The Rock* of *The Teaching* that God has allowed Simon to understand. Believers’ knowledge of that information will then make it impossible for the “gates” of Hades—that is, the realm of the dead—to foil the Resurrection of the Righteous by holding the members of the Body of Christ (Israel) captive.

As you can see, Peter had good reason to have a special fondness for the *parabolic imagery* in which Jesus Christ is *The Rock*—the *Living Word of God* that *The Teaching* is—on which Christ said He was going to “build” the *Ekklesia* (“assembly”) of Israel, that is, “*The House*” of God, just as Nathan *promised* David He would (2 Sam. 7:12–14). In that *parabolic imagery*, True Believers are viewed as little “rocks,” made in the image and likeness of *The Rock*, and are all being “laid” as “living stones” in “*The House*” that God is “building” for Himself. Peter explains all that this way:

Therefore, getting rid of all ill-will, all deceit, hypocrisy and jealousy, and all speaking badly of others, as newborn babies, desire the unadulterated rational milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation, if you have tasted that His Majesty is good. To Whom coming—a Living Stone declared useless by men, but Chosen and Valued by God—you also as “living stones” are being “built” a spiritual “house” into a holy “priesthood,” to offer spiritual “sacrifices” acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in Scripture: “LOOK! I AM LAYING IN ZION A CHOSEN, VALUED CORNER STONE; AND THE ONE WHO BELIEVES ON HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.” Therefore, the value is to you—to those who believe—but to those who do not believe: “THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS DECLARED USELESS? THIS ONE BECAME A CORNERSTONE” and “A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSIVENESS.” Those who stumble at the Word do not believe—to which also they were “laid.” But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR ACQUISITION, in order that you may proclaim the virtues of the One Who called you out of darkness into His astonishing Light—those once NOT A PEOPLE, but now A PEOPLE OF GOD; those who had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but have now RECEIVED MERCY.
(1 Peter 2:1–10)—my interim translation

The Apostle Paul uses exactly the same Hebrew idiom (“build a house”) and *parabolic imagery* that Jesus and Peter used to explain why it is now possible for Gentile Believers to become members of the *Ekklesia* (“assembly”) of Israel that Jesus Christ became when all other Jews were “cut off from” “*The House*” of Israel. Speaking *parabolically*, he says this:

Wherefore remember that you—formerly the Gentiles (in the flesh), {that is,} those who are called “uncircumcision” by those who are called “the circumcision” (made in the

flesh by hand)—that you were at that time outside of Christ, excluded from the citizenship of Israel and strangers to the covenants of **the promise**, not having a hope and without God in the world. But now in Messiah Jesus, you—those who were once far off—have been brought near by the blood of the Messiah. For He is Himself our peace, **the One Who made both One** and, by tearing down the partition-wall of the “hedge,” the hostility, in His flesh—{that is,} by voiding the Law of the commandments {given} by decrees so that **(1) in Himself He might create the two into one New Man**, {thereby} making peace, and **(2) He might reconcile them both to the {Living} God in one Body**, by killing the hostility in Himself. So coming, HE PREACHED {THE GOSPEL}—PEACE TO YOU, TO THOSE FAR OFF, AND PEACE TO THOSE NEAR—so that through Him we both have access to the Father in one “Spirit.” Consequently, you are, therefore, no longer strangers and aliens; but **you are fellow citizens of the Holy Ones and members of “The House” of the {Living} God—having been “built” on the “foundation” of the Apostles and Prophets—a Corner {Stone} being Messiah Jesus Himself, in Whom a whole “building” (being fitted carefully together) is growing into a “Holy Temple” in His Majesty, in Whom also we are being “built” together into a “dwelling-place” of the {Living} God in a “Spirit.”**

(Ephesians 2:11–22) —my interim translation

The Answer: “You Are the Messiah!”

The next thing that Jesus explains to His disciples is how those who make up the *Ekklesia* of Israel—the Body of Christ—will come together as “one” in the “New Man” that He is and rise to life in an entirely new existence at the End of the Age. It is because He is going to give His disciples “the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven.” That is, after His Resurrection, He is going to give them supernatural insight into *The Teaching* (Luke 24:45)—which alone is able to unlock the “door” to Heaven. He will then grant them the authority to teach that Truth (Matt. 28:16–20) to whomever they deem to be True Believers and to refuse to teach it to those they deem to be unbelievers. In that way, they will effectively “bind” in Hades those who do not believe the Truth and “loose” from Hades those who do.

Jesus tells His disciples that whatever they decide with regard to the identification of Believers and Pretenders will be honored by God in Heaven.

The reason for that circumstance should be obvious to anyone who knows that salvation can only be attained through belief in the Truth of the *Living Word of God* (*The Teaching*) that Jesus Christ is. After all, if one has not *heard* at least the introductory part of that Word (which is commonly called “the Gospel”), one certainly cannot be *saved by faith* (belief) from the terrifying fate that Jesus *parabolically* calls “Hades.”

By the way, “saving faith” is *faith* in the sense of *what one believes about* Jesus Christ and God, not *faith* in the goofy sense of *that one believes a God exists* or has some nebulous, warm-fuzzy “faith in Christ,” whatever that imbecilic cliché is supposed to *mean*. Perhaps I should also remind you that, when Paul wrote the following concerning salvation by faith (belief), he clearly had in mind the blatantly obvious requirement that one must first *hear the Truth about Christ* before one can be saved by *belief in Christ*:

But the righteousness based on faith speaks thus, “DO NOT SAY IN YOUR HEART, ‘WHO WILL ASCEND INTO HEAVEN?’ (that is, to bring Christ down), or ‘WHO WILL DESCEND INTO THE ABYSS?’ (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).” But what does it say? “THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART”—that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, that if you confess with your mouth Jesus {as} Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. For the Scripture says, “WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.” For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same {Lord} is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call upon Him; for “WHOEVER WILL CALL UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.” How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, “HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GLAD TIDINGS OF GOOD THINGS!”

(Romans 10:6–15)

The Roman Catholic Church still retains a vestige of the things Jesus had in mind when He *talked about* His disciples “binding” and “loosing” people by controlling their access to *The Teaching*. You may have already heard about it. That Early Church practice is called

“excommunication.” If you were not aware that Jesus Christ expected the Early Church to conduct such a brutal practice, perhaps you should consider the fact that your knowledge of the Scriptures and Early Church history is seriously (and I do *mean seriously*) lacking. That being the case, how can you honestly expect to avoid the wrath of God yourself?

While trying to maintain the purity of the “faith,” the Early Church Fathers fought some horrendous battles with Pretenders over the permanent exclusion of Pretenders who had denied Christ during persecution. (See “Puritans and Pretenders: Cyprian, Novatian, and the Lapsed,” *The Voice of Elijah*®, January 1994.) In the end, Satan won that round as well. Consequently, the majority in the Church today haven’t a clue that the new birth requires an honest contrition and sorrow for sins. They just showed up on the church step one Sunday morning, Bible in hand, “‘cause my Momma and Daddy went to church. Don’t know why, but it seemed like the right thing to do for the kids.”

Unfortunately, the Church no longer teaches any real Truth from which anyone’s exclusion would make much difference in their eternal destination. The only Truth remaining in the Church today is the Gospel, and that Truth has been almost completely corrupted over the past century and a half by moronic Pretenders who falsely claimed to be Evangelists. Besides, the Gospel is supposed to be preached to unbelievers outside the Church. Therefore, everyone has always been allowed to hear that part of *The Teaching*. The Gospel is most often preached *inside* church buildings today only because, if the Truth be known, those few legitimate Evangelists who have remained true to their calling subconsciously realize that the majority of the folks warming their most ample backsides on the pews every Sunday are completely unregenerate.

The Son of What “Man”?

Let’s go back and look at what Matthew tells us Jesus had already told His disciples the Prophets said about Him as “the Son of the man.” That *Way*, we should be able to understand better the *parabolic imagery* Jesus had in mind when He asked His disciples “Who do ‘the men’ say ‘the Son of the man’ is?” In the following passage, Jesus has an exchange with a man who swears he will “follow” Christ wherever He goes. Little does the poor fellow know that Christ cannot—

and will not—allow Himself the luxury of “sleep” until He makes it back to the *place* He came from:

But Jesus, seeing the crowd around Him, gave orders to go to the other side. And approaching, a certain scribe said to Him, “Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go!” And Jesus says to him, “Foxes have holes, and the birds of Heaven have a place to live; but the Son of the man does not have anywhere to bow His head.” But another of His disciples said to Him, “Lord, allow me first to go and bury my father.” But Jesus says to him: “Follow Me! And let the dead bury their dead.” And when He got into the boat, His disciples followed Him.

(Matthew 8:18–23) —my interim translation

That brief exchange appears to be one of the events that precipitated Jesus’ in-depth explanation (to His disciples in private) of the *parabolic imagery* in which the Prophets depict Him as “the Son of the man.” “The man” Jesus had in mind when He used that title to refer to Himself is the first Adam, “the man” the Prophets repeatedly and continually refer to as either “Adam” (Hebrew: *Adam*) or “the man” (Hebrew: *Ha’Adam*). They, likewise, refer to Jesus Christ—the Second Adam—as both “*The Man*” (Hebrew: *Ha’Adam*) and “the Son of Adam.” So just to ridicule the scribes and Pharisees—and every other moron who has no idea what the Prophets *meant* by what they said about “*The Man*” and “the Son of Adam”—Jesus combined the two titles into one and cryptically referred to Himself as “the Son of the man.”

In mentioning “foxes” and “birds” in the parable above, Jesus was speaking both *literally* and *parabolically* (as He often did) about two different kinds of *created beings*, just as He was *speaking* both *literally* and *parabolically* when He claimed He had no place to “bow His head.” The Scriptures do, in fact, tell us He stayed with different people (Luke 10:38; John 4:40; cf. Mark 1:45); and they surely didn’t make Him sleep out in the yard.

His point in using the expression “bow His head” rather than “lay His head”—as the phrase is normally translated—is because He *means* He has no *parabolic* “place” where He can *parabolically* “bow His head” and “nod off,” or “catch a few winks.” That is because anyone “walking in *The Way*”—as He did—had better not “turn aside from *The Way*” to find some place to “sleep” this side of Heaven. I assume you were aware Jesus was speaking in terms of that *parabolic image*. After all, the

man did say he would “follow” Christ wherever He went. And the Hebrew idiom “walk in *The Way*” would rather logically come to mind under such circumstances, just as it did when Peter asked Christ where He was going right before He died:

Simon Peter says to Him, “Lord, where are You going?” Jesus responds, “Where I go, you cannot follow Me now; but you will follow later.” Peter says to Him: “Lord, why can’t I follow You now? I will give my soul for You.” Jesus answers: “You will give your soul for Me? Without doubt! Without doubt! I say to you, a rooster will not crow until you deny me three times. Don’t let your ‘heart’ be thrown into confusion. You believe in the {Living} God, and You also believe in Me. In the ‘House’ of My Father, there are many ‘dwelling places.’ But if not, I would have told you, because I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you for Myself, so that where I am you also may be. And where I go, you know ‘The Way.’” Thomas says to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You go, how could we know the way?” Jesus says to him, “I am ‘The Way,’ and ‘The Truth,’ and ‘The Life.’ Nobody comes to the Father except through Me.” (John 13:36–14:6) —my interim translation

In that passage, Jesus is *parabolically* depicting Himself as *The Teaching* (“*The Way*”) that He believed. (See *The Way, The Truth, The Life.*) The Truth is, anyone who has *parabolically* begun to “follow” Christ by beginning to “walk in *The Way*” and then *parabolically* “bows his head” for even an instant will wake up to find he is a dead man, “bound” up tighter than a wet pair of knickers (whatever *that means*) inside the “gates of Hades.” Jesus makes that point rather graphically in the Parable of the Ten Virgins (Matt. 25:1–13).

Three Hebrew idioms related to the *parabolic image* of Christ as “the Son of the man” Adam are “build a house,” “raise up a seed,” and “make a name.” All three idioms *mean* “engender a son,” and all are concerned with a peculiar Canaanite custom intended to dramatically improve the eternal well-being of a dead man who has no hope of resurrection. A part of the *parabolic imagery* related to those idioms depicts Christ as the “Seed” of the *Living Word* of God. (Take the second of any way you care to; the statement is still true.)

If you are familiar with the mind-set represented in the Old Testament, you already know that every living

thing—including mankind—produces “seed” that bears its “name.” That is why the Prophet Isaiah brings together that *parabolic image* and the Hebrew idiom “make a name” in this passage:

*“Seek His Majesty while He can be found!
Call Him while He is near!
Let a guilty one abandon his ‘way,’
And an iniquitous man his thoughts,
That he may return to His Majesty;
That He may have compassion on him;
And to our God,
That He may abundantly forgive.
Because My thoughts are not your thoughts.
And your ‘ways’ are not My ‘ways,’”*
declares His Majesty.
*“Since the Sea of Waters is higher than the Earth,
Therefore, My ways are higher than your ways,
And My thoughts than your thoughts.
(1) Because, just as the rain and the snow
come down from the Sea of Waters,
And it does not return there until
it (a) saturates the Earth,
And (b) causes her to deliver and sprout,
And (c) gives seed for seeding, and bread for eating;
Likewise shall be My Word,
Who will proceed from My mouth.
He will not return to Me empty—
Without (a) doing what I desired,
And (b) successfully completing what I sent Him for.
(2) Because, with joy you will go out,
And in peace you will be carried {to the grave}.*
*The mountains and the hills
will break out with shouts before you,
And all the trees of the field will clap hands.
In place of the thornbush will come up a cypress;
In place of the nettle will come up a myrtle.
He will become (1) a Name for His Majesty—
(2) An eternal sign; He will not be cut off!”*
(Isaiah 55:6–13) —my interim translation

Isaiah is *parabolically* describing the *function* and *purpose* of Jesus Christ, the *Living Word* of God Who came down to Earth from a *place* that Moses calls “*the Sea of Waters*” just LIKE the rain and the snow come down from an *expanse* that Moses, likewise, calls “*a Sea of Waters*” (Gen. 1:8–9). As Isaiah indicates, the *purpose* for which God sent His *Living Word* was to replicate the

Seed of that *Living Word* in those who will willingly abandon their own “thoughts” and their own “way” so that the Earth can *parabolically*—LIKE a woman—“deliver” a “*Seed*” and “sprout” the (collective) *Seed* of the *Living Word* of God at the Resurrection of the Righteous.

To accomplish the *purpose* for which He was sent, Jesus Christ, the *Living Word* of God, had to *function parabolically* LIKE a *Seed* and die so that, as Isaiah explains, in place of “the thornbush,” “a cypress” would “come up” in the Resurrection. That seemingly illogical *parabolic statement* on the part of Isaiah is based on a *parabolic image* in which God “cut off” the “tree” that *Corporate Israel* is when Jesus Christ was crucified on the cross. It is also one of the sources from which the Apostle Paul gets the following information:

But someone will say: “How are the dead raised? In what kind of body do they come?” Fool! What you sow is not made to live unless it dies. And what you sow, you do not sow the body it will become, but a naked kernel of perhaps wheat or some of the rest. But the {Living} God gives it a body just as He desired, and to each of the seeds its own body.

(1 Corinthians 15:35–38)—my interim translation

On another occasion, Jesus alludes to the same *parabolic imagery* that Paul used when he said that, and He again refers to Himself as “the Son of the man” Adam:

*Jesus responds to them, saying: “The hour has come so that **the Son of the man** may be glorified! Without doubt! Without doubt! I say to you: If ‘the Grain’ of ‘the Wheat’ falling into the Earth does not die, He remains alone; but if He dies, He bears much ‘fruit.’ The one who loves his soul destroys it, and the one who hates his soul in this world will preserve it into eternal life. If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me, and where I am, there also will be the one who serves Me. If anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him.”*

(John 12:23–26)—my interim translation

As you should be able to see from His *parabolic* reference to Himself as “*the Grain*” of “*the Wheat*,” Jesus is *parabolically* describing His death as the *Seed* of the *Living Word* of God. What He says is based on Isaiah’s appeal to independent-minded people that they give up their own “thoughts”/“ways” and think in

terms of the Word of God Who came down from Heaven LIKE the snow and the rain. The point that Jesus makes is equally easy to understand: Anyone who “follows” Him by “walking in *The Way*” that God thinks will preserve his soul and live forever.

As I mentioned above, the *parabolic imagery* associated with “the Son of the man” Adam has to do with the Hebrew idioms “build a house,” “raise up a seed,” and “make a name.” That is why Isaiah indicates the “cypress” that will “sprout” in the Resurrection is “*The Name*” of God—that is, the Firstborn Son of God Who “carries *The Name*” of God. Because Christ “carries *The Name*” of God, He will, therefore, never be either “cut down” or “cut off from” God’s (family) tree—depending on which *parabolic image* you apply and whether you take the Hebrew idioms *figuratively* or *literally*. You may have also already noticed that, in *parabolically* describing the Resurrection, Isaiah deliberately switches from the singular *Him* to the plural *you*. He does that to elicit the *parabolic image* of “The One” (*Corporate Israel*) and “The Many” (members of Israel) in the mind of those who have insight.

The Prophets tell us that, *parabolically* speaking, Israel is a “tree” or a “vine” that God intentionally “cut off” when Christ was crucified. We will look at one of the passages where one of them *talks about* that a bit later. If, as you read the last few verses of Isaiah 55, you were thinking in terms of the *parabolic pantomime* in which Jesus deliberately orchestrated His Own death on a “tree,” you may have already caught Isaiah’s tongue-in-cheek reference to the kind of *parabolic* “tree” on which Christ died. If not, maybe next time. You undoubtedly thought the crown of thorns that abject imbeciles forced Him to wear held no *symbolic significance* whatsoever.

For now, just for the sake of those absolute morons who stubbornly refuse to believe the Truth even when they have ample opportunity to hear, I should tell you that the Prophets of God included more than enough ridicule to go around. God saw every little detail of the Crucifixion of Christ long before He sent that *Living Word* of God to Earth to die on the cross in a *parabolic pantomime* of things yet to come. And the Prophets wrote down exactly what God said about that *parabolic pantomime*. So those who are able to understand the Truth should have no doubt whatsoever that what He told the Prophets about the death of the man Adam at the End of the Age is every bit as certain.

As I stated earlier, I have already explained the *parabolic imagery* in which Jesus Christ is depicted as the *Seed of the Word of God* (*The Teaching*). I did that in the article, “If You Plan to Reap What You Sow, You Had Better Watch What You Plant” in the April 1998 issue of *The Voice of Elijah*®. In that article, I told you the account in Matthew 9–17 must be merged with the things that John tells us Jesus said about Himself as the “Bread” that came down from Heaven and the *parabolic pantomime* in which He fed thousands with just a few loaves of bread (John 6).

The reason for the overlap in the accounts found in the four Gospels is fairly easy to explain: The Holy Spirit was providing the information necessary for those with insight to understand what Jesus taught. Merging the four accounts discloses that, during that brief span of time, Jesus was privately explaining to His disciples what Isaiah was *talking about* in the passage above. But Jesus did not let any artificial division like a chapter or verse stop Him. Since he began in Isaiah 40, Isaiah has been *parabolically talking about* Jesus Christ as the *Living Word of God* Who came down from Heaven to replicate the *Seed of the Living Word of God* in others before returning there again. So Jesus continued following Isaiah’s train of thought in Isaiah 55 right on into the next “chapter”:

*This is what His Majesty has said:
“Guard justice! And do what is required!
Because My Jesus is close to coming!
And what I require {is close} to being revealed!
A blessed Man will do this!
And the Son of Adam will hold it fast—
The One who guards a Sabbath rather than polluting it,
The One Who guards his hand
rather than doing anything evil.”
(Isaiah 56:1–2) —my interim translation*

In light of Jesus’ repeated use of the *parabolic imagery* depicting His Incarnation in Isaiah 55, that passage would logically be one of the first ones He would turn to after He began to explain to His disciples why He referred to Himself as “the Son of the man.” I translated the Hebrew term *yeshua* (“salvation”) as “Jesus” just so you could see that Isaiah is still *talking about* the *Living Word of God* that comes down from “the Sea of Waters.” That translation should also help you to understand why the messenger of the

Lord told Joseph to give Christ the name *Jesus*. That is the Greek form of the Hebrew name *Joshua*, which is a statement in which *yeshua* (“salvation”) is combined with “*The Name*” of God. I imagine Moses and the other Prophets of Israel found that particular facet of the *parabolic imagery* of the Passover Parable to be quite humorous. I know I do.

Numbers 13 describes a *parabolic pantomime* in which, just as Jesus changed Simon’s name to *Petros*, Moses changed a man’s name from *Hoshea* (“May His Majesty save”) to *Yehoshua* (“His Majesty is *Yeshua*”) (Num. 13:16). He did that to better depict the role that Joshua played in the *parabolic pantomime* of the Passover Parable. (See *The Passover Parable* on the Order Form.) But the humorous part of that *parabolic pantomime* is this: The name *Joshua* (*Jesus/Yehoshua*) clearly identifies who “His Majesty” is. He is *Yeshua*. Consequently, you can expect the Prophets to ridicule the ignorant and *talk about* Jesus Christ—“*The Name*” Who is *Yeshua*—by cryptically referring to Him as the “salvation” (*Yeshua*) of Israel, just as Isaiah did. But those with insight already knew the “salvation” (*yeshua*) of Israel is summed up in the *Living Word of God*—“*The Name*” of God—in which one must believe to be saved. So what’s new?

The point is, “*The Man*” Jesus—the One Who “*carried The Name*” “His Majesty is salvation”—became “*The Man*” Who will forever “*carry The Name*” that I, for the sake of convenience, translate as “His Majesty,” and you know as “Lord.” Just as Joshua, the son of Nun, did in *parabolic pantomime*, “*The Name*” Who is *Yeshua* will lead His People up from “Egypt” on that Great Day when they “go up” to the Promised Land. But enough about that. Here is Matthew’s account of the messenger setting up the *parabolic pantomime*:

*The birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph; but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant from a Holy Spirit. But Joseph, her man, being what is required and not willing to disgrace her, wanted to send her away secretly. But after he had thought about this, look! a messenger of His Majesty appeared to him in a dream saying: “Joseph, son of David, don’t be afraid to take your woman Mary; for the one engendered in her is from a Holy Spirit. And she will give birth to a son, and you will call His name Jesus; for He will save His People from their sins.”
(Matthew 1:18–21) —my interim translation*

That is just another interesting aside, with no purpose other than to let you know where some of the “treasure” is buried. The Prophets have some rather interesting things to say about *Yeshua*. The point here is, Isaiah 56:2 is but one of the verses Jesus had in mind when He referred to Himself as “the Son of the man” Adam. I will show you a couple of others a bit later.

Which “Sabbath” Do You Mean?

As the Prophet Isaiah states in cryptic *parabolic* shorthand, the *Living* Word of God Who comes down from Heaven (what Moses calls “the Sea of Waters”) is Jesus, “the Son of Adam.” But after the Prophet says that, he immediately mentions the *parabolic image* of the seventh “day” of Creation—the eternal Sabbath:

*“A blessed Man will do this!
And the Son of Adam will hold it fast—
The One Who guards a Sabbath rather than polluting it,
The One Who guards his hand
rather than doing anything evil.”
(Isaiah 56:2) —my interim translation*

Pay close attention to what Isaiah says about the Son of the man Adam as “the One Who guards a Sabbath rather than polluting it.” Matthew indicates Jesus was not only explaining to His disciples the *parabolic imagery* related to Himself as the *Seed* of the *Living* Word of God Who is “the Son of the man” Adam, He was also telling them what it *means* for True Believers to “rest” on the *eternal* Sabbath—the seventh “day” of Creation. To understand what Matthew says, however, you need to keep in mind that Jesus was explaining what Isaiah had written about Him as “the Son of the man” Adam, the One Who came down from Heaven LIKE the snow and the rain to replicate the *Seed* of the Word of God in others. Matthew tells us that “during that time,” Jesus had the following encounter with some of the Pharisees:

During that time, Jesus went—on the Sabbaths—through the standing grain; and His disciples were hungry and began to pick heads and eat. But when the Pharisees saw, they said to Him, “Look! Your disciples are doing what is not permissible on Sabbath.” But He said to them, “Have you not read what David—and those with him—did when he was hungry? How he entered into the

House of God? And they ate the loaves of presentation, which it was not permissible for him to eat, nor for those with him, but only for the priests. Or have you not read in the Law, that on the Sabbaths the priests in the Temple profane the Sabbath and are innocent? But I say to you that something greater than the Temple is here. But if you had known what is—‘I DESIRE COMPASSION AND NOT A SACRIFICE’—you would not have condemned those who are innocent.”

(Matthew 12:1–7) —my interim translation

The basic thrust of Jesus’ argument is fairly easy to understand: The *literal* priests (the Levites) who serve in the *literal* “House of God” (the Temple) break the *literal* Sabbath every seventh day and are innocent; so why would the Pharisees condemn the *parabolic* priests (His disciples) who serve in the *parabolic* “House of God” (Israel/Jesus Christ/*The Teaching*) when they break the *literal* Sabbath? They have, in fact, done exactly what God requires by *parabolically* “guarding” God’s “rest” (*The Teaching*) on the seventh *parabolic* “day” of Creation (the eternal Sabbath) while serving in “*The House*” of God (Israel/Jesus Christ/*The Teaching*), “The One” Who is “something greater than the Temple.”

Everything Jesus says to the Pharisees has a *literal* overtone and some sort of *parabolic* undertone that is intended to ridicule their ignorance. That is nothing unusual; He was constantly making cryptic statements that could be taken either *literally* or *parabolically*. Most of the time, He *meant* them to be taken both ways, with one’s understanding being dependent on whether one actually knew what He was *talking about*. For example, when He mentions the “loaves of presentation,” He is *parabolically* alluding to the *parabolic imagery* in *The Teaching* related to Himself as the “loaf” of “Bread” that came down from Heaven. But that would only have been understood by His disciples, to whom He had explained the point of the *parabolic pantomime* in which He fed thousands with just a few loaves of bread. Here is what He said concerning that pantomime:

The next day, the crowd that had been standing on the other side of the sea saw that no other small ship was there except one and that Jesus had not gone with His disciples in the small ship, but His disciples had gone away alone. But small ships from Tiberias came near the place where they ate the bread after the Lord gave thanks. Therefore,

when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor His disciples were there, they themselves got into the small ships and came to Capernaum, seeking Jesus. And finding Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, "Rabbi, when did You come here?" Jesus responded to them and said: "Without doubt! Without doubt! I say to you, you seek Me not because you saw signs but because you ate from the bread and were satisfied. Don't 'work' for the food that spoils but for the 'Food' that remains into eternal life—which the Son of the man will give you, for the Father, the {Living} God, has 'sealed' this {One}." Therefore, they said to Him "What must we do that we may work the works of the {Living} God?" Jesus responded to them and said, "This is the 'work' of the {Living} God: That you believe into the One Whom that One sent." Therefore, they said to Him: "Then what sign do You do so that we may see and believe You? What work do You do? Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, just as it is written: 'HE GAVE THEM BREAD FROM HEAVEN TO EAT.'" Therefore, Jesus said to them, "Without doubt! Without doubt! I say to you, Moses did not give you the 'Bread from Heaven,' but My Father is giving you the true 'Bread from Heaven.' For the 'Bread' of the {Living} God is the One Who comes down from Heaven and gives life to the world." Therefore, they said to Him, "Lord, give us this 'Bread' all the time!" Jesus said to them: "I am the 'Bread of life.' The one who comes to Me will {never} be hungry and the one who believes into Me will never be thirsty. But I say to you that although you have seen Me, yet you do not believe. Everyone the Father gives Me will come to Me, and I will definitely not throw out anyone who comes to Me, because I have come down from Heaven, not to do My Own will but the will of the One Who sent Me. But this is the will of the One Who sent Me: That I not lose any from Him He has given Me but {that} I raise it up on the last 'day.' For this is the will of My Father: That everyone who sees the Son and believes into Him has eternal life, and {that} I raise him up on the last 'day.'" Therefore, the Jews were complaining about Him because He said, "I am the 'Bread' that came down from Heaven," and were saying: "Isn't this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can He now say, 'I came down from Heaven'?" Jesus responded and said to them: "Don't complain to one another! Nobody is able to come to Me unless the Father Who sent Me draws him, and I will raise him up on the last 'day.' It is written in the Prophets, 'AND THEY WILL ALL BE TAUGHT OF GOD.' Everyone who has heard the Father—and has learned—comes to Me, because no one has seen the Father except the

one who is from the {Living} God. He has seen the Father. Without doubt! Without doubt! I say to you: The one who believes has eternal life. I am the 'Bread of Life.' Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness and died. This One is the 'Bread' Who comes down from Heaven so that whoever eats from Him will not die. I am the 'Living Bread' Who has come down from Heaven. If anyone eats from this 'Bread,' he will live in the Age. But the 'Bread' I will give for the life of the world is also My flesh." Therefore, the Jews were fighting among themselves, saying, "How is this One able to give us His flesh to eat?" Therefore, Jesus said to them: "Without doubt! Without doubt! I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of the man and you drink His blood, you do not have life in yourselves. The one who munches on My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last 'day.' For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. The one who munches on My flesh and drinks My blood remains 'in Me' and I in him. Just as the Living Father sent Me and I live through the Father, so also the one who munches on Me. That one will live through Me. This is the 'Bread' Who came down from Heaven, not like the fathers ate and died. The one who munches on this 'Bread' will live into the Age." He said these things in a synagogue, while teaching in Capernaum.

(John 6:22–59) —my interim translation

Christ is obviously the parabolic "Bread of Life" He talks about in that passage. The parabolic image He has in mind is one in which God "ground up" the Living Word of God and made it into a "loaf" of "bread" that He sent down from Heaven. But unless one is aware that everyone is what he believes, one has no basis on which to understand the parabolic image in which Moses and the other Prophets of Israel depict Christ as the Seed of the Living Word of God (*The Teaching*) that Jesus, speaking parabolically, says God made into a human body. Immediate insight into the mind-set of Christ comes from what Moses explains concerning the first (and Second) *Adam* in this verse:

"Then He humbled you and let you be hungry, and made you eat the manna—which you had not known, and your fathers had not known—in order to make you know that **the man will not live by the bread alone, because the man will live by everything that comes out of the mouth of His Majesty.**"

(Deuteronomy 8:3) —my interim translation

If one knows what the Prophets have said about the man, it is obvious that Moses is referring to things in *The Teaching* related to the Incarnation of “*The Man*” Jesus Christ, “*The Man*” Who came down from Heaven LIKE manna to provide life for those “in Israel.”

Immediately after Moses said that, he gave the Levites responsibility for teaching *The Teaching*. (See *The Mystery of Scripture*, Vol. 1.) That is the one priestly function that Pharisees, like the ignorant Pretenders in the Church in our own day, have always been unaware of. Yet teaching *The Teaching* is the very task that Jesus had in mind when He said “if you had known what is” in Matthew 12:7. The Levites’ failure in regard to that unique priestly responsibility is concisely revealed by Hosea 6:6, the very verse of Scripture Jesus tells the Pharisees they need to look at more closely:

*What will I do to You, Ephraim?
What will I do to You, Judah?
Your lovingkindness is like a morning cloud,
Like the dew that goes away early.
Therefore, I will cut into pieces by the Prophets;
I will kill them by the statements of My mouth;
And Your judgments are: A Light is going out.
Because I desire lovingkindness and not a sacrifice,
And knowledge of God rather than a burnt offering.
But they, like Adam, transgressed a covenant;
A name, they acted deceitfully.
(Hosea 6:4–7) —my interim translation*

The point of that passage is straightforward enough for anyone with insight to understand: God did not ordain the Levitical priesthood to pompously and piously conduct the *parabolic pantomimes* that Moses instituted by offering *physical* sacrifices in the Tabernacle. Their primary responsibility was the one they consistently ignored: They were supposed to **hand down** *The Teaching of Moses* that those *parabolic pantomimes* illustrated. (See *The Mystery of Scripture*, Vol. 1.)

Jesus was pointing out the one thing everyone should note well: A slavishly stupid reliance on rituals has no value whatsoever in God’s sight if those rituals are not accompanied by an understanding of *The Teaching* that explains their *meaning and significance*. That is, you can be baptized, take communion, and go to church every Sunday until Hell freezes over, but those *rituals* won’t gain you one ounce of favor with God if you don’t know *why* God would have you do

them. That is because God has no interest in *what you do*; His concern is *Who you know*. If you do not know Jesus Christ, the *Living Word of God* (the One Who is the Truth of *The Teaching* God would have you understand) you are headed for Hell in a handbasket of your own making.

Hosea is merely making the point that, when the priests failed to **hand down** *The Teaching* as Moses commanded them, God sent the Prophets to speak to them cryptically in terms of the *parabolic imagery* of *The Teaching* so that the priests—because they had lost *The Teaching*—would not understand. (See *The Way, The Truth, The Life*.) *Parabolically* speaking, God did exactly what He said He would do:

*Therefore, I will cut into pieces by the Prophets;
I will kill them by the statements of My mouth;
And Your judgments are: A Light is going out.
(Hosea 6:5) —my interim translation*

If you have any normal brain function remaining—that is, if you have any rational process left that is not completely dominated by an insatiable need for some sort of sensual gratification—you might want to consider the fact that the God Who never changes might be doing exactly the same thing today. After all, the Church lost *The Teaching* nearly eighteen hundred years ago.

In quoting Hosea, Jesus Christ was sarcastically informing the Pharisees that they were just as ignorant in their “knowledge of God” (*The Teaching of Moses*) as the Levitical priests had been in Hosea’s day. None of them had any idea that God considered their mindless and arrogant reliance on rituals to be a total abomination. That can be seen from what Jesus said earlier, when He quoted exactly the same verse:

*And while He was reclining {at the table} in the house, (imagine!) many tax-gatherers and sinners were coming and reclining with Jesus and His disciples. And when the Pharisees saw, they said to His disciples, “Why does your Teacher eat with the tax-gatherers and sinners?” But when He heard, He said: “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who have an illness. **But go and learn what is: ‘I DESIRE COMPASSION AND NOT A SACRIFICE,’ for I did not come to call {those who think they are} righteous, but sinners.”**
(Matthew 9:10–13) —my interim translation*

If one is not aware that Jesus had been explaining to His disciples the *parabolic imagery* in which He is not only “the Son of the man” Adam but also the *Seed* of the *Living Word* of God, what He says to the Pharisees on that occasion does not make a whole lot of sense. That is because He does not expect the Pharisees (or, for that matter, any other imbecile who has no interest in knowing the Truth) to understand what He said. He is ridiculing their ignorance of *The Teaching of Moses* by saying things which could only be understood by His disciples, those to whom He had already explained a good deal of the *parabolic imagery* of *The Teaching*.

To see what Christ was doing, it helps to know that He intentionally provoked a confrontation with the Pharisees over what they considered permissible on the Sabbath. He did that because He had been teaching His disciples those things in *The Teaching of Moses* that are illustrated by the *parabolic image* of the Sabbath “rest” of the seventh “day” of Creation. Matthew confirms that in the verses immediately before the passage from Matthew 12 that I quoted above:

During that time, Jesus, responding, said: “I praise You Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, because You hid these things from {those who are} wise and intelligent, and You revealed them to babes. Yes, Father, because this is what was pleasing before You. Everything has been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Neither does anyone know the Father except the Son—and the one to whom the Son wishes to reveal. Come to Me—everyone who is tired and loaded down—and I will give you ‘rest.’ Take My ‘yoke’ upon You and learn from Me, because I am meek and subservient in the heart; and YOU WILL FIND ‘REST’ IN YOUR SOULS. For My ‘yoke’ is good and My load is light.” (Matthew 11:25–30) —my interim translation

The “these things” to which Christ is referring when He says, “You hid *these things* from {those who are} wise and intelligent,” is *The Teaching* concerning the Sabbath “rest” that Moses and the other Prophets of Israel intentionally concealed in their writings. God hid that Truth in such a way that those who consider themselves to be “wise and intelligent” will never be able to figure it out on their own. He then *delivered* it to Christ by revelation immediately after Christ was baptized by John, just as Christ *delivered* it to the Apostle Paul

(1 Cor. 15:3; Gal. 1:12), who *delivered* it to his disciples (1 Cor. 11:2, 23), who were supposed to *deliver* it to subsequent generations, and so on down to our time. The leaders of the Church failed at that task just as the Levites had done before. Now that Jesus Christ is taking the “seals” off the Scriptures in preparation for Judgment Day, anyone who honestly wants to know the Truth should be able to understand it for themselves. Those who know they are not “wise and intelligent” enough to do that will seek out a Teacher who has been called to explain it to them.

It is obvious to everyone—except the imbeciles, idiots, and morons among us—that the Church somehow lost the Truth somewhere along the way. At least that is the absolutely preposterous charge the leaders of the Protestant Reformation brought against the Roman Catholic Church. But who am I to say? If you are “wise and intelligent” enough to know better, I am sure you will continue to believe whatever makes you feel comfortable. Only those who are *parabolically* LIKE “babies” will ever come to Jesus Christ and learn from Him anyway. You who are humble enough to do that will suddenly find the “yoke” of Christ becomes the “rest” of the eternal Sabbath “in your souls.” That is the *parabolic imagery* the author of the Book of Hebrews had in mind when he issued this warning:

Therefore, let us fear lest, giving up a promise of entering His rest, any of you would think so as to arrive too late. For we are also those who have had good news proclaimed just as they were. But the word of hearing did not benefit them, not having been joined to belief in those who heard. For the ones who have believed are entering the rest just as He has said, “JUST AS I SWORE IN MY WRATH: ‘{I swear} THEY WON’T ENTER MY REST!’” Yet the works have been done from world’s foundation, for thus He has said somewhere concerning the seventh: “AND GOD RESTED IN THE SEVENTH DAY FROM ALL HIS WORKS.” And in this {statement} again, “{I swear:} THEY WON’T ENTER MY REST!” Therefore, since it remains for some to enter into it, and those who had good news proclaimed earlier did not enter because of unbelief, He again appoints a certain day—“Today”—saying by David after such a long time just as had been said before: “TODAY, IF YOU SHOULD HEAR HIS VOICE, DON’T HARDEN YOUR HEARTS.” For if Joshua had given them rest, He would not have spoken concerning another {rest} after those days. Consequently, a Sabbath rest remains for the People of God. For the One who has

entered His rest has Himself also rested from His works just as the {Living} God rested from His Own. Therefore, let's be zealous to enter that rest so that nobody "FALLS" by the same pattern of unbelief. (Hebrews 4:1-11) —my interim translation

The basis for the *parabolic image* in which *The Teaching* is depicted as the “yoke” of Jesus Christ is one in which the Believer is also portrayed as a *created being* who is completely under the control of Jesus Christ, the *Living Word of God (The Teaching)*. Abject idiots reject even the mere suggestion that they might be better off submitting themselves to the will of another (especially God) rather than blowing every which “way” the “wind” blows. That is why those who consider themselves “wise and intelligent” are—and will forever remain—total idiots.

By using the phrase “on the Sabbaths” (plural) rather than “on the Sabbath” (singular) in Matthew 12:1 above, Matthew is surreptitiously telling his reader that Jesus went out walking in a wheat field for several Sabbaths in a row, knowing His disciples would “harvest” and eat some of the grain, because He was looking for an opportunity to confront the Pharisees on the issue of what they considered permissible on the Sabbath—that is, on the day of *physical* “rest.” His intent is confirmed by what He did next:

And moving on from there, He went into their synagogue. And just imagine, a man who had a shriveled hand! And they asked Him, saying, “Is it permissible to heal on the Sabbaths?” (So that they could accuse Him.) But He said to them: “What man of you will there be who has one sheep and, if this one should fall into a pit on the Sabbaths, will he not take hold of it and raise it up? So how much different is a man than a sheep? Therefore, it is permissible to do good on the Sabbaths.” Then He said to the man, “Stretch out your hand!” And he stretched it out, and it was restored as sound as the other. But the Pharisees, going out, took council against Him—how they might destroy Him. (Matthew 12:9-14) —my interim translation

The *parabolic* “pit” that Jesus had in mind when He talked about a “sheep” falling into a “pit” is the same *parabolic* “pit” the Prophets talk about the man falling into, which is the same *parabolic* “pit” into which those who are *parabolically* “blind” are still leading those who

are *parabolically* “blind” (Matt. 15:14; Luke 6:39). But one has no way of knowing what Jesus had in mind when He said that unless one knows that the verb translated “raise up” is an ordinary Greek verb that is routinely used in the New Testament to speak of the resurrection of the dead (Matt. 9:25; 10:8; 11:5; 14:2; 16:21; 17:9, 23; 20:19; 27:52, 63; 28:6-7; 1 Cor. 15:35; et. al.). Even then, the point that Jesus makes will be completely lost on those who fail to understand that He always spoke *parabolically*, as should be obvious from the fact that He consistently used words that readily lent themselves to being used as double entendres.

For the benefit of those who are new to *parabolic imagery*, the Resurrection of the Righteous will occur (*parabolically*) at dawn on the seventh *parabolic* “day” of Creation—the “day” when the *Living Word of God* finally “rests” after completing His one remaining “work.” *Parabolically* speaking, however, that “day” has already “dawned” on those who are “in Christ”—that is, on those True Believers who have already begun to “walk in” the “newness of life” they will experience on that Great Day (Rom. 6:1-10). That eternal Sabbath is the “day” the Prophet Malachi *parabolically* describes this way:

“For behold, the day is coming, burning like a furnace; and all the arrogant and every evildoer will be chaff; and the day that is coming will set them ablaze,” says the LORD of hosts, “so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. But for you who fear My name the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings; and you will go forth and skip about like calves from the stall. And you will tread down the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day which I am preparing,” says the LORD of hosts. (Malachi 4:1-3)

Give “the man” a Hand!

Knowing that Matthew reveals Jesus was in the process of explaining the *parabolic imagery* that the Prophet Isaiah used in Isaiah 55:6-56:2 makes it easier to see that He must have continued right on explaining these things:

“Don’t let the son of the foreigner who has joined himself to His Majesty say: ‘His Majesty will certainly separate me from His People!’

Don't let the eunuch say, 'Look! I'm a dry tree!'
 Because this is what His Majesty has said:
'For the eunuchs who guard My Sabbaths
 And choose what I desire,
 And hold My covenant fast,
I'll give them—in My house and in My walls—a hand,
And a Name better than sons and better than daughters!
I'll give him an eternal Name that won't be cut off!
 The sons of foreigners who join themselves to His Majesty
 To serve Him, to love The Name of His Majesty,
 and to be His slaves?
All who guard a Sabbath rather than pollute it?
 And those who hold My covenant fast?
 I'll bring them to the Mountain of My Holy Place,
 And I'll make them joyful in the house of My prayer!
 Their whole offerings and their sacrifices
 are acceptable on My altar,
 Because My house will be called a House of Prayer
 for all the peoples!"

(Isaiah 56:3–7) —my interim translation

In that passage, the Prophet says quite a few things that don't make a whole lot of sense according to our *modern Western* mind-set, do they? The Truth is, they wouldn't have made much sense to someone in Isaiah's time either. But that is only because Isaiah is describing something that folks in his day probably considered extremely unlikely, or at the very least, highly ridiculous. After all, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that the Prophets served did not normally go around "making a name" for folks who needed one but couldn't "make" one for themselves.

I have already explained that "The Name" Isaiah has in mind is Jesus Christ. I have also told you the biblical custom by which one *idiomatically* "makes a name" (literally "engenders a son") for someone else is commonly called "levirate marriage." You can find that practice described fairly well in the Book of Ruth. (See "Questions & Answers," *The Voice of Elijah*®, April 1997.) If you care to check further, you will also find *the promise* that God made to David in 2 Samuel 7 included *the promise* that He would one day "make a name," "build a house," and "raise up a seed" for David as well. But that was only because He knew David would die a long time before he ever needed someone to "make a name" for him.

God *fulfilled the promise* He made to David when He *literally* engendered a Son ("made a name," "built a

house," "raised up a seed") for David through the Virgin Mary. Then He *parabolically* "made a name" ("built a house," "raised up a seed") for Himself by coming back from the dead. But that's another story.

In Isaiah 56, God is extending *the promise* He made to David by including even those folks outside of Israel (the ones who are ordinarily called "Gentiles" by those who are called "Jews"). I say that because you may or may not know that a eunuch could not be a member of Israel (Deut. 23:1). Therefore, just to make sure you are able to understand what God is *promising* Gentiles ("the sons of foreigners"), eunuchs, and everybody else who, for some reason, find themselves excluded from Israel, I should probably tell you the Hebrew idiom "give a hand" is equivalent in *meaning* to the three Hebrew idioms "build a house," "make a name," and "raise up a seed."

To understand the *parabolic imagery* that stands behind the Hebrew idiom "give a hand," one needs to know that—*euphemistically* speaking—a eunuch does not have a fully functional "hand." So he obviously cannot "build a house," "raise up a seed," or "make a name" for himself. He needs a "redeemer" to do that for Him, and his redeemer "engenders a son" for him by "giving him a hand." That is exactly what God *promised* He would—*parabolically*—do for David and for everybody outside of Israel "who join themselves to His Majesty." That is why the Prophet Isaiah quite often mentions the fact that God is the "Redeemer" of Israel. He has in mind the fact that God "redeemed" Israel when He "built a house," "made a name," and "*raised up a Seed*" for the man Israel on the third day. But the Prophets intentionally hid that fact from fools by making them think they were *talking about* the members of Israel when they were actually *talking about* "The Man" Israel.

Since I have already explained why the ancients were concerned about having someone to "carry *The Name*," I'll say no more about that here. (See "The Sad, Sordid History of the People of God," *The Voice of Elijah*®, July 1996, and "So Why Would a Nomad 'Build a House' and Settle Down?" *The Voice of Elijah*®, October 1997.) My only concern is that you understand Jesus was explaining such things to His disciples, all the while referring to Himself as "the Son of the man" Adam, because He wanted them to understand the *parabolic imagery* He had in mind when He applied that title to Himself.

Out of the Mouth of Babes

Now that I have explained what the Prophet Isaiah said about “the Son of Adam” Who would also be “*The Name*” of God, it becomes a bit easier for those who believe to understand what some of the other Prophets had in mind when they *talk about* the same things. Here is a short psalm in which the Prophet who wrote it marvels at the things God plans to do by sending His *Living Word* down to Earth:

For the choir director: On the Gittith.

A Psalm to David {the Messiah}

Your Majesty, our Lord:

How majestic is Your Name in all the Earth—

{The One} Who will bestow Your splendor on Heaven!

From {the} mouth of babes and sucklings,

You will lay a strong foundation—

Because of Your adversaries—

To make an enemy and a vengeful one cease.

When I see Your heavens, the works of Your fingers—

A moon and stars that You established—

What is a Man, that You will remember Him?

Even the Son of Adam, that You will take care of Him?

You will even make Him lack little of God!

And You will crown Him with glory and honor.

You will make Him ruler over the works of Your hands;

You will put everything beneath His feet—

Sheep and oxen (all of them),

And even beasts of an open field;

Birds of a Sea of Waters and the fish of the sea

Those passing through paths of seas.

(Psalm 8:1–8) —my interim translation

The Prophet who wrote that psalm is merely musing over the things Moses wrote about “*The Man*” Jesus Christ in Genesis 1:26–28. If you don’t trust my assertion that he is *talking about* Jesus Christ, “the Son of Adam” Who is also “*The Name*” of God, you might want to consult the Lord Himself about that (Matt. 21:16). Or maybe you would prefer to speak with the Apostle Paul (1 Cor. 15:27; Eph. 1:22). But then again, perhaps the author of the Book of Hebrews would be a better choice (Heb. 2:6–8), since he explains a bit more about “*The Name*” and the *significance* of that *parabolic imagery*.

My point is, Jesus, Paul, and the author of the Book of Hebrews obviously understood that Psalm 8 is somehow *talking about* Jesus Christ. I’m just telling you

how, because that’s what God called me to do. You can believe that if you care to, disbelieve it if you dare to. It doesn’t make a whit of difference to me one way or the other. I don’t even care what you do with the information I provide because I’m just doing what God called me to do. But it might make a great deal of difference to you what you do with the Truth, particularly if you should suddenly realize the “gates” of Hades have been locked forever after you settled in, got comfortable, and “went to sleep” on the wrong side of those “bars.” Those who have insight will know exactly what to do with the Truth.

In another psalm, one of the Prophets makes a tongue-in-cheek lament over the fact that God has broken down the “hedge” that has traditionally kept Israel from being overrun by “swine”:

O God {of} hosts! Bring us back,

And make Your face shine,

And we will be saved!

You will cause a Vine to set out from Egypt;

You will drive out nations, and You will plant her.

You have cleared in front of her;

And she will put down roots and fill {the} Earth.

The mountains will be covered by her shadow,

And by her branches, the cedars of God.

She will send out her boughs to a sea,

And to a river, her branches.

Why did You break down her hedges,

So that everyone crossing {on} a “way” plucks her {grapes}?

A swine from a thicket tears at her;

And anything moving around an open field grazes on her.

O God {of} hosts! Please return!

Look down from Heaven, and see, and take care of this Vine!

Even of her Slip that Your right hand has planted;

Even of a Son You have secured for Yourself.

She has been burned with fire;

She has been cut down!

They will perish from the rebuke of Your face.

Let Your hand be on “The Man” of Your right hand—

On the Son of Adam You have secured for Yourself.

Then we will not turn back from You;

Make us live, and we will be called by Your Name.

Your Majesty, God {of} hosts! Bring us back!

Make Your face shine,

And we will be saved!

(Psalm 80:7–19) —my interim translation

One of the keys to understanding what the Prophet says in that psalm resides in the Hebrew verb I have twice translated “have secured.” By using that verb and the literary technique known as “Hebrew parallelism,” the Prophet has identified the “Slip” of the “Vine” of Israel that God “planted” in His “vineyard” as not only “a Son” but also “*The Man of Your right hand*” and “the Son of Adam.” (You might want to make a note of that; it could come in handy later on.)

To understand what the Prophet was *talking about* when he composed Psalm 80, one also needs insight into the unique perspective from which he views two events that were future to his own time. But you should be able to relate to his perspective quite easily: He is *parabolically* depicting the mind-set of a Believer alive at the End of the Age. Consequently, he is looking forward to, and praying for, the End of the Age while looking back and *parabolically* describing the Crucifixion of Christ (*Corporate Israel*) and the history of the Church. All of the things he mentions are future to his own time; but only the Resurrection of the Body of Christ at the End of the Age is future to the point in time from which he views the past.

The Prophet begins by describing the glorious future that awaits the “Vine” of Israel (“The Many” in Christ) after God makes His “face” shine and “she” is resurrected. Then he turns and looks back, lamenting the fact that God has dealt as harshly as He has with His “Vine,” Israel (the Church). He next briefly depicts the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ as God having *parabolically* “planted” a “Slip” from the “Vine” that Israel was before He “cut off” that “Vine.” He also tells us that, by doing that, God “secured” a Son for Himself. Finally, he prays that God will once again pay attention to the “Vine” of Israel (“The Many” in Christ) because “she” is “the Son of Adam You have secured for Yourself.” But here’s the twist: Throughout the psalm, the Prophet never wavers from *parabolically* depicting Jesus Christ (*Corporate Israel*) as *The Teaching*. (Look closely; it’s all there.)

The Septuagint translation of Psalm 80 reveals that the *parabolic* “hedge” the Prophet describes as having been broken down by God is the same *parabolic* “hedge” the Apostle Paul says Christ tore down when He died (Eph. 2:14 quoted above). That *parabolic* “hedge” is the same *metaphoric* “hedge” the Pharisees thought they had made to protect the *oral Torah* that God *handed down* to Moses at Mt. Sinai:

Moses received Torah from Sinai and delivered it to Joshua, and Joshua to the Elders, and the Elders to the Prophets, and the Prophets delivered it to the Men of the Great Synagogue. These said three things; Be deliberate in judging, and raise up many disciples, and make a hedge for the Torah.

(R. Travers Herford, *The Ethics of the Talmud: Sayings of the Fathers*, New York: Schocken Books, 1962, p. 19)

In Psalm 80, the Prophet is *talking about* the fact that Jesus Christ, the “Vine” of Israel that He became (John 15:1–5) after all the other Jews “in Israel” were “cut off from” Israel, was Himself *parabolically* “cut off.” God then “planted” a “Slip” from that “Vine” in His “vineyard.” In so doing, however, God broke down the “hedge” around the “vineyard” that Israel (*The Teaching*) had been so that Gentiles (“swine”) and everybody else in God’s “field” could feed on the “Vine” (*The Teaching*) of Israel.

It is not all that important that one understands every detail in the Prophet’s mocking lament. He is merely ridiculing those like the brainless numskulls in our day who are too dumb to realize they have not a clue as to what the Prophets are even *talking about*. The most seriously deluded will vociferously contend the Scriptures are easy enough for anyone to understand. For that reason one would do well to pay attention to the most chilling part of the Prophet’s psalm. That is the refrain with which he begins and ends his cryptic ridicule of those who have no interest at all in knowing the Truth:

Your Majesty, God {of} hosts! Bring us back!

Make Your face shine,

And we will be saved!

(Psalm 80:19) —my interim translation

I have already explained that God *parabolically* “hid His face” by having the Prophets conceal the Truth in the Hebrew Scriptures. (See “Questions & Answers,” *The Voice of Elijah*®, July 2004.) Anyone with insight into that *parabolic imagery* should be able to see that when God finally grants the Prophet’s request to “make Your face shine,” Pretenders in the Church will have absolutely nothing to celebrate:

They will perish from the rebuke of Your face.

(Psalm 80:16b) —my interim translation ■



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.

Stormy: Immediately after the events of 9/11, I explained what I thought was coming down the pike that would get us to the point where the arrival of the Antichrist would be welcomed by a majority around the world. (See "Is This Enough 'Distress' for You? No Matter; More's Coming," *The Voice of Elijah®*, October 2001.) One of the pivotal events I mentioned at that time was the U.S. invasion of Iraq and the assassination of Saddam Hussein. The invasion has already occurred; however, we are still awaiting the death of Hussein. As I have already conceded, his death may or may not be the result of an assassination. He could just as easily be executed. I still believe the former will occur, just because Isaiah seems to indicate his death results from a desire for revenge on the part of the citizens of Iraq. But I could easily be wrong.

The other impending development that I told you I expected was the coming together of a ten-nation Arab League of Nations. That has not yet happened, but it seems even more likely now that the U.S. has invaded Iraq and Afghanistan. Keep in mind the fact that of the nations most likely to become members of such a League, none have democratic governments. Yet the President of the United States is currently espousing a Middle East policy based on promoting the spread of democracy throughout that region of the world. The explicitly stated goal of that policy is the replacement of autocratic regimes with democratic ones. In my view, the possibility of that occurring among the Arab states is about as likely as frogs flying.

Since 9/11, another fairly obvious trend has surfaced. That is the political rift that now separates Europe from the United States, Great Britain, and Israel. I'm not exactly sure where that is headed, but it appears to have a specific purpose in Satan's plan. To understand it, however, one needs to keep in mind its origin. According to news reports, the current President of the United States evidently believes he has a divine calling to do what he is doing. I believe that is true, but not in the same way that he believes it to be true. God is using various other leaders around the world in exactly the same way He is using the President of the United States. One of those leaders used to be Saddam Hussein. Be that as it may, the religious views of the U.S. President are not shared by the populace of the largely secular nations of Europe. And therein lies the catalyst for some sudden and dramatic changes in the world dynamic.

I would not be surprised to see the cultural and political climate here in the United States take a sudden, hard, conservative/religious turn to the right. Were that to happen, the division between the perceived national interests of the U.S. and specific European nations would grow exponentially. There is already a growing antisemitism in France and Germany; and recent press reports indicate several European governments are becoming more closely aligned with the Arab and Palestinian opposition to Israel. That is a development that bears watching closely. Where Satan is headed with it is anybody's guess at this point. But his goal will undoubtedly become more obvious as we get closer to the End. Along "*The Way*," it is best to keep in mind why Satan is being allowed free reign here at the End:

*A jealous and avenging God is the LORD;
The LORD is avenging and wrathful.
The LORD takes vengeance on His adversaries,
And He reserves wrath for His enemies.
The LORD is slow to anger and great in power,
And the LORD will by no means leave {the guilty} unpunished.
In whirlwind and storm is His way,
And clouds are the dust beneath His feet.
He rebukes the sea and makes it dry;
He dries up all the rivers.
Bashan and Carmel wither;
The blossoms of Lebanon wither.
(Nahum 1:2-4) ■*



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 main article of the July 2004 newsletter, there are several occasions in your translation of Galatians where you say “belief of Christ” or “from belief of Christ” rather than “belief in Christ” or “from belief in Christ.” Since you were talking about prepositional phrases on one of those occasions, it made me wonder if there is a slight difference in meaning between “belief of Christ” and “belief in Christ,” or if they both mean the same thing. Also, in your translation of Romans 7:25–8:10 (p. 9) you say “a Spirit of God” and “a Spirit of Christ” rather than “the Spirit of God” and “the Spirit of Christ.” Since there is a definite article that refers to something specific and a is a more general term that doesn’t, I wasn’t sure what to make of this. Is there a difference between “a Spirit of God” and “the Spirit of God,” or “a Spirit of Christ” and “the Spirit of Christ”?

Elijah: You caught me. In my translation of the biblical text, I sometimes leave little indicators to remind me where there are things in the original text I don’t yet fully understand. Thanks for pointing out a couple. Your question comes at a time when I have just recently understood the mind-set behind one of the grammatical constructions you mention. So you have not only given me an opportunity to explain that anomaly, you have also provided an incentive for me to go back and revisit the other.

I have known for several years that there was a whole lot more going on with the Greek term *pistis* (“faith/belief”) than translators and commentators were willing to acknowledge. I just couldn’t figure out what it was. The more I understood how the Prophets and Apostles used the nuances and idiomatic *meaning* of words and phrases to both conceal and reveal, the more I could see that the ubiquitous “faith in Christ” nonsense was just that—nonsense. Their mindless standardization of the various shades of *meaning* inherent in the biblical text clearly revealed translators didn’t have a clue as to what the biblical text was actually *talking about* in many instances. In some cases, their translations do nothing more than conceal the fact that the biblical text doesn’t have an “in Christ” to be found anywhere near the verse in question.

The first thing you need to know is that the Greek noun *pistis*, which is translated “faith,” that is, “belief,” has both an active and a passive sense. When used in the active sense, the term *means* “belief” and regularly takes a prepositional phrase with the Greek preposition ἐν (“in”) as a modifier which defines the *content* the subject in question (actively) *believes*. Hence, one frequently finds the phrase “faith *in* Christ” used in the New Testament to describe what True Believers (actively) believe. When the Apostles use that phrase, they have in mind the True Believer’s *belief in The Apostolic Teaching* that Jesus Christ is. Prepositional phrases with εἰς (“into”) and ἐπί (“on”) convey other nuances.

The flip side of the active *meaning* of the Greek noun *pistis* is its passive *meaning*. When the Apostles use the term *pistis* with a passive sense in mind, its *meaning* changes from an *active* “belief” to a *passive* “believability”—that is, “the quality or state of being believable” (*Webster’s Third*)—and it is modified by a noun in the genitive case which identifies the person or thing one finds “believable.” (The Greek language uses a nominal case ending called a “genitive” to convey the possessive sense of the English preposition *of*.) That’s where the phrase I translated “belief *of* Jesus Christ” comes in. I was merely using that awkward phrase to remind myself I did not yet fully understand *why* Paul used two entirely different grammatical constructions in the original text. Now I do. When he uses the genitive construction, he is not *talking about* the True Believer’s *belief in The Teaching* that Jesus Christ is; he is instead *talking about* the *believability of The Teaching*.

If you don't have *faith in* what I have just told you because you find the *believability* of my explanation lacking, look up *pistis* for yourself in a Greek lexicon. You will find both its *active* and *passive meanings* listed. That is so because scholars have, for centuries, had access to the information I just passed on to you. *They just haven't known what to do with it.* Too bad. They should have known better. They are, after all, the ones who claim to be "experts."

The author of the Book of Hebrews constructed his entire epistle around the *active* sense of the noun *pistis* ("belief/believability") and the *passive* sense of the adjective *pistos* ("believing/believable"), both of which derive from the same root. Consequently, when commentators read the Book of Hebrews with only the *active* sense of that noun and adjective in mind, the *meaning* and *significance* of the author's exhortation go sailing right over their heads. They don't even grasp the fundamental basis on which he makes his appeal. But True Believers will understand all that and more before all is said and done here at the End. Then they will have a solid *belief in The Teaching* because they have seen (with the "eyes" of their "heart") the *believability of The Teaching*—keeping in mind, of course, the fact that, *parabolically speaking*, Jesus Christ is *The Teaching*.

The second idiosyncrasy you noticed in my translation is a bit more difficult to explain. The short answer is, I don't know—yet. What I do know is this: The authors of the Scriptures never say anything casually or without good reason. I say that because I have just recently gone through the entire Book of Hebrews looking at how the author of that text uses quotes from the Greek Septuagint to convey nuances of *meaning* that provide startling insight into his mind-set yet remain completely unstated in the text of his letter. Those things would only be obvious to someone who first understands the *meaning* and *significance* of the Hebrew text which stands behind the Septuagint texts he quotes and then reads along with him in the Septuagint to see how he changes that text or omits portions of it to emphasize the point he is making.

The way the author of the Book of Hebrews uses the Septuagint text is somewhat LIKE the authors of the New Testament using the Greek term *kurios* ("Lord") as a title of Christ. If one does not know where that title originates in the Septuagint translation and how that Greek translation applies it to the original Hebrew text, one certainly has no idea what mind-set the Early

Church had in regard to the use of *kurios* ("Lord") as a title of Christ. You will find that I (sometimes) translate the term as "His Majesty." That should give you a clue.

To get back to your second question, I translated Romans 8:9 as "*a Spirit of God*" and "*a Spirit of Christ*" because that is what the Greek text actually says. Most translators don't bother trying to understand what Paul *meant* by that indefinite phrase because "everybody knows" God only has one "Spirit"—that is, "the" Holy Spirit. Therefore, "everybody knows" that "Spirit of God" should only be referred to as "*the Spirit of God*." The only problem in that regard is the Scriptures quite often indicate that what "everybody knows" is not entirely true. Take, for instance, these texts:

For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!"
(Romans 8:15)

For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which {exists} among you, and your love for all the saints, do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention {of you} in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him.
(Ephesians 1:15-17)

Unless I am mistaken, Paul is *talking about "the Spirit of God"* in both of those instances. So why does he say, "*a spirit*" instead of "*the Spirit*"? And why do translators not capitalize the word "spirit" in those two verses to indicate that Paul is actually *talking about "the Spirit of God/Christ"*? Perhaps it is because they don't understand the relationship that exists between the "messengers" of God and their *delivery* of "*the Spirit of God*" as "*a Spirit of God*."

That's something else the author of the Book of Hebrews taught me. I would have had no reason at all to look into the role that the Angel ("messenger") of the Lord played in the Passover Parable had he not spent the first two chapters of his work emphasizing the contrast between "*The Way*" God spoke to the sons of Israel in the Old Testament and "*The Way*" He speaks to Believers now. He has a few things to say that the pulpit parrots who ignorantly claim "God said to me" need to hear. But I have no doubt they lack ears to hear. They are too busy telling everybody what God said.

Now that I have muddied the waters by telling you all that, I should also tell you I am not denying the fact that God only has “one” “Spirit,” which is, in fact, *the* Holy Spirit. But let me remind you that we are *talking about* a “spirit” in terms of what the first-century Greeks understood a “spirit” to be. So let’s not have any of this mystical haunted house goofiness where God is imagined to be an ethereal Being Who suddenly comes floating in out of nowhere. The “Spirit” of God is *The Living Word of Truth* Who enters the “heart” of a person through the person’s ear.

Provided a person has an ear to hear and a “heart” fertile enough to believe, “the” Word of Truth the person has heard takes up residence in his “heart” and that person becomes a bit more LIKE “the” Word of Truth he has heard. Has any person ever heard the totality of “the” Word of Truth that God is? I seriously doubt it. So why can we not say such a person has in his “heart” merely “a” (part of the) Word of “the” Truth that God is rather than “the” (totality of the) Word of Truth that God is? Anyone who wants to reject that notion outright really should pay more attention to Paul’s use of “*the* Spirit” and “*a* Spirit” in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14. They might learn something.

The point I am making has to do with nuances. If one wants to bulldoze his way through the Scriptures and think he understands the *meaning* and *significance* of everything he reads there, by all means, let him wear the cap of a dunce. (It should fit him perfectly.) I have already shown how “conventional wisdom” doesn’t even make it past Genesis 1:26–27 without making fools out of all those who blindly accept what “everybody knows” that passage is *talking about*. The mistaken assumptions of hell-bent fools do nothing more than grease the skids on which they are sliding off into the Pit. If someone loves the Truth enough to actually want to understand what the Scriptures *mean* by what they *say*, he must first take on an alien mind-set, one that died some eighteen hundred years ago when the Early Church lost *The Apostolic Teaching*. That is the mind-set I have been called to *restore* and teach.

In the mind-set reflected in the Scriptures, extremely slight nuances of *meaning* and vivid *parabolic imagery* open up a whole new realm of thought in which all Believers and God Himself become “one in Christ,” the One Who is the *Living Word of God* to which they have responded in humility and contriteness of “heart.” As the Apostle Paul puts it:

*Wherefore remember that you—formerly the Gentiles (in the flesh), {that is,} those who are called “uncircumcision” by those who are called “the circumcision” (made in the flesh by hand)— that you were at that time outside of Christ, excluded from the citizenship of Israel and strangers to the covenants of **the promise**, not having a hope and without God in the world. But now in Messiah Jesus, you—those who were once far off—have been brought near by the blood of the Messiah. For He is Himself our peace, **the One Who made both One** and, by tearing down the partition-wall of the “hedge,” the hostility, in His flesh—{that is,} by voiding the Law of the commandments {given} by decrees so that (1) in Himself He might create the two into one New Man, {thereby} making peace, and (2) He might reconcile them both to the {Living} God in one Body, by killing the hostility in Himself. So coming, HE PREACHED {THE GOSPEL}—PEACE TO YOU, TO THOSE FAR OFF, AND PEACE TO THOSE NEAR—so that through Him we both have access to the Father in one “Spirit.” Consequently, you are, therefore, no longer strangers and aliens; but you are fellow citizens of the Holy Ones and members of the “House” of the {Living} God—having been “built” on the “foundation” of the Apostles and Prophets—a Corner {Stone} being Messiah Jesus Himself, in Whom a whole “building” (being fitted carefully together) is growing into a “Holy Temple” in His Majesty, in Whom also we are being “built” together into a “dwelling-place” of the {Living} God in a “Spirit.”*
(Ephesians 2:11–22) —my interim translation

Let me show you a few places where translators have, on a few occasions, clearly observed a nuance of the Greek language similar to the contrast that exists between “*a* Spirit of God” and “*the* Spirit of God,” only to ignore it completely on others. In the following passage, “*the* Son of God” has been accurately translated:

*But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest said to Him, “I adjure You by the living God, that You tell us whether You are the Christ, **the Son of God.**”*
(Matthew 26:63)

*And whenever the unclean spirits beheld Him, they would fall down before Him and cry out, saying, “You are **the Son of God!**”*
(Mark 3:11)

And demons also were coming out of many, crying out

and saying, "You are **the Son of God!**" And rebuking them, He would not allow them to speak, because they knew Him to be the Christ.
(Luke 4:41)

"If You are the Christ, tell us." But He said to them, "If I tell you, you will not believe; and if I ask a question, you will not answer. But from now on THE SON OF MAN WILL BE SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND OF the power OF GOD." And they all said, "Are You **the Son of God**, then?" And He said to them, "Yes, I am."
(Luke 22:67–70)

"And I have seen, and have borne witness that this is **the Son of God.**"
(John 1:34)

Nathanael answered Him, "Rabbi, You are **the Son of God**; You are the King of Israel."
(John 1:49)

"Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of **the Son of God**; and those who hear shall live."
(John 5:25)

But when Jesus heard it, He said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that **the Son of God** may be glorified by it."
(John 11:4)

She said to Him, "Yes, Lord; I have believed that You are the Christ, **the Son of God**, {even} He who comes into the world."
(John 11:27)

But these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, **the Son of God**; and that believing you may have life in His name.
(John 20:31)

Those are all accurate translations of the phrase "**the Son of God.**" Now let's look at an instance where translators have also accurately translated the plural form of the indefinite phrase "**a son of God**":

And Jesus said to them, "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage, but those who are considered worthy

to attain to that age and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage; for neither can they die anymore, for they are like angels, and are **sons of God**, being sons of the resurrection."
(Luke 20:34–36)

Jesus has just told us He is not **the only** Son of God. The Truth is, He is "**the only begotten** Son of God" among many other "sons of God":

"He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of **the only begotten Son of God.**"
(John 3:18)

All of the translations above are accurate translations of the two phrases "**a son of God**" and "**the Son of God.**" But the translations below do not accurately reflect what the biblical text actually says. They are instead merely a reflection of the mistaken assumptions of the translator. In each case, the text should have been translated "**a Son of God,**" which is a perfectly acceptable translation since we know that Jesus Christ is (*parabolically speaking*) not **the only** Son of God:

And the tempter came and said to Him, "If You are **the Son of God**, command that these stones become bread." But He answered and said, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.'" Then the devil took Him into the holy city; and he had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are **the Son of God** throw Yourself down; for it is written, 'HE WILL GIVE HIS ANGELS CHARGE CONCERNING YOU'; and 'ON {their} HANDS THEY WILL BEAR YOU UP, LEST YOU STRIKE YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE.'" (Matthew 4:3–6)

And those passing by were hurling abuse at Him, wagging their heads, and saying, "You who {are going to} destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save Yourself! If You are **the Son of God**, come down from the cross." In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking {Him,} and saying, "He saved others; He cannot save Himself. He is the King of Israel; let Him now come down from the cross, and we shall believe in Him. HE TRUSTS IN GOD; LET HIM DELIVER {Him} now, IF HE TAKES PLEASURE IN HIM; for He said, 'I

am *the Son of God.*"

(Matthew 27:39–43)

Now the centurion, and those who were with him keeping guard over Jesus, when they saw the earthquake and the things that were happening, became very frightened and said, "Truly this was *the Son of God!*"

(Matthew 27:54)

And when the centurion, who was standing right in front of Him, saw the way He breathed His last, he said, "Truly this man was *the Son of God!*"

(Mark 15:39)

And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy offspring shall be called *the Son of God.*"

(Luke 1:35)

And the devil said to Him, "If You are *the Son of God*, tell this stone to become bread."

(Luke 4:3)

And he led Him to Jerusalem and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are *the Son of God*, throw Yourself down from here."

(Luke 4:9)

Jesus answered them, "I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?" The Jews answered Him, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out {to be} God." Jesus answered them, "Has it not been written in your Law, 'I SAID, YOU ARE GODS'? If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), do you say of Him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am *the Son of God*'?"

(John 10:32–36)

The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and by that law He ought to die because He made Himself out {to be} *the Son of God.*"

(John 19:7)

The standardized translation "*the Son of God*" that translators favor completely ignores the various

nuances conveyed by the biblical text. For example, when Satan calls Christ "*a son of God*" rather than "*the Son of God*," he is mocking Him. Satan obviously knows Who Jesus Christ is, since the biblical text indicates his demon friends readily address Christ as "*the Son of God*." On the other hand, those present at the Crucifixion call Christ "*a son of God*" because they are convinced of His divinity but know nothing of the theology inherent in the *parabolic imagery* in which Christ is Israel, "*the only begotten* (Firstborn) Son of God."

Let me show you one other similar example where our *modern Western* mind-set completely scotches the nuance of *meaning* conveyed by the biblical text:

"But if I cast out demons by *the finger of God*, then the kingdom of God has come upon you."

(Luke 11:20)

First of all, it should be obvious that Jesus is speaking *parabolically*—or at least *metaphorically*—when He anthropomorphizes God by attributing to Him a "finger." That is, even a total idiot should be able to recognize that the Creator of Heaven and Earth is not a man with *literal* fingers. But the English reader has no way of knowing that the Greek text does not actually say "*the finger of God*," or that it really says "*a finger of God*." The translator translated the text the way he did because we as *modern Westerners* mentally gloss over the fact that a person has more than just one finger and mentally assume God must have used "the" index finger. The *ancient oriental* Greeks did not.

The point is, when Christ is referred to as "*a son of God*," there is a completely different mental concept standing behind that phrase than when someone refers to Him as "*the Son of God*." The same applies to "*a Spirit of God/Christ*" in Romans 8:9. One may not completely understand what the Apostle Paul has in mind when he says "*a*" and not "*the*," but one should certainly not ignore it or, worse yet, deny that it exists. In case you weren't listening, what I just said was a warning. Those who refuse to pay attention to and accept the nuances (and idiomatic expressions) of the biblical text will never be able to take on "the heart of the fathers."

Now, having said all that, I realize some zealous pseudo-scholar with an ego so large that it hampers his ability to think straight is undoubtedly going to claim that I am ignoring one of the many "Hebraisms,"

“Aramaisms,” or “Semiticisms” in the Greek text of the Gospels, so let me briefly address that issue. In the Hebrew and Aramaic, as well as in semitic languages in general, phrases like “the Son of God,” “the Spirit of God,” and “the finger of God” are normally expressed by means of a grammatical construction known as the “construct state.”

The “construct state” expresses possession by placing the possession noun immediately before the possessor noun, with no other word in between. However, the two nouns in a “construct state” must be either both definite or both indefinite. Consequently, this rigid grammatical expression can only convey the meaning “a son of a god” or “the son of the God.” It cannot convey the meaning “a son of the God” or “the son of a god.” That is so because the definiteness or indefiniteness of the second noun is attributed to the first noun as well. So, for example, the Hebrew has either *house the man* to express “the house of the man” or *house man* to express “a house of a man.”

The grammatical peculiarity I have just explained does not apply to the Greek language of the New Testament, because that language has a whole lot more flexibility due to its use of case endings on nouns. For that reason all this linguistic jibberish is relevant only because some scholars think the four Gospels and the Book of Acts were written in Aramaic and later translated into Greek. Others claim that at the very least these five works were written in Greek by someone thinking in Aramaic. Still others insist that only the words of Jesus are Greek translations of an Aramaic original.

Be that as it may, all of these folks claim they see “Hebraisms,” “Aramaisms,” or “Semiticisms” (Hebrew and Aramaic being “semitic” languages). That is, they find grammatical expressions characteristic of the Hebrew Scriptures and the Aramaic language—the language spoken by first-century Jews—scattered throughout the first five books of the New Testament. I’m not sure that I agree with any part of this theory. I tend to think it may be—like the ignorant cut-and-paste JEDP theory that most liberal scholars still apply to the Pentateuch—the product of “scholars” who have entirely too much time on their hands and no insight at all into the peculiar mind-set of the authors of the Scriptures.

Concerning the question you asked, there is no serious challenge to the Apostle Paul’s ability to express things in the Greek language without resorting to the

Aramaic vernacular of the Jews. He is, after all, the one who said “a Spirit of God” and “a Spirit of Christ” in Romans 8:9. And examples abound, even in the Book of Romans, where Paul uses definite and indefinite forms where he wants to *make an* extremely fine *distinction between* things he considers important. I have shown you how he does that with “sin” and “the sin,” “law” and “the Law,” to mention but two examples.

If one wants to get overly technical in regard to the Gospels, Matthew 27:43 doesn’t even fit into the rigid “construct state” form required of the “Hebraism” I explained. The text *literally* says Christ said, “Of God I am a *son*.” I don’t see the fixed “construct state” word order *son God* there, do you? Moreover, Christ didn’t use the definite article to say “the Son of the God” as is normal when the authors of Scripture *mean* for us to understand “the Son of God.” So much for scholarly nonsense and the mistaken assumptions of translators.

Editor: The Scriptures tell us that King Solomon, in his time, was the wisest of all men and that he spoke 3000 proverbs (1 Kin. 4:29–32). On numerous occasions you have said that Solomon’s wisdom came from his knowledge of The Teaching of Moses. By the end of his life, however, Solomon had become a fool and was doing “evil in the sight of the Lord” because he had “turned away from the Lord” (1 Kin. 11:6–9), which is to say he had “turned away from” The Teaching of Moses. I know you have explained Solomon’s folly in The Next Step program, but I think our readers need to hear how it is possible for a wise person—that is, someone who understands the Truth of The Teaching—to abandon The Teaching and thereby “turn away from” the Lord. Would you please explain Solomon’s folly to us?

Elijah: The only people who have any need at all to understand the things you mention are those who have heard a coherent explanation of *The Apostolic Teaching*. That is so because one cannot “turn away from” something one has never heard and understood. So far, I have not explained *The Teaching* to anyone, certainly not the readers of your newsletter. The most anyone outside of The Next Step program has heard are the bits and pieces scattered around in *The Voice of Elijah*®; *The Voice of Elijah*® *Update*; *Not All Israel Is Israel*; *The Way, The Truth, The Life* seminar tapes; *The Mystery of Scripture, Volume 1*; and the two seminars from which I have yet to publish transcripts.

True Believers who actually have a desire to understand the Truth have most likely put most of those bits and pieces together themselves and are still hungry for more. They can rest assured that I will tie up all the loose ends for them sometime in the future. But not now. It is enough for them to know that God does not judge a person on the basis of the amount of Truth he *understands*; He judges strictly on the basis of whether a person *acts in accordance with* whatever small amount of the Truth he has had opportunity to *hear*. That is, after all, what Jesus was *talking about* when He said this:

And the Lord said, "Who then is the faithful and sensible steward, whom his master will put in charge of his servants, to give them their rations at the proper time? Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes. Truly I say to you, that he will put him in charge of all his possessions. But if that slave says in his heart, 'My master will be a long time in coming,' and begins to beat the slaves, {both} men and women, and to eat and drink and get drunk; the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect {him,} and at an hour he does not know, and will cut him in pieces, and assign him a place with the unbelievers. And that slave who knew his master's will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, shall receive many lashes, but the one who did not know {it,} and committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will receive but few. And from everyone who has been given much shall much be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more."

(Luke 12:42-48)

My point is, I have a solemn obligation to make the Truth of *The Teaching* available to anyone who sincerely wants to understand it; and I plan to do exactly what God called me to do. But Jesus clearly warned His disciples against the danger of explaining the Truth to people who have no ears to hear when He said this:

"Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces."

(Matthew 7:6)

If one understands that the source of all holiness is the *Living Word of God* that Jesus Christ is, what

Jesus said on that occasion takes on a bit more heft. The Apostles and the other leaders of the Early Church accomplished what God demands in that regard through a practice known as "excommunication." I find it easier to just let people exclude themselves.

Anyone who wants to hear how it is possible to "turn away from" the Truth need only read the Book of Hebrews anyway. The author of that epistle clearly and repeatedly warns his reader that *hearing* the Truth is not enough; only those who *believe* and then *remember* so as to *act in accordance with* what they have heard will be saved. Here is my translation of a couple of his more dire admonitions:

*Therefore, leaving the Word concerning the beginning of the Messiah, let's carry on to completion, not again laying a foundation (1) of repentance from dead works and (2) of faith toward God, (3) of teaching concerning (a) baptisms, as well as (b) laying on of hands, (c) resurrection of the dead, and (d) eternal judgment. And this {carrying on to completion} we will do only if the {Living} God allows. **For it is impossible, for those who have been given light once [those who have (1) tasted the gift of Heaven, (2) been made to share a Holy Spirit, and (3) tasted a good statement of God and powers of a coming Age], and fall aside, to renew them again to repentance. They are crucifying the Son of the {Living} God in themselves and making a show of {Him}!** For ground that drinks the rain that often comes upon it, and produces fodder convenient for use by those for whom it is being tilled, partakes of a **blessing** from the {Living} God. But if it produces thorns and thistles, it is worthless and near to cursed. **Its completion is to be burned.** But we have been persuaded concerning you, brothers, of much better things (and the coming salvation), even though we are talking like this.*
(Hebrews 6:1-9) —my interim translation

For if we go on sinning of our own free will after receiving the knowledge of the Truth, there remains no further sacrifice for sins, but a certain terrifying expectation of judgment and A JEALOUS FIRE WHICH IS GOING TO CONSUME THOSE WHO OPPOSE. Anyone who sets aside Moses' law dies without mercy on {the testimony of} two or three witnesses. Of how much worse retribution do you think the one who (1) trampled on the Son of the {Living} God, (2) considered as common the blood of the covenant by which he was made holy, and (3) insulted

*the Spirit of favor will be deemed worthy? For we know the One Who said, "VENGEANCE IS MINE; I WILL REPAY." And again, "HIS MAJESTY WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE." **Falling into the hands of a Living God is terrifying.** (Hebrews 10:26–31) —my interim translation*

For what it's worth, the Protestant Reformer John Calvin—the great hero of the once-saved-always-saved crowd—agrees completely with my understanding that those two passages *mean* exactly what they appear to say. He says this:

*God indeed declares, that he would have all men to repent, and addresses exhortations in common to all; their efficacy, however, depends on the Spirit of regeneration. It were easier to create us at first, than for us by our own strength to acquire a more excellent nature. Wherefore, in regard to the whole process of regeneration, it is not without cause we are called God's "workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. ii. 10). Those whom God is pleased to rescue from death, he quickens by the Spirit of regeneration; not that repentance is properly the cause of salvation, but because, as already seen, it is inseparable from the faith and mercy of God; for, as Isaiah declares, "The Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob." **This, indeed, is a standing truth, that wherever the fear of God is in vigour, the Spirit has been carrying on his saving work.** Hence, in Isaiah, while believers complain and lament that they have been forsaken of God, they set down the supernatural hardening of the heart as a sign of reprobation. The Apostle also, intending to exclude apostates from the hope of salvation, states, as the reason, that it is impossible to renew them to repentance (Heb. vi. 6); that is, God by renewing those whom he wills not to perish, gives them a sign of paternal favour, and in a manner attracts them to himself, by the beams of a calm and reconciled countenance; on the other hand, by hardening the reprobate whose impiety is not to be forgiven, he thunders against them. **This kind of vengeance the Apostle denounces against voluntary apostates,** (Heb. x. 29), who, in falling away from the faith of the gospel, mock God, insultingly reject his favour, profane and trample under foot the blood of Christ, nay, as far as in them lies, crucify him afresh. Still, he does not, as some austere persons preposterously insist, leave no hope of pardon to voluntary sins, but shows that*

apostacy being altogether without excuse, it is not strange that God is inexorably rigorous in punishing sacrilegious contempt thus shown to himself. For, in the same Epistle, he says, that "it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away to renew them again to repentance, seeing they crucify the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame" (Heb. vi. 4–6). And in another passage, "If we sin willingly, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment," &c. (Heb. xi. 25, 26) [sic: Heb. 10:26–27].

(John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, Translated by Henry Beveridge, 1845, Book III, Chapter III)

Editor: *If the genealogical account in Matthew 1:2–6a is compared with the genealogical account in Luke 3:31b–34a, one finds a slight difference in the two as it relates to the generations from Abraham to David. The difference is that Luke includes an extra person—Admin, the son of Ram (Luke 3:33)—in Abraham's family tree whereas Matthew doesn't mention Admin and lists Amminadab (Admin's son by Luke's account) as the son of Ram (Matt. 1:4). Matthew makes a special point of telling us that the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen (Matt. 1:17) yet by Luke's account there were apparently fifteen generations. Did Matthew intentionally drop Admin from his account in order to produce a list with fourteen generations? If so, Matthew must have seen some significance in the number fourteen. What is the significance and why did Matthew choose to exclude Admin from his genealogical account rather than someone else?*

Elijah: First, let's look at the genealogy of Christ that Matthew gives in his Gospel:

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. To Abraham was born Isaac; and to Isaac, Jacob; and to Jacob, Judah and his brothers; and to Judah were born Perez and Zerah by Tamar; and to Perez was born Hezron; and to Hezron, Ram; and to Ram was born Amminadab; and to Amminadab, Nahshon; and to Nahshon, Salmon; and to Salmon was born Boaz by Rahab; and to Boaz was born Obed by Ruth; and to Obed, Jesse; and to Jesse

was born David the king. And to David was born Solomon by her {who had been the wife} of Uriah; and to Solomon was born Rehoboam; and to Rehoboam, Abijah; and to Abijah, Asa; and to Asa was born Jehoshaphat; and to Jehoshaphat, Joram; and to Joram, Uzziah; and to Uzziah was born Jotham; and to Jotham, Ahaz; and to Ahaz, Hezekiah; and to Hezekiah was born Manasseh; and to Manasseh, Amon; and to Amon, Josiah; and to Josiah were born Jeconiah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon. And after the deportation to Babylon, to Jeconiah was born Shealtiel; and to Shealtiel, Zerubbabel; and to Zerubbabel was born Abihud; and to Abihud, Eliakim; and to Eliakim, Azor; and to Azor was born Zadok; and to Zadok, Achim; and to Achim, Eliud; and to Eliud was born Eleazar; and to Eleazar, Matthan; and to Matthan, Jacob; and to Jacob was born Joseph the husband of Mary, by whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ. Therefore all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations; and from the deportation to Babylon to {the time of} Christ fourteen generations.

(Matthew 1:1–17)

Now let's look at the relevant passage from the Gospel of Luke:

And when He began His ministry, Jesus Himself was about thirty years of age, being supposedly {the} son of Joseph, the {son} of Eli, the {son} of Matthat, the {son} of Levi, the {son} of Melchi, the {son} of Jannai, the {son} of Joseph, the {son} of Mattathias, the {son} of Amos, the {son} of Nahum, the {son} of Hesli, the {son} of Naggai, the {son} of Maath, the {son} of Mattathias, the {son} of Semein, the {son} of Josech, the {son} of Joda, the {son} of Joanan, the {son} of Rhesa, the {son} of Zerubbabel, the {son} of Shealtiel, the {son} of Neri, the {son} of Melchi, the {son} of Addi, the {son} of Cosam, the {son} of Elmadam, the {son} of Er, the {son} of Joshua, the {son} of Eliezer, the {son} of Jorim, the {son} of Matthat, the {son} of Levi, the {son} of Simeon, the {son} of Judah, the {son} of Joseph, the {son} of Jonam, the {son} of Eliakim, the {son} of Melea, the {son} of Menna, the {son} of Mattatha, the {son} of Nathan, the {son} of David, the {son} of Jesse, the {son} of Obed, the {son} of Boaz, the {son} of Salmon, the {son} of Nahshon, the {son} of Amminadab, the {son} of Admin, the {son} of Ram, the {son} of Hezron, the {son} of Perez, the {son} of

Judah, the {son} of Jacob, the {son} of Isaac, the {son} of Abraham, the {son} of Terah, the {son} of Nahor, the {son} of Serug, the {son} of Reu, the {son} of Peleg, the {son} of Heber, the {son} of Shelah, the {son} of Cainan, the {son} of Arphaxad, the {son} of Shem, the {son} of Noah, the {son} of Lamech, the {son} of Methuselah, the {son} of Enoch, the {son} of Jared, the {son} of Mahalaleel, the {son} of Cainan, the {son} of Enosh, the {son} of Seth, the {son} of Adam, the {son} of God.

(Luke 3:23–38)

I vaguely recall answering a question similar to the one you just asked, but after looking high and low, I can't find any trace of it. Maybe one of your readers will. I talked about a few things related to the genealogy of Christ in "Questions & Answers," *The Voice of Elijah*®, July 2001. But the closest I came to answering your question was in response to a question you asked in "Questions & Answers," *The Voice of Elijah*®, July 1999. Your question there had to do with the Sermon on the Mount, and I only mentioned Matthew's genealogy tangentially. Here is what I said. I'll boldface the things that are relevant to the question you asked here:

*Matthew begins his Gospel with a genealogy of Jesus Christ. But if you have ever looked closely at that genealogy, you should already know that there is more to it than meets the eye. It clearly differs from the one that Luke includes in his Gospel. That is because Matthew's purpose in writing his Gospel is significantly different than the purpose Luke had when he wrote his. **Luke's focus in writing the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts is on telling us how Jesus Christ—the Heir of the promise—inherited the promise and made it available to all who would believe in Him. By contrast, Matthew tells us how the curse of the Law fell on Jesus Christ—the Israel of God—so that those in Christ might inherit the promise. That is why Matthew's genealogy begins with Abraham and ends with Jesus Christ, while Luke's genealogy begins with Jesus Christ and ends with Adam.** Since those genealogies contain specific details that relate to various aspects of The Teaching, I won't say much more about them here.*

You do need to know a few more things about Matthew's genealogy, however, before you can understand the Sermon on the Mount. First, you must understand it contains the lineage of Joseph, not Mary. And the name Jeconiah (Jehoiachin), which is mentioned in

Matthew 1:11–12, is significant in that it tells us Jesus Christ could never have inherited the promise had He been the biological son of Joseph. Jeremiah tells us God had disqualified Jeconiah and his descendants from ever being the fulfillment of the promise He gave to David (2 Sam. 7):

“As I live,” declares the LORD, “even though Coniah [Jehoiachin] the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah were a signet {ring} on My right hand, yet I would pull you off; and I shall give you over into the hand of those who are seeking your life, yes, into the hand of those whom you dread, even into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of the Chaldeans. I shall hurl you and your mother who bore you into another country where you were not born, and there you will die. But as for the land to which they desire to return, they will not return to it. Is this man Coniah a despised, shattered jar?

Or is he an undesirable vessel?

**Why have he and his descendants been hurled out
And cast into a land that they had not known?**

O land, land, land,

Hear the word of the LORD!

Thus says the LORD,

‘Write this man down childless,

A man who will not prosper in his days;

For no man of his descendants will prosper

Sitting on the throne of David

Or ruling again in Judah.’”

(Jeremiah 22:24–30)

If you were paying close attention when you read Matthew’s genealogy—as you always should be when reading the Scriptures—you probably noticed he concluded the genealogy with this verse:

Therefore all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations; and from the deportation to Babylon to {the time of} Christ fourteen generations.

(Matthew 1:17)

Matthew’s fourteen-generation framework is obviously artificial. I say “obviously” because he intentionally left names out of the first two “fourteens” while making sure the last “fourteen” would appear to have only thirteen names. He did that so ignorant people would ask “Why?”

But most don’t bother. Those who do assume they already know. That’s why they are still ignorant. If they knew why Matthew used the fourteen-generation framework, they would also know he used the obvious omissions in it to draw attention to four of the five names in the genealogy that one needs to consider further: Abraham, David, Jeconiah, and Christ.

Matthew did a nice job of emphasizing the name Jeconiah by diverting your attention from it, didn’t he? He borrowed that technique from Moses and the Prophets. He also tweaked the noses of all who have ever bothered to count the number of “generations” he included in his list. They are all there, in spite of the fact that a fool could drive himself crazy looking for the “generation” that is missing in the final “fourteen.” The missing one is the fifth name in the list of forty-two “generations” that you should note—Mary. If you did not know that The Law of Moses stipulates a woman could stand in such a position, don’t say anything that might disclose your incredible ignorance. Just remind me sometime to tell you why a woman shows up as one “generation” in the final “fourteen.” Matthew gives you a couple of really BIG clues in his “was born ... from” technique and in ALL the other women he mentions—Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and the unmentionable one. His point has to do with how Mary negated the curse that God placed on Jeconiah so that Jesus Christ could be the fulfillment of the promise that God gave to David.

(“Questions & Answers,” **The Voice of Elijah**®, July 1999)

That should answer your question concerning the significance of the number fourteen in Matthew’s genealogy. But I need to correct what I said about Matthew leaving names out of the first two “fourteens.” I should have said “he appears to have intentionally left names out of the first two ‘fourteens.’” That is because it is fairly obvious that he left the three names *Ahaziah*, *Joash*, and *Amaziah* (1 Chron. 3:11–12) out of the second “fourteen,” but he may or may not have left the name *Admin* out of the first “fourteen.” How that name came to be included in Luke’s genealogy is probably the more appropriate question. It does not appear in any of the genealogies in the Old Testament, and the extant Greek manuscripts have such a variety of readings for Luke 3:33 that nobody knows for sure *Admin* should even be there. The committee of scholars assigned the task of determining the original reading did their best. They “adopted what seems to be the least unsatisfactory form of text, a reading that was current in the Alexandrian church at an

early period." (Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, United Bible Societies, New York: 1971, p. 136)

Editor: This question is from a subscriber who, after reading the January 2004 issue of The Voice of Elijah® on marriage, adultery, and becoming one flesh, would like to know how it is possible to "untie" oneself from someone once they have become intimate. I assume this person wants to know how it is possible to get out of a "one-flesh" relationship once sexual intercourse has taken place. To use her words, how do you "clear yourself" once you have become intimate with someone you shouldn't have? Would you, please, respond to this?

Elijah: One of the biggest hurdles we all face in understanding how God thinks in regard to sexual intercourse is Satan's merciless and relentless attempts at using our sexuality to bring us into condemnation. The Truth is, all of the laws in the Old Testament prohibiting sex and nakedness were intended to do nothing more than establish a series of *parabolic pantomimes* which are in turn *meant* to remind us that "the sin" of the man Adam is what got us all into this mess in the first place and "the death" of the Man Jesus Christ is the only thing that will get us out. Therefore, God expects us to be diligent to see to it that we do not commit "the (same) sin" that Adam committed, after we come to a knowledge of the Truth.

On the basis of what I have already explained about the *act* of adultery, it should be obvious that God finds nothing wrong with a man and a woman becoming "one flesh" if the woman is not already "one flesh" with some other man. And God's only concern after a man and a woman become "one flesh" is that they remain "one flesh." If they don't, it can only be that the woman has broken their "one-flesh" union by becoming "one flesh" with another man—that is, by committing the *physical act* of adultery. So, to answer the question, the *act* of adultery—that is, the breakage of the "one-flesh" relationship that occurs when a woman in a "one-flesh" relationship joins herself to another man—is the only way a woman can "untie" herself or "clear herself" from a man with whom she has become "one flesh."

Having said that, however, it is important to remember that God assigns responsibility (guilt) for a woman's *act* of adultery according to who repudiated whom. If the man "sent her away," God considers the

woman free from the "one-flesh" relationship and holds the man responsible (guilty) for *physically* breaking it when she joins herself to another man. In such a case, the woman bears no guilt at all because the man rejected her. In that sense, one could say that the man's repudiation of the woman "unties her" or "clears her" so that she can enter the second "one-flesh" relationship without guilt.

If a woman destroys a "one-flesh" relationship by willingly having sexual intercourse with another man when the first man has not "sent her away," she bears full responsibility (guilt) for her *act* of adultery. In either case, the "one-flesh" relationship she had with the first man has been broken. And no matter who bears responsibility, if they admit their sin, God does forgive adultery. That is, after all, the point of the story about the woman taken in adultery (John 8:1–11).

It is also important to keep in mind that the *act* of adultery is just that: an *act*, a sin, a one-time event. It is not, and does not produce, an on-going *state* in which one is continually sinning. That is, although the *act* of adultery can only be committed against a man with whom a woman involved has become "one flesh," a woman who has voluntarily committed the *act* of adultery does not continue living "in adultery" by remaining with the second man. The Truth is, God expects her to honor the "one-flesh" relationship that she entered when she had sexual intercourse with that man. She would, in fact, commit an even greater sin by returning to the first man. That is because the only on-going sinful *state of being* related to the *act* of adultery is the one created by a woman who returns to a man against whom she has committed adultery. God considers that relationship to be an abomination.

In God's eyes, stealing, killing, and *adultery* are equally offensive. That should be obvious from the fact that all three are found in His BIG TEN—Commandments, that is. But one could (provided he had ears to hear) learn a much needed lesson from the fact that there are seven other Commandments on that list, and the last one has to do with refraining from even LUSTING after things—and women—one doesn't have. (Folks don't like to *talk about* that one, do they?) But the *parabolic pantomime* of the Sabbath *torah* is the most instructive if one honestly wants to understand why God expects Believers to continue to observe the *parabolic pantomime* related to adultery. Both pantomimes continue under the New Covenant, and both have been changed. ■