



# THE VOICE of ELIJAH

Restoring the hearts of the fathers to the children

## There is Nothing Beyond the Life of the Word

If, then, those who have believed have life, what remains beyond the possession of eternal life? Nothing is wanting to faith, as it is perfect and complete in itself. If aught is wanting to it, it is not wholly perfect. But faith is not lame in any respect; nor after our departure from this world does it make us who have believed, and received without distinction the earnest of future good, wait; but having in anticipation grasped by faith that which is future, after the resurrection we receive it as present, in order that that may be fulfilled which was spoken, "Be it according to thy faith." And where faith is, there is the promise; and the consummation of the promise is rest. So that in illumination what we receive is knowledge, and the end of knowledge is rest—the last thing conceived as the object of aspiration.

As, then, inexperience comes to an end by experience, and perplexity by finding a clear outlet, so by illumination must darkness disappear. The darkness is ignorance, through which we fall into sins, purblind as to the truth. Knowledge, then, is the illumination we receive, which makes ignorance disappear, and endows us with clear vision. Further, the abandonment of what is bad is the adopting of what is better. For what ignorance has bound ill, is by knowledge loosed well; those bonds are with all speed slackened by human faith and divine grace, our transgressions being taken away by one Hæonian medicine, the baptism of the Word.

We are washed from all our sins, and are no longer entangled in evil. This is the one grace of illumination, that our characters are not the same as before our washing. And since knowledge springs up with illumination, shedding its beams around the mind, the moment we hear, we who were untaught become disciples. Does this, I ask, take place on the advent of this instruction? You cannot tell the time. For instruction leads to faith, and faith with baptism is trained by the Holy Spirit. For that faith is the one universal salvation of humanity, and that there is the same equality before

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the righteous and loving God, and the same fellowship between Him and all, the apostle most clearly showed, speaking to the following effect: "Before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed, so that the law became our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith; but after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster."

Do you not hear that we are no longer under that law which was accompanied with fear, but under the Word, the master of free choice? Then he subjoined the utterance, clear of all partiality: "For ye are all the children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." There are not, then, in the same Word some "illuminated (gnostics); and some animal (or natural) men;" but all who have abandoned the desires of the flesh are equal and spiritual before the Lord.

And again he writes in another place: "For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free, and we have all drunk of one cup." Nor were it absurd to employ the expressions of those who call the reminiscence of better things the filtration of the spirit, understanding by filtration the separation of what is baser, that results from the reminiscence of what is better. There follows of necessity, in him who has come to the recollection of what is better, repentance for what is worse. Accordingly, they confess that the spirit in repentance retraces its steps.

Clement of Alexandria, "The Instructor," Book i, Chap. vi, in Roberts and Donaldson (Eds.), *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (1885), Vol. 2, pp. 216-217.

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## *A Note From the Editor*

In the January 2004 issue of *The Voice of Elijah*<sup>®</sup>, I suggested that the reason people are inclined to believe lies over the Truth is because lies allow us to believe whatever we want, which in turn allows us to do whatever we want without feeling bad about doing it. The implication of that statement is that we lie to ourselves, in part, because it frees us from the emotional baggage—guilt, shame, fear, remorse, etc.—that the Truth heaps on anyone who knows the Truth but doesn't want to be constrained by it.

What I failed to mention in the January issue is that it is not just those who seek to avoid negative emotions who lie to themselves. The Truth is, people lie to themselves for the exact opposite reason. That is, they lie to experience positive emotions (such as joy or happiness) that give them a lift or make them feel euphoric in some way. While there is certainly nothing wrong with such emotions when they are based on the Truth, a person's emotional state is a bubble waiting to burst when it is based on a lie or lies. Think about it. A lot of one-time euphoric brides and grooms have had their emotional bubble burst after years of marriage because they falsely believed they were in love when in fact they weren't.

Speaking of emotional bubbles, let's talk about what goes on in the Church these days. If you have been to your local church recently, you know the number one priority of most churches is to provide a positive experience for everyone who attends. In most cases, this means making sure some sort of emotional, rather than intellectual, connection is made that leaves people with warm, fuzzy feelings as they head out the door. Unfortunately, most "Christians" falsely assume if they are moved emotionally during a service by the music, the message, or whatever, that they have been spiritually stimulated. That is seldom the case.

Don't get me wrong. There is nothing at all wrong with emotional experiences (ranging from joy to fear). They are part of any True Believer's walk with God if they are where they should be. But if emotional, rather than intellectual, stimulation is what you primarily seek from your relationship to God, you are on the wrong track headed in the wrong direction. The reason for that is because our emotions are not stable. One minute we feel euphoric, the next minute we are down in the dumps (that's an idiom). Unfortunately, that's no way to build a lasting relationship with God.

Take for example the movie, *The Passion of The Christ*. This is obviously a very emotional movie. This emotion can be seen and felt when moviegoers come out of the theatre still crying or are heard talking immediately thereafter about how the movie has transformed them. Unfortunately, the reality is that most people are not transformed by this movie; they are moved by it emotionally. BIG DIFFERENCE. This is not just my opinion. I recently read an article that said *The Passion of The Christ* has not produced

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the sort of change that most evangelicals were predicting. Church attendance is no higher than before, contributions have not gone up, stewardship in local churches is still waning, and the number of people who claim to be “Christian” has not increased. Reluctantly, evangelical leaders are admitting these things are so.

Those who predicted *The Passion of The Christ* would transform people’s lives obviously overlooked the fact that emotions are subject to rapid change and therefore do not provide the stability needed to produce lasting change. The only way to find that stability is to look past your emotions and to focus on the one thing that is genuinely stable—the Truth. Emotions may vacillate, but the Truth is always rock-solid, even when no one believes it.

The Truth we are concerned with, first and foremost, here at *The Voice of Elijah*® is the Truth of God’s Word because that Word has the power to transform the lives of those who believe it. As I explained in the April 2004 newsletter, the Truth of God’s Word is often referred to in the Scriptures as The Teaching. In the Old Testament, The Teaching (the Hebrew word *torah* means “teaching,” but is normally translated “law”) is The Teaching of Moses. In the New Testament, it is The Apostolic Teaching (Acts 2:42). Those two Teachings, along with The Teaching of the Prophets and The Teaching of Jesus (John 7:16–17), proclaim the same basic Word of Truth. However, each Teaching must be viewed from its own unique historical perspective.

For instance, The Apostolic Teaching must be viewed from a different perspective than The Teaching of Moses for one obvious reason: The Messiah that Moses prophesied was coming to redeem God’s People had not yet come in his day, but had come and been resurrected by the time of the Apostles. Therefore, it makes sense that the Apostles’ perspective on The Teaching would be slightly different from that of Moses because they witnessed the fulfillment of Moses’ prophecy concerning the Messiah.

My point here and in the last newsletter is that one must accept the fact that The Teaching—the

Word of Truth pertaining to God’s plan of salvation—has always existed. If that were not so, Adam and his immediate descendants would have had no hope of salvation. Yet few in the Church today are even aware that the Word of God has always existed in the form of an oral Teaching that could be verbally handed down from generation to generation. The belief that the Scriptures alone are the Word of God has blinded most to the fact that long before men began communicating in written form, they were communicating the old-fashioned way—by speaking.

The Truth is, the Apostles taught their disciples The Apostolic Teaching via the spoken word. The Bible as we know it today didn’t exist. In fact, none of the New Testament even existed when the Apostles established the Early Church. Makes you wonder how those Early Believers learned anything at all about God since none of them had a Bible tucked under their arm as they headed off to worship each Sunday morning. I’m being facetious. Obviously, they gained their knowledge by listening to a Teacher as he orally explained his understanding of God’s Word. That is still going on today. Most “Christians” obtain the majority of their knowledge of the Bible from their pastor, favorite radio teacher, or someone else who is orally teaching their understanding to others. Unfortunately, the “knowledge” these so-called “teachers” are handing down often has no basis in fact or in the Scriptures.

Those who are not seeking to know the Truth of the Word of God cannot please God because His will is that men believe the Truth of His Word. He has little patience or tolerance for fools who are content to believe whatever fits their personal belief system. God is a God of Truth and those who seek Him must do so in Spirit and in Truth (John 4:23–24). In the next issue I want to delve into some of the lies Satan has palmed off on the Church and unsuspecting True Believers. But it is important that we start with the basic premise that there is but one Truth and that Truth is The Teaching God has made known about Himself. An important element of that Truth is that God seeks an intellectual relationship with True Believers, not an emotional one.

*Allen Fries*

# Only a Fool Would Keep Working When There Is Nothing Left to Do

**T**his is the fifth and final article in a series of articles explaining what the Apostle Paul meant when he talked about law. The first article in this series was published as “We Know the Law Is Holy. But What About the Commandment?” in **The Voice of Elijah**®, July 1998. The second in the series, “There Is Nothing More Amazing Than Dead Men Walking (in ‘The Way’)” appeared in **The Voice of Elijah**®, January 2000. The third article was published under the title “‘The Law’ of This, ‘The Law’ of That, So Much ‘law’ One Can’t Keep Track” in **The Voice of Elijah**®, April 2001. The fourth was “Two Agreements Made: One a ‘Covenant,’ the Other a ‘Testament’” in **The Voice of Elijah**®, January 2002.

In those four articles and in the current article, I have included my own translation of some of the biblical texts that are most relevant to this topic, not because I consider my translation to be completely accurate at this point, but because it makes it easier for me to explain my current understanding of the meaning of the original Greek text. I will, most likely, continue to make minor changes to my translation as more and more of the parabolic imagery of The Teaching of Moses comes into clearer focus. I plan to publish a complete translation of the epistles of Paul—eventually. In the articles in this series, more than in any of the other articles I have written for **The Voice of Elijah**®, I will refer to things that I have explained in The Next Step program. The reader should not take that as an encouragement to join that program, however, since those things will eventually be published in book form.

In the first article in this series (“We Know the Law Is Holy. But What About the Commandment?” **The Voice of Elijah**®, July 1998), I mentioned five things that you need to know to understand what the Apostle

Paul means when he uses the Greek term *nomos* (“law”). The first thing you must realize is that, since Satan has lied to us, most of what you now believe about the Scriptures is probably a fiction.

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

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

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

The final thing you need to know about Paul's use of the term *law* is that he uses various *prepositions* with specific *meaning* when he *talks about* both "law" and "the Law." Therefore, I have, over the course of this series, explained a few things about the *parabolic imagery* of *The Teaching* that Paul has in mind when he uses phrases like "in law," "from law," "from works of law," "under law," and "through law."

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

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

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

I explained that Paul, in using the prepositional phrase "in the Law," is speaking in terms of specific *parabolic imagery* in which Jesus Christ is "the Law." That is, Jesus Christ is the Word of God—*The Apostolic Teaching*. Paul is contrasting the position of True Believers *in Christ* with that of those who are still "under sin" or, to put it in terms of the expression he will use later, those

who are "under law." He goes on to explain that the only way anyone can attain a position "in the Law" is to believe the Truth of *The Apostolic Teaching* (which he also calls *the promise*) in the same way that Abraham did.

I told you that when Paul says "those from law," he is speaking idiomatically. I even showed you that Jesus uses the same idiomatic expression in John 8:44. I told you that by speaking in terms of that *parabolic image*, Paul is depicting the Jews of his day as having been engendered "from" their belief in "law"—that is, "from" their belief in the benefit of external rituals—rather than "from" belief in the Truth of "the Law" (*The Teaching*). I told you he is also mockingly alluding to the *parabolic image* in which God has engendered True Believers by writing "the Law" on their "hearts."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I explained that Paul is speaking in terms of some rather detailed *parabolic imagery* when he says that. In that *parabolic imagery*, individual Believers become members of the Body of Jesus Christ—“The One” Who

is *Corporate* Israel—under the terms of the New Covenant. However, Jesus Christ—*Corporate* Israel—died for the sins of the individual members of *Corporate* Israel under the curse of the Old Covenant. He was resurrected—as the sole surviving Member of *Corporate* Israel—under the terms of the New Covenant. Therefore, individual members of *Corporate* Israel—Believers who have *parabolically* become “one” with the Man Israel under the terms of the New Covenant before the time of His death—escape death by *parabolically* dying in the Man Who became *Corporate* Israel and being resurrected in “*The Man*” Who now is *Corporate* Israel. Or, as Paul explains the *parabolic imagery*, Believers joined themselves to one “male” (the physical Body of Jesus Christ) so that when He died, they would be “free from the Law” and could belong “to another male” (the resurrected Body of Christ):

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



In the fourth article in this series (“Two Agreements Made: One a ‘Covenant,’ the Other a ‘Testament,’” *The Voice of Elijah*®, January 2002), I began to explain what Paul was *talking about* when he used the term *law* in his epistle to the Galatians. I told you the point he makes in that epistle is exactly the same point he makes in his epistle to the Romans: The person who has understood and believed the Truth of *the promise*—*The Teaching* that Abraham believed and *handed down* to his son Isaac—has the freedom to choose where he will live. He can either live in the incredible freedom of the “Spirit” of “the Law”—that is, *The Teaching*—which now dwells in his “inner man,” or he can go back to living in the flesh. If he chooses the latter, “law” will continue to define the impossible task of pleasing God:

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

If a person chooses to live in the “Spirit” of “the Law”—that is, if he decides to “walk in *The Way*” (*The Teaching*)—he thereby becomes an *heir of the promise* that God *delivered* to Abraham and Abraham *handed down* to Isaac. In that way, the “inner man” of every Believer *parabolically* becomes a descendant of Abraham through the germination of the *parabolic* “Seed” of Abraham within him:

*Just as Abraham BELIEVED THE {Living} GOD AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS WHAT IS REQUIRED. Consequently, we know that those who are from belief are sons of Abraham. And the Scripture—seeing beforehand that the*

*{Living} God would acquit the Gentiles from belief—preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham that, “ALL THE GENTILES WILL BE BLESSED IN YOU.” Therefore, those from belief will be blessed with Abraham the Believer.*  
(Galatians 3:6–9) —my interim translation

I then explained that the things Paul explains in the Book of Galatians are based in part on *parabolic imagery* in which the Believer *parabolically* becomes “one” with Christ through the *parabolic pantomime* in which Jesus Christ made a New “Covenant” with His disciples right before He died. One of the terms of that “covenant” was that anyone who heard and believed the Truth of the Gospel down through history could also become “one” with Christ just as they had:

*“I manifested Thy name to the men whom Thou gavest Me out of the world; Thine they were, and Thou gavest them to Me, and they have kept Thy word. Now they have come to know that everything Thou hast given Me is from Thee; for the words which Thou gavest Me I have given to them; and they received {them,} and truly understood that I came forth from Thee, and they believed that Thou didst send Me. I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom Thou hast given Me; for they are Thine; and all things that are Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine; and I have been glorified in them. And I am no more in the world; and {yet} they themselves are in the world, and I come to Thee. Holy Father, keep them in Thy name, {the name} which Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, even as We {are.} While I was with them, I was keeping them in Thy name which Thou hast given Me; and I guarded them, and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. But now I come to Thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy made full in themselves. I have given them Thy word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I do not ask Thee to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil {one.} They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth. As Thou didst send Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth. I do not ask in behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, {art} in*

*Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me. And the glory which Thou hast given Me I have given to them; that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, that the world may know that Thou didst send Me, and didst love them, even as Thou didst love Me.”*  
(John 17:6–23)

Having become “one” with Jesus Christ through belief in the Truth, all Believers *parabolically* died in Christ under the curse of “the Law” (that is, under the curse imposed for failing to meet the legal requirements placed on Corporate Israel by the *written text* of the Pentateuch). With the death of Christ, however, Corporate Israel came to an abrupt end. In that way, both the “curse of the Law” and the legal requirements of the Old Covenant were done away, since they no longer had any living entity to govern.

Because all Believers *parabolically* became “one” with Jesus Christ when His disciples ratified the New “Covenant,” they *parabolically* remain in Christ when He is resurrected. In that way, the members of Corporate Israel—the Body of Christ—are completely free from the *symbolic rituals* imposed on them under the Old Covenant. Furthermore, Paul adamantly insists that anyone who believes his salvation depends on the observance of any of those *parabolic rituals* is no longer “one” with Christ. He has, in fact, been “cut off from” Christ because he has rejected the Truth of *The Teaching* that Christ is:

*You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.*  
(Galatians 5:4)

The only “law” which Believers must still “keep” is not a “law” at all. It is instead *The Teaching* God hid in “the commandments.” (See *The Mystery of Scripture*, Vol. 1.) The irony in that is, “keep the commandments” is a Hebrew idiom Moses used to conceal the Truth. The idiom actually means “protect *The Teaching*.”

After I explained the *parabolic imagery* in which the Believer becomes “one” with Christ, I told you the New Covenant is actually two “covenants” in the same way that the Old Covenant was two “covenants.” In each case, the second “covenant” is actually a “testament.” That is, according to the *parabolic imagery* of *The*

*Teaching*, everyone who accepts the terms of the second New Covenant becomes “one” with Christ, and a member of Israel, the Firstborn Son of God. That is, when he *receives the promise* by faith (belief) in *The Teaching* which explains *what was promised*, he is *parabolically* “adopted” as a “Child” of God and becomes an *heir of the promise*. Ironically, *the promise* is *The Teaching* he *received* when he believed the Gospel.

Since *the promise* was *delivered* to Abraham long before God incorporated Israel and instituted the “law” through Moses, Paul insists “the Law” of Moses (that is, the legal requirements placed on Corporate Israel by the *written text* of the Pentateuch) was nothing more than a “tutor” who taught us what we needed to know about the death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. He also tells us that, in imposing “the Law” on Corporate Israel, God was merely placing *the promise* in the hands of a “mediator,” One who could not die until He so chose.

Now that Christ has died, the “Mediator” Who held title to *the promise* has been dissolved and *the promise* can once again be *handed down to the heirs of the promise*, that is, to all who have become sons of Abraham through belief in *The Teaching* which explains *what was promised*:

*So why the Law? It was added on account of transgressions until the Seed would come to Whom it {what was promised} had been promised, having been directed in {to} the hand of a mediator by means of messengers. The mediator is not for one, yet the {Living} God is One. Is the Law therefore against the promises of the {Living} God? Certainly not! For if a law had been given which was able to give life, the acquittal certainly would have been from law. Instead, the Scripture has declared everyone a prisoner under sin so that the promise could be given—from belief of Jesus Christ—to those who believe. Yet before the belief {of Christ} came, we were held as prisoner under law, being locked up with respect to the belief which was going to be revealed, with the result that the Law has become our tutor in Christ, so that we could be acquitted from belief. But, the belief {of Christ} having come, we are no longer under a tutor. For you are all sons of God because of the belief in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek. There is neither slave nor free. There is neither male nor female. For all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if*

*you are {a member} of Christ, then you {all together} are Abraham's Seed, heirs in accordance with promise. But I say, for as long a time as the Heir is a {minor} child, He is no different than a slave {in spite of} being Lord of all. Instead, He is under a guardian or trustee until the set time of the Father. Likewise also, when we were children, we were held as slaves under the elements of the world. But when the fullness of the time came, the {Living} God sent His Son, born from a woman, born under law, so that He could set free those under law, so that we could receive the adoption.*

*(Galatians 3:19–4:5) —my interim translation*

## Prepositional Phrases

Over the course of the four previous articles in this series, I have mentioned various prepositional phrases that Paul uses to express his mind-set in regard to “law” and “the Law.” You must keep in mind what Paul has in mind when he uses those expressions so that you can understand what he says to the Galatians.

The first prepositional phrase involves Paul’s use of a preposition commonly translated “from.” He sometimes says “from law,” by which he has in mind a *parabolic image* in which the Jews are children of Satan who have been engendered “from” their belief in the lie that salvation can be attained through “works of law.” In contrast to that *parabolic image*, Paul also uses the expression “from belief” to refer *parabolically* to those who have been engendered by God “from” their “belief” in the Truth of *The Teaching*. In addition, he uses the expression “from the Law” to refer to Jesus Christ, the only Person Who has ever been *physically* engendered by the Living Word of God embodied in “the Law.” He uses all three of those expressions in this passage:

*For the promise to Abraham, or {rather} to his Seed—that He would be the Heir of {the} world—was not because of law, but because of a belief {that attained} what is required. For if those from law are heirs, the belief {of Abraham} has been emptied and the promise abolished. For the Law produces wrath. But where no law exists, neither does violation. For this reason {it is} from belief, so that—in accordance with favor for the purpose of confirming the promise to all the Seed—{it is} not only to the One from the Law, but also to the one from belief—{that is} Abraham, who is father of us all.*

*(Romans 4:13–16) —my interim translation*

The second prepositional phrase that Paul uses is “under law.” He never says “under *the Law*,” although translators regularly translate what he said that way. His mind-set in regard to this particular phrase has to do with the bondage that unbelievers want to impose on Believers by demanding they must do or not do something to be saved. He knows that we are all born into a state of rebellion against God and have an innate tendency to want to do what is prohibited. That is why he sometimes uses the phrase “under sin” as the *parabolic equivalent* of “under law.” The following passages contain all of the instances where Paul uses the expression “under law”:

*Therefore, do not let the sin reign in your mortal body so that you listen to its desires, and don't offer your members to the sin as tools for what is not right. Instead, offer yourselves to the {Living} God like those {who are} alive from the dead and your members to the {Living} God as tools for what is required. For sin will not be lord over you, for you are not under law but under favor. What therefore? Should we sin because we are not under law but under favor? Certainly not!*

*(Romans 6:12–15) —my interim translation*

*To the Jews I became like a Jew, so that I might gain the Jews; to those under law, as under law—though not being under law myself—so that I might gain those under law.*

*(1 Corinthians 9:20) —my interim translation*

*Instead, the Scripture has declared everyone a prisoner under sin so that the promise could be given—from belief of Jesus Christ—to those who believe. Yet before the belief {of Christ} came, we were held as prisoner under law, being locked up with respect to the belief which was going to be revealed, with the result that the Law has become our tutor in Christ, so that we could be acquitted from belief. But, the belief {of Christ} having come, we are no longer under a tutor. For you are all sons of God because of the belief in Christ Jesus.*

*(Galatians 3:22–26) —my interim translation*

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

*(Galatians 4:4–5) —my interim translation*

*You tell me—those who want to be under law—do you not listen to the Law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one from the slave woman and one from the free woman. But the one was engendered from the slave woman with respect to flesh, the other was engendered from the free woman through a promise. (Galatians 4:21–23) —my interim translation*

*For the flesh desires {things} against the spirit. Yet the spirit {does the same} against the flesh. For these are opposed to one another so that what you don't want {to do}, these {things} you do. **But if you are led by spirit, you are not under law.** (Galatians 5:17–18) —my interim translation*

As you can see from what Paul says, the “law” under which all of mankind is held in bondage is the legal requirements placed on Corporate Israel by the written text of the Pentateuch—which he sometimes calls “the Law.” Parabolically speaking, “the Law” (the Pentateuch) is nothing more than a “tutor” whose purpose is to teach concerning Corporate Israel—that is, Jesus Christ, the One Who eventually became Corporate Israel when all the other Jews were “cut off from” Corporate Israel. (See *Not All Israel Is Israel*.) Therefore, anyone who has come to understand and believe the true meaning and significance of “the Law”—which is *The Teaching*, that is, the “Spirit”—is no longer “under law,” that is, “under the tutor” that “the Law” is meant to be for those “under law.”

Consider what Paul says: By being born in the flesh, everyone is physically “engendered under law” in the same way that Christ was. However, those who believe the Truth concerning Jesus Christ that is hidden in “the Law,” have been spiritually “engendered from the free woman through a promise.” Their belief in the Truth of *The Teaching of Moses* has set them free “from works of law,” that is, from the need to observe the requirements that God imposed on Corporate Israel, because they now understand that those requirements applied only to Jesus Christ, the One Who became Corporate Israel and died under the curse of “the Law.”

The point Paul makes in the Book of Galatians can be succinctly summarized this way: Since Christ has already died under the curse of the Old Covenant and has been resurrected under the terms of the New Covenant according to *the promise*, “law” no longer governs anyone who believes the Truth. Consequently,

those who ignorantly insist that Believers must observe any of the requirements of the Old Covenant will automatically be “cut off from” Corporate Israel. That is so because they have denied the Truth of *The Teaching* that Jesus Christ is. Paul makes that statement in the following passage, in which he is speaking parabolically in terms of the Believer’s “spirit” being “formed” in the image and likeness of Jesus Christ/God (the Living Word of God/*The Teaching*) through the agency of *the promise* he had already handed down to the Galatians:

*My children, those whom I am again suffering birth pangs until Christ is formed in you, I wish I were with you now and could change my tone because I am baffled by you. You tell me—those who want to be under law—do you not listen to the Law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one from the slave woman and one from the free woman. But the one was engendered from the slave woman with respect to flesh, the other was engendered from the free woman through a promise. These are speaking allegorically, because they are two covenants. One is indeed from Mt. Sinai, delivering to slavery, which is Hagar. Hagar is Mt. Sinai in Arabia. She corresponds to the present Jerusalem, because she is enslaved along with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free! That is our Mother! For it is written:*

*“REJOICE, BARREN ONE WHO DOESN'T BEAR.*

*BREAK OUT AND SHOUT, ONE WHO HAS NO BIRTH PANGS.*

*BECAUSE THE CHILDREN OF THE DESOLATE ONE*

*ARE FAR MORE THAN THE ONE WHO HAS THE MAN.”*

*But you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of a promise. But just as then, the one who was engendered with respect to the flesh persecuted the one {engendered} with respect to the Spirit, so also now. But what does the Scripture say? “CAST OUT THE SLAVE WOMAN AND HER SON! FOR THE SON OF THE SLAVE WOMAN WILL NOT INHERIT WITH THE SON OF THE FREE WOMAN.” Therefore, brothers, we are not children of a slave woman, but of the free woman. Christ set us free into the freedom {of belief}. Therefore, stand firm and don't again become subject to {an oral tradition that is} a yoke of slavery. Look! I, Paul, say to you that if you were to be circumcised, Christ will in no way benefit you. I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised, that he is required to do the whole Law. You have been released from Christ—you who seek to be acquitted in law. You have forfeited the gift. For we—in spirit, from belief—are waiting for a hope of acquittal. For in Christ Jesus*

neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value, but belief working because of love. You were running well! Who prevented you from being convinced of the Truth? The persuasion is not from the One Who calls you. A little leaven leavens the whole lump {of dough}. I have confidence in you in the Lord that you will not even consider another {gospel}, but the one who is upsetting you will bear the judgment, whoever he might be.

(Galatians 4:19–5:10) —my interim translation

## One Need Only “Walk in The Way”

I have repeatedly told you over the years that the three Hebrew idioms “build a house,” “raise up a seed,” and “make a name” are all *parabolically equivalent*. That is, they all have basically the same *meaning*—which is “engender a son.” The only difference between the three idioms has to do with the *parabolic imagery* which stands behind each one. By that I mean the “house,” “seed,” and “name” referred to in the idioms all depict exactly the same Person—Jesus Christ. But “house” does not evoke the same *mental imagery* as “seed,” and neither of those two evokes the same *mental imagery* as “name.” That is one of the reasons Moses and the other Prophets of Israel were able to so easily conceal *The Teaching* in their writings. Ignorant folks think they are speaking in terms of a *literal* “house,” “seed,” or “name” when, in truth, they are merely speaking *parabolically* concerning Jesus Christ as the “House,” “Seed,” and “Name” of God.

There are two other Hebrew idioms that are also *parabolically equivalent* to each other. I only mention them here because you need to know their *meaning* before you can fully comprehend Paul’s mind-set in regard to “law” and “the Law.” The first of those two idioms is “walk in *The Way*.” As I have explained in *The Way, The Truth, The Life*, as well as in various articles I have written for *The Voice of Elijah*®, that idiom actually means “believe (walk in) *The Teaching of Moses (The Way)*,” but it *implies* a whole lot more than just a one-time belief. That is so because the person who sincerely believes the Truth of *The Teaching* will be constantly thinking in terms of *The Teaching* rather than thinking in terms of the flesh. That is what Paul has in mind when he says this:

*Thanks to God because of Jesus Christ our Lord! So therefore, I myself am—on the one hand—a slave to a law of*

*God in my mind, but—on the other—{I am a slave} to a law of sin in the flesh. So therefore, there is no condemnation on those who are in Christ Jesus. For the Law of the Spirit of the life {which is} in Christ has freed me from the Law of the sin and the death. For the inability of the Law, in which it was weak because of the flesh, the {Living} God, sending His Own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and on account of sin, condemned the sin in the flesh, so that the requirement of the Law could be accomplished in us—those who are walking not in accordance with flesh but in accordance with spirit. For those who are in accordance with flesh think about the things of the flesh, but those {who are} in accordance with spirit {think about} the things of the Spirit. For the flesh’s way of thinking is death, but the Spirit’s way of thinking is life and peace, because the flesh’s way of thinking is a hatred toward God, for it cannot submit to the Law of the {Living} God, for it is not able. So those who are in flesh are not able to please God. Yet you are not in flesh, but in spirit, if a Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have a Spirit of Christ, he is not {a part} of Him. Yet if Christ is in you, the body is indeed dead because of sin, but the spirit is alive because of what is required.*

(Romans 7:25–8:10) —my interim translation

The second Hebrew idiom—which is *parabolically equivalent* to “walk in *The Way*”—is normally translated “keep the commandments.” But the idiom *literally says* “guard the commandments,” and *actually means* “protect *The Teaching*.” The *parabolic imagery* has to do with the fact that “the commandments” are the “ten words” God wrote on the two stone tablets while Moses was on Mt. Sinai. In *parabolic pantomime*, the Levites were to stand constant guard around the Tabernacle in which those “commandments” resided so that the holiness of God would not be defiled should something bad happen to them. The twelve tribes of Israel were also to stand guard around the perimeter of the camp to provide added security. Obviously the sons of Israel did not do what God demanded. If they had, the Levites would still be standing guard around the Tabernacle and the tablets would still be in it.

The purpose of the *symbolic ritual (torah)* in which the sons of Israel were to “guard the commandments” was to remind them that they were—above all else—to protect *The (oral) Teaching of Moses* which explained the true meaning and significance of “the commandments”

God wrote on the two stone tablets. The sons of Israel didn't do that either. So Moses and the other Prophets of Israel methodically recorded their failure by hiding *The (oral) Teaching* in the written "testimony" we now call the "Old Testament."

You need to know a few things about "the commandments" so that you can understand why they remained the basis for the New Covenant when "law" was done away in Christ. First of all, as I explain in *The Mystery of Scripture, Vol. 1*, "the commandments" are the essence of the covenant God made with Israel. The *statutes* and *judgments* merely defined how the covenant was to be implemented. Therefore, when God made a New Covenant with Israel—that is, with Jesus Christ—the basis for the covenant remained the same. God just abandoned the *statutes* and *judgments* whereby the Old Covenant had been implemented. He retained only the requirement that Israel continue to "walk in *The Way*" and "guard the commandments."

I have often told you that the primary difference between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant is this: Whereas God ratified the Old Covenant with Corporate Israel, He ratified the New Covenant with *the individual members of Israel*. The tongue-in-cheek aspect of that particular facet of *The Teaching* resides in the fact that the only member of Corporate Israel Who could actually avoid being immediately "cut off from" Israel—by "walking in *The Way*" and "keeping the commandments"—had already become Corporate Israel (under the terms of the Old Covenant) by the time He went down to be baptized in the Jordan and thereby accept the terms of the New Covenant.

It should be obvious that, when God ratified the New Covenant with the individual members of Israel rather than with Corporate Israel, some things had to change. One of the most dramatic changes was the way in which the "Spirit" of God resided *in Israel*. We all know how, under the terms of the Old Covenant, the sons of Israel built a Tabernacle according to the pattern God showed Moses on Mt. Sinai. The specifically stated purpose of that Tabernacle was to provide a residence for the "Spirit" of God:

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

*"And I will consecrate the tent of meeting and the altar; I will also consecrate Aaron and his sons to minister as priests to Me. And I will dwell among the sons of Israel and will be their God."*  
(Exodus 29:44–45)

Those two passages make it abundantly clear the purpose of the Tabernacle was to provide a place for God to "dwell among" the sons of Israel. However, one other passage provides startling insight into the basic difference between the Old Covenant and the New:

*"Moreover, I will make My dwelling among you, and My soul will not reject you. I will also walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people."*  
(Leviticus 26:11–12)

The translation "I will make My dwelling among you" conceals some extremely vital information. The Hebrew text *literally* says, "I will put My dwelling place {Tabernacle} in your midst." But the *significance* of that simple statement does not become apparent until the Prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel restate the verse to explain that God plans to dwell *inside* His People under the terms of the New Covenant. Jeremiah puts it this way:

*"Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them, and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people."*  
(Jeremiah 31:31–33)

Did you see how Jeremiah changed what Moses said? He replaced "My dwelling place" with "My law." (Again, as I have stated repeatedly, you need to keep in mind the fact that the Hebrew term *torah*, which is translated "law," actually means "teaching.") Jeremiah also changes the preposition that Moses used when he referred to God dwelling "in the midst/among" His People. Instead of the preposition Moses used, which

was a preposition commonly used to refer to something “in the midst of” a group of people, Jeremiah used a preposition which ordinarily points to something located *inside* an individual. He did that because he knew God intended to dwell *inside* the “heart” of the Believer as a *torah*—that is, as the “Spirit” of the Living Word of God (*The Teaching*) that Jesus Christ is.

In describing how God intends to “dwell in the midst of” His People under the terms of the New Covenant, Ezekiel, likewise, changes what Moses wrote:

*“For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands, and bring you into your own land. Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances. And you will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers; so you will be My people, and I will be your God.”*  
(Ezekiel 36:24–28)

Ezekiel does exactly the same thing as Jeremiah. He changes the preposition “in the midst” to “inside.” He also changes “My dwelling place” to “a new spirit,” which is obviously equivalent to “a new heart,” and by which He clearly means “My Spirit.” Ezekiel is referring to the “Spirit” of God which resides *inside* the “heart” of the Believer. It goes without saying that Ezekiel’s “My Spirit” must in some way be the same thing as Jeremiah’s “My *torah*.” The Truth is, as I explained above, they are exactly the same thing. Under the terms of the New Covenant, God dwells *inside* the Believer in the form of *The Teaching* which is the “Spirit” of the Living Word of God, Jesus Christ.

What Ezekiel and Jeremiah tell us about God’s plan under the New Covenant doesn’t help all that much unless one understands the Hebrew and Greek mind-set in regard to the nature of a “spirit” and how the *spirit* of a person is the beliefs that dwell in his *heart* (that is, his *mind*) by consent of his *soul*. Needless to say, the ancients’ view of such things does not have a whole lot in common with the modern Western mind-set regarding ghosts and goblins. Nonetheless, it should be clear from what Jeremiah and Ezekiel tell us that God

ratified the New Covenant with Jesus Christ when the Spirit of God descended on Him immediately after He was baptized (sprinkled?) by John in the Jordan River:

*Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan {coming} to John, to be baptized by him. But John tried to prevent Him, saying, “I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?” But Jesus answering said to him, “Permit {it} at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he permitted Him. And after being baptized, Jesus went up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, {and} coming upon Him, and behold, a voice out of the heavens, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.”*  
(Matthew 3:13–17)

After Jesus Christ died under the curse of the Old Covenant and was resurrected under the terms of the New, *the promise* once again became available to be distributed *individually* to all *the heirs of the promise* in the form of the Living Word of God (God’s “Spirit”). That began on the Day of Pentecost just as Jesus said it would:

*“And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”*  
(Luke 24:49)

*And when the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent, rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.*  
(Acts 2:1–4)

The point of all this can actually be put quite a bit more compendiously. The “commandments” which were the essence of the Old Covenant still remain as the essence of the New. But the only *torah* (teaching) contained in those “commandments” is the *symbolic* (parabolic) ritual of the Sabbath *torah* (see *The Mystery of Scripture*, Vol. 1):

*“Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God; {in it} you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and made it holy.”*  
(Exodus 20:8–11)

The Sabbath *torah* is no longer written on stone tablets. It is “written” on the “heart” of every Believer who accepts the terms of the New Covenant when an Evangelist explains that part of *The Teaching* known as “the Gospel.” That *torah* sums up *The Apostolic Teaching* that God desires to “write” on the “hearts” of Believers through *The Teaching* of a legitimately called Teacher. Therefore, any Believer who is still “guarding the commandments” need only hear someone explain *The Teaching* to know he has, indeed, heard the Truth:

*But when it was now the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and {began to} teach. The Jews therefore were marveling, saying, “How has this man become learned, having never been educated?” Jesus therefore answered them, and said, “My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me. If any man is willing to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or {whether} I speak from Myself. He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who is seeking the glory of the One who sent Him, He is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.”*  
(John 7:14–18)

Refraining from *physical* work on the Sabbath was nothing more than a *symbolic ritual* (a *parabolic pantomime*) which pointed to a far greater *spiritual* reality. The purpose of that *ritual* was to remind the sons of Israel that the true Sabbath is the seventh “day” of Creation when the *Living Word* of God finally “rests” after creating “*The Man*” in His image and likeness. Now that God has accomplished that, Believers have access to His “rest” and it is imperative that they not violate it:

*Therefore, let us fear lest, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you should seem to have come short of it. For indeed we have had good news*

*preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard. For we who have believed enter that rest, just as He has said,*

*“As I SWORE IN MY WRATH,  
THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST,”*

*although His works were finished from the foundation of the world. For He has thus said somewhere concerning the seventh {day,} “AND GOD RESTED ON THE SEVENTH DAY FROM ALL HIS WORKS”; and again in this {passage}, “THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST.” Since therefore it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly had good news preached to them failed to enter because of disobedience, He again fixes a certain day, “Today,” saying through David after so long a time just as has been said before,*

*“TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE,  
DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS.”*

*For if Joshua had given them rest, He would not have spoken of another day after that. There remains therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God. For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His. Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall through {following} the same example of disobedience.*

(Hebrews 4:1–11)

Lots of “Christians” believe salvation must, in some way, depend on “works of law.” That is, they think they must do or not do something to be saved: “Go to church; don’t smoke; don’t drink; don’t gamble.” Little do they know, in those very beliefs, they violate God’s “rest” and thereby forfeit salvation. As Paul warns the Galatians:

*For everyone who is from works of law is under a curse. For it is written that “CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT REMAIN IN ALL THE THINGS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW TO DO THEM.”*

(Galatians 3:10) —my interim translation

The Sabbath *torah* that God wrote on the “heart” of every Believer when he first believed is the basis on which Paul rejects those Pretenders “from law” who are still seeking salvation “from works of law.” Every True Believer knows he *did* nothing but believe the Truth to be “born again.” The Truth is, a Believer need *do* nothing but “rest” in that Truth to be saved. But what do you think would happen if he rejected *additional* Truth? ■





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

Matthew relates the following interesting exchange that took place between Jesus and the two major sects of Judaism:

*And the Pharisees and Sadducees came up, and testing Him asked Him to show them a sign from heaven. But He answered and said to them, "When it is evening, you say, '{It will be} fair weather, for the sky is red.' And in the morning, '{There will be} a storm today, for the sky is red and threatening.' Do you know how to discern the appearance of the sky, but cannot {discern} the signs of the times? An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; and a sign will not be given it, except the sign of Jonah." And He left them, and went away.*

*(Matthew 16:1-4)*

Did you notice that, when the Pharisees and Sadducees asked Him for "a sign from heaven," Jesus rebuked them because they could forecast the weather by looking at the sky but could not, likewise, discern what "the signs of the times" meant? Then He told them the only sign they would be given is "the sign of Jonah." In saying that, He is referring to parabolic imagery in which His death and Resurrection are LIKE Jonah's three-day experience in the sea:

*Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered Him, saying, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You." But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous*

*generation craves for a sign; and {yet} no sign shall be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet; for just as JONAH WAS THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE BELLY OF THE SEA MONSTER, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh shall stand up with this generation at the judgment, and shall condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here."*  
*(Matthew 12:38-41)*

Obviously, Jesus must have had some particular parabolic image in mind, or He would not have made the same statement on two separate occasions. The question is, What was it? The answer lies in what they requested: "a sign from heaven." One would think that having witnessed His miracles of healing, they had already seen enough signs and wonders. But no. They craved something bigger—"a sign from heaven." So Christ told them the only sign would be one in which His death and Resurrection are LIKE the experience Jonah had. The parabolic image is one the Prophets knew by heart; it is the Canaanite myth of Baal they ridicule. In it, Jonah represents Baal, the son of god overcome by the monster (serpent) who lives in the Sea and is taken down into the depths of Sheol ("the Sea of El"), only to escape unharmed three days later.

The humorous part of what Jesus said to the Pharisees and Sadducees resides in His comment on their ability to forecast the weather accurately but not interpret "the signs of the times." That is because the Prophets parabolically describe the Second Coming as a storm that will come billowing up out of the "Sea of Waters" just LIKE the Canaanites thought their god Baal did after He was resurrected:

*"But immediately after the tribulation of those days THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken, and then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory."*  
*(Matthew 24:29-30)*

An evil and adulterous generation always seeks "a sign from heaven." This time, they're going to get one. ■



**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 Revelation 9:1–5, we are told that Satan—the “fallen star” mentioned in Revelation 9:1—releases “locusts” upon the Earth that have the power to torment, but not kill, those “who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads” (Rev. 9:4–5). We are also told that “men will seek death” in those days because of these “locusts” but “will not find it” (Rev. 9:6). It’s easy to see that the “locusts” are parabolic, but the statement that men will seek death but won’t find it seems to be literal. Is it? If it isn’t, what is Revelation 9:6 parabolically describing? How can you tell when a statement is literal and not parabolic?

**Elijah:** Your question relates to an area of academic study called “hermeneutics,” which involves the issue of how one should go about interpreting the Scriptures. Unfortunately, every hermeneutical theory ever postulated as the basis for biblical interpretation is itself based on the faulty assumption that God intended the Scriptures to be interpreted. That is just another lie that Satan has successfully foisted off on the Church. As I have been showing your Monthly Contributors for nearly a decade in *The Voice of Elijah® Update*, none of the legitimate leaders of the Early Church were interpreting the Scriptures for themselves prior to the time of Clement and Origen. They were instead resolutely focused on *handing down* an oral tradition—The Apostolic Teaching—that Jesus Christ revealed to His disciples

immediately after His Resurrection. At that time, Christ gave them specific instructions that they *hand down* His Teaching to the next generation of Believers, who were to *hand it down* to the next generation, and so on, until the End of the Age:

*But the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had designated. And when they saw Him, they worshiped {Him;} but some were doubtful. And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”*  
(Matthew 28:16–20)

The Early Church Fathers Irenæus, Hippolytus, and Tertullian all agree that orthodox Church leaders in their day were doing exactly what Jesus commissioned His disciples to do. They were *making disciples* and *handing down* the oral tradition that Christ had *delivered* to His disciples in precisely the same way that every other group in that day used the discipleship process. (See “Where Are Jesus’ Disciples?” *The Voice of Elijah®*, April 1991.) Disciples were not expected to *interpret* anything for themselves. They were instead expected to listen to a Teacher and learn the oral tradition which had been *handed down orally* from some deceased “master,” in some cases for hundreds of years. The Greek schools of philosophy were all *handing down oral traditions* which had been established by such masters as Plato, Aristotle, and Zeno. The Pharisees as well claimed to be *handing down* the oral tradition that Jews today still maintain God *delivered* to Moses (see *The Way, The Truth, The Life and The Mystery of Scripture, Volume 1*):

*So a second time they called the man who had been blind, and said to him, “Give glory to God; we know that this man is a sinner.” He therefore answered, “Whether He is a sinner, I do not know; one thing I do know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.” They said therefore to him, “What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?” He answered them, “I told you already, and you did not listen; why do you want to hear {it} again? You do not want to become His disciples too, do you?” And they reviled him, and said, “You are His disciple, but we are*

*disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses; but as for this man, we do not know where He is from."*

(John 9:24–29)

The Early Church became concerned with the formulation of a valid biblical hermeneutic only after Satan had successfully enticed a majority of Church leaders into corrupting *The Apostolic Teaching*. I am currently in the process of showing the Monthly Contributors how that disaster came about. History indicates Satan had achieved his goal by sometime in the late second century. That was when he prompted the "Christian philosophers" Clement of Alexandria and Origen to step forward with their goofy *allegorical* theory of interpretation. According to their lame-brained theory, the Bible is a book which contains both *literal* and *allegorical* statements.

Church leaders who followed Clement and Origen's lead in blindly interpreting the Scriptures for themselves suddenly ran hard up against a variant form of the question you just asked: "How can you tell when a statement is *literal* and not *allegorical*?" The answer those two dimwits and the intellectual black holes who followed them into total ignorance should have been able to see for themselves, but couldn't because of pride and arrogance, is this one: A disciple is not supposed to be able to tell when something is *literal* and not *parabolic*; he is, instead, supposed to listen to a legitimate Teacher explain the *meaning* and *significance* of the Scriptures. After the disciple has been fully trained, he will then be able to tell the difference between *literal* and *parabolic statements*, not because he was able to figure it out on his own, but because he understands exactly the same *oral tradition*—which includes nothing more than—his Teacher understands. It is just as Jesus explained to His disciples:

*"A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master. It is enough for the disciple that he become as his teacher, and the slave as his master. If they have called the head of the house Beelzebul, how much more the members of his household!"*

(Matthew 10:24–25)

*"Have you understood all these things?" They said to Him, "Yes." And He said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple of the kingdom of*

*heaven is like a head of a household, who brings forth out of his treasure things new and old."*

(Matthew 13:51–52)

The teacher/disciple method that Christ adopted for His disciples to *hand down The Apostolic Teaching* is actually quite easy to understand, but it is extremely difficult for stiff-necked people to accept. That's one of the reasons why He chose it. A Teacher teaches his disciples *The Teaching*; his disciples listen and do their best to master that content. A true disciple does not add his own speculation to *The Teaching*, and he strives to leave nothing out. If Clement, Origen, and their ilk had understood and been willing to accept the discipleship process, the Church today might not be in the mess it is in—where any half-wit with a religious bent uses the Scriptures as nothing more than a drop-off point from which he sails off into absolute drivel.

The basic hermeneutical theory of Church leaders has gradually evolved over the past 1800 years. From its beginning in Origen's *allegorical* theory, it has now come full circle to the equally goofy *literal* theory of interpretation advocated by a majority of evangelical scholars today. Unfortunately, the problem the *literal* theory has faced since its inception is exactly the same problem that Clement and Origen's *allegorical* theory faced—God never intended for anyone to interpret the Scriptures. That is why He had the Prophets seal up what they wrote with seven *parabolic* seals. Those seals have made it impossible for anyone to gain insight into the *meaning* and *significance* of their writings by *any* method of interpretation. That explains why Christ *revealed* the *meaning* and *significance* of the Scriptures to His disciples and then made it possible for them to understand what He had told them:

*Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things."*

(Luke 24:44–48)

As I have explained repeatedly over the years since I began my ministry, Jesus Christ is currently removing the seals the Prophets placed on the Hebrew Scriptures. That *means* anyone who has the ability to read the original languages in which they were written *should be able* to read and understand them for himself. Unfortunately, nobody will ever be able to do that using the *literal* theory of interpretation, the *allegorical* theory of interpretation or, for that matter, any other oddball theory of interpretation. That is because the Scriptures are now becoming just like any other piece of literature. They do not require any special method of interpretation to be understood. Although Moses and the other Prophets of Israel do speak in terms of specific Hebrew idioms which are based on just as specific *parabolic imagery*, they have carefully defined all of the idioms and *parabolic equivalencies* they use.

The approach one needs to take in reading the Scriptures is exactly the same approach that one should use in reading any good mystery novel. And just like in real estate, there are only three things one needs to remember: context, context, context. One also has to keep an open mind and a sharp eye out for the clues the author provides. If you miss any one of the thousands of clues the Prophets wove into their account—most likely because you assumed you already knew what they *meant*—you will end up thinking Colonel Mustard did it in the kitchen with the lead pipe when, in fact, the “house” doesn’t even have a kitchen.

I doubt that I have yet answered your question to your satisfaction, so let me ask you a couple of questions. If God is allowing Jesus Christ to “unseal” the Scriptures so that anyone who seeks insight can now read them with complete understanding, why would He also call someone to *restore The Apostolic Teaching*? It seems clear to me, at least, that if God did that, He would also expect that person to *restore* the discipleship process and *hand down* *The Teaching orally* by explaining the *meaning* and *significance* of the Scriptures to those who become his disciples. But if that is true, why would God have also made it possible for everyone to read and understand the Scriptures? The answer to that question is one you probably already know. He did it to ridicule fools who have not been called to the task.

For the benefit (or detriment) of those short loads who blindly insist on striking out on their own, I’ll give you the short answer to your question. You can’t. The Prophets have to tell you; otherwise, you won’t have a

clue. With that in mind, let’s look at the passage you mentioned:

*And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth; and the key of the bottomless pit was given to him. And he opened the bottomless pit; and smoke went up out of the pit, like the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke of the pit. And out of the smoke came forth locusts upon the earth; and power was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power. And they were told that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, but only the men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. And they were not permitted to kill anyone, but to torment for five months; and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings a man. **And in those days men will seek death and will not find it; and they will long to die and death flees from them.***

(Revelation 9:1–6)

One could argue that “men will seek death” is a *parabolic statement*, since the Prophets do occasionally speak *parabolically* about Satan in terms of the Canaanite god “Death.” But the argument that men will ask some false god to alleviate their physical or mental pain is disproven by the fact that John immediately defines what he *means* by saying “they will long to die.” Therefore, it is fairly clear that his statement is nothing more than a *literal* description of some *physical* reality. It is just as obvious that the “locusts” (grasshoppers) he mentions are part of a *parabolic* description which depicts the arrival of a host of demons on Earth. John could not have been more blatant in his use of the telltale sign of a parable:

*And the appearance of the locusts was **like** horses prepared for battle; and on their heads, as it were, crowns **like** gold, and their faces were **like** the faces of men. And they had hair **like** the hair of women, and their teeth were **like** {the teeth} of lions. And they had breastplates **like** breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was **like** the sound of chariots, of many horses rushing to battle. And they have tails **like** scorpions, and stings; and in their tails is their power to hurt men for five months. They have as king over them, the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek he has the name Apollyon.*

(Revelation 9:7–11)

*Editor: Galatians 3:8 has always confounded me a bit when Paul says, "the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the Gospel beforehand to Abraham." Since the Scriptures didn't exist in Abraham's day, how could "the Scripture" have "preached the gospel" to Abraham? What does Paul have in mind when he says this? He also says something similar in Romans 9:17 where he writes, "For the Scripture says to Pharaoh ..." and then he quotes what God told Moses to say to Pharaoh in Exodus 9:16. Is Paul merely associating the spoken Word that came first with the written Word that came later, or does he have something else in mind?*

**Elijah:** Let's look at the verse you mentioned:

*And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, {saying}, "ALL THE NATIONS SHALL BE BLESSED IN YOU."  
(Galatians 3:8)*

The first thing you must understand is this: When you see the *singular* term *Scripture* in the New Testament, think *oral statement*. When you see the *plural* form *Scriptures*, think *written text*. Let me show you what I mean. In the following two passages, the Greek term translated "Scripture" is plural ("Scriptures"):

*And behold, one of those who were with Jesus reached and drew out his sword, and struck the slave of the high priest, and cut off his ear. Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place; for all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels? **How then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen this way?**" At that time Jesus said to the multitudes, "Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest Me as against a robber? Every day I used to sit in the temple teaching and you did not seize Me. **But all this has taken place that the Scriptures of the prophets may be fulfilled.**" Then all the disciples left Him and fled.  
(Matthew 26:51-56)*

*And they laid hands on Him, and seized Him. But a certain one of those who stood by drew his sword, and struck*

*the slave of the high priest, and cut off his ear. And Jesus answered and said to them, "Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest Me, as against a robber? Every day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize Me; **but {this has happened} that the Scriptures might be fulfilled.**" And they all left Him and fled.*

*(Mark 14:46-50)*

As you can see, both of those passages describe exactly the same historical event. In saying "the Scriptures," Jesus is referring to the entire *written text* of the Hebrew Scriptures, not to any one *oral statement* made within "the Scriptures." That usage contrasts sharply with the following passages, where the singular form *Scripture* is used to point to a single *oral statement* within the *written text* of "the Scriptures":

*And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read. And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book, and found the place where it was written,  
"THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME,  
BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME  
TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR.  
HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES,  
AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND,  
TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE DOWNTRODDEN,  
TO PROCLAIM THE FAVORABLE YEAR OF THE LORD."  
And He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed upon Him. And He began to say to them, "**Today this Scripture has been fulfilled** in your hearing."  
(Luke 4:16-21)*

*"I do not speak of all of you. I know the ones I have chosen; but {it is} that **the Scripture may be fulfilled**, 'HE WHO EATS MY BREAD HAS LIFTED UP HIS HEEL AGAINST ME.'"  
(John 13:18)*

*The soldiers therefore, when they had crucified Jesus, took His outer garments and made four parts, a part to every soldier and {also} the tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece. They said therefore to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, {to decide} whose it shall be"; **that the Scripture might be fulfilled**, "THEY DIVIDED MY OUTER GARMENTS AMONG THEM, AND FOR*

MY CLOTHING THEY CAST LOTS."  
(John 19:23–24)

I could show you other passages where the same principle applies, but that is not necessary. It is clear that the singular term *Scripture* is consistently used to refer to a single oral statement made within the written text of "the Scriptures." Now that you know that, take a look at how the Apostle Paul thinks in regard to the individual oral statements made in the written text of "the Scriptures":

What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about; but not before God. For **what does the Scripture say?** "AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS."  
(Romans 4:1–3)

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."  
(Romans 10:6–13)

I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. Or **do you not know what the Scripture says** in {the passage about} Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel? "Lord, THEY HAVE KILLED THY PROPHETS, THEY HAVE TORN DOWN THINE ALTARS, AND I ALONE AM LEFT, AND THEY ARE SEEKING MY LIFE." But what is the divine response to him? "I HAVE

KEPT for Myself SEVEN THOUSAND MEN WHO HAVE NOT BOWED THE KNEE TO BAAL."  
(Romans 11:1–4)

And you brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise. But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him {who was born} according to the Spirit, so it is now also. **But what does the Scripture say?**

"CAST OUT THE BONDWOMAN AND HER SON,  
FOR THE SON OF THE BONDWOMAN SHALL NOT BE AN HEIR  
WITH THE SON OF THE FREE WOMAN."

So then, brethren, we are not children of a bondwoman, but of the free woman.  
(Galatians 4:28–31)

It is fairly obvious that, for some reason, Paul understands that the oral statements made in the written text of "the Scriptures" *speak*. But if you look more closely at what he says, you will notice that he knows they sometimes *speak parabolically*. That is, "the Scriptures" make oral statements that somehow go beyond the apparent meaning of the written text. That is not an idiosyncrasy on Paul's part. James exhibits exactly the same characteristic:

Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected; and **the Scripture was fulfilled which says,** "AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS," and he was called the friend of God.  
(James 2:21–23)

You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend {it} on your pleasures. You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you think that **the Scripture speaks** to no purpose: "He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us"?  
(James 4:3–5)

Now, if someone can just show me where in the written text of "the Scriptures" I can find the oral statement James is quoting in the passage immediately above, I will have to agree that the singular form

*Scripture* always refers to the actual *statement* recorded in the *written text* rather than to the *oral statement* made (that is, what is *meant*) by “the Scripture.” Lacking that, perhaps one should just accept the fact that “Scripture” is not always an easily identified *oral statement* made in just one verse or passage of the *written text*. The Truth is, the Apostles used the Greek term translated “Scripture” to refer to *parabolic statements* that sometimes seem to have no relation at all to the *written text*. If you doubt that, tell me where Paul came up with his understanding of the verse he quotes here:

*Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says,*  
 “YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING,” and “The laborer is worthy of his wages.”  
 (1 Timothy 5:17–18)

As you undoubtedly noticed, Paul appears to quote the Scriptures twice. He first quotes the Septuagint version of Deuteronomy 25:4 (reversing only the order). But the second quote, like the one that James made above, has no such obvious source. That is even more instructive for our purposes here. Sometimes, the *parabolic statements* made in the *written text* of the Scriptures are made over several seemingly disconnected verses or passages through the use of *parabolic imagery*. That is what James is *talking about*; and the same applies to what Paul says in this next passage as well:

*Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law. But the Scripture has shut up all men under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.*  
 (Galatians 3:21–22)

In James 4:5, James has in mind the *parabolic imagery* associated with God’s Spirit dwelling in *Corporate Israel* under the terms of the Old Covenant. His point is, God has allowed that same Spirit to dwell in the *individual Believer* under the terms of the New Covenant. He is warning Believers that just as God’s wrath lashed out at *Corporate Israel* when the people defiled His Spirit, so also His wrath will burn against

them if they do likewise. Paul, on the other hand, is simply referring to the fact that all the Jews were “cut off from” Israel so *the promise* could be conveyed as an *inheritance* to those who become members of the Body of Jesus Christ (Israel) solely on the basis of faith.

The real *significance* of what I have just told you about “the Scriptures” and “the Scripture” resides in the fact that the Greek term translated “Scripture(s)” actually *means* “writing.” That would seem to contradict what I have just told you. However, the *parabolic imagery* of *The Teaching* resolves the conflict by explaining the mind-set of the Apostles in regard to “Scripture.” The Apostle John explains the *parabolic imagery* you need to keep in mind to understand this particular part of *The Teaching of Moses*. He says this:

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.*  
 (John 1:1–5)

I have already explained how the sons of Israel gave up *The Teaching of Moses* in exactly the same way the Church gave up *The Apostolic Teaching*. (See *The Way, The Truth, The Life* and *The Mystery of Scripture, Volume 1*.) That is, when shallow-minded nitwits stood up and started teaching nonsense they had picked up somewhere else, “all Israel” followed them off into folly. To use the Hebrew idiom that Jeremiah seems to have preferred, the people “turned aside from *The Way*.” Consequently, the *Living “Word”* Who resided in *The (oral) Teaching of Moses* used Moses and the other Prophets of Israel to hide Himself in the *written text* that eventually became the Hebrew Scriptures. To put it a bit more graphically, the God Who is a Word “hid His face” from Israel by gradually taking on a *written*, rather than *oral*, form.

*Then the LORD said to Moses, “Behold, the time for you to die is near; call Joshua, and present yourselves at the tent of meeting, that I may commission him.” So Moses and Joshua went and presented themselves at the tent of meeting. And the LORD appeared in the tent in a pillar of cloud, and the pillar of cloud stood at the doorway of the tent.*

And the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, you are about to lie down with your fathers; and this people will arise and play the harlot with the strange gods of the land, into the midst of which they are going, and will forsake Me and break My covenant which I have made with them. Then My anger will be kindled against them in that day, and **I will forsake them and hide My face from them**, and they shall be consumed, and many evils and troubles shall come upon them; so that they will say in that day, 'Is it not because our God is not among us that these evils have come upon us?' But **I will surely hide My face in that day** because of all the evil which they will do, for they will turn to other gods. Now therefore, write this song for yourselves, and teach it to the sons of Israel; put it on their lips, in order **that this song may be a witness for Me against the sons of Israel**. For when I bring them into the land flowing with milk and honey, which I swore to their fathers, and they have eaten and are satisfied and become prosperous, then they will turn to other gods and serve them, and spurn Me and break My covenant. Then it shall come about, when many evils and troubles have come upon them, that **this song will testify before them as a witness** (for it shall not be forgotten from the lips of their descendants); for I know their intent which they are developing today, before I have brought them into the land which I swore." So Moses wrote this song the same day, and taught it to the sons of Israel.  
(Deuteronomy 31:14–22)

The significance of what God says about "The Song of Moses" resides in the fact that the song contains a succinct summary of the Living Word of God Who is The Teaching of Moses. The irony in that is, God had already begun to make preparations for the time when He would completely "hide His face" from Israel. But don't overlook the obvious: The Living Word of God hid Himself in the Scriptures in order to "testify" against those who refuse to believe Him.

Just in case some moron happens to be reading this, I should probably explain that the statement "God 'hid His face' from Israel" is not a *literal* description of what actually happened to the God Who is the Living Word of God, it is a *parabolic* one. Nevertheless, the end result was exactly what God had planned. The Living Word of God (that is, what the *written text* of "the Scriptures" *actually means* rather than what it *appears to say*) now resides neatly tucked away in the seven *parabolic* messages the Prophets sealed with seven *parabolic*

seals. That Living Word of God consists of *oral statements*—both *literal* and *parabolic*—that are made by "the Scripture" through the *written text* of "the Scriptures."

Here are a couple of passages where the Apostle Paul uses the *parabolic imagery* I have just explained:

*Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, that we might bear fruit for God. For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were {aroused} by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death. But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.*  
(Romans 7:4–6)

*For we are not like many, peddling the word of God, but as from sincerity, but as from God, we speak in Christ in the sight of God. Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, as some, letters of commendation to you or from you? You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read by all men; being manifested that **you are a letter of Christ, cared for by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone, but on tablets of human hearts**. And such confidence we have through Christ toward God. Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as {coming} from ourselves, but **our adequacy is from God, who also made us adequate {as} servants of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. But if the ministry of death, in letters engraved on stones, came with glory, so that the sons of Israel could not look intently at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, fading {as} it was, how shall the ministry of the Spirit fail to be even more with glory?** For if the ministry of condemnation has glory, much more does the ministry of righteousness abound in glory. For indeed what had glory, in this case has no glory on account of the glory that surpasses {it.} For if that which fades away {was} with glory, much more that which remains {is} in glory.*  
(2 Corinthians 2:17–3:11)

In that last passage, Paul is merely explaining to the Corinthians that he wrote the Living Word of God—that is, "The Light" of The Apostolic Teaching—on



their “hearts” when he taught them the *meaning* and *significance* of the Hebrew Scriptures. He contends that *parabolic Light* shines far more brightly than “*The Light*” that reflected off Moses’ face (in *parabolic pantomime*) each time he heard the Lord explain *The Teaching* to him through the veil in the Tabernacle. Paul goes on to say this about “*The Light*” of *The Apostolic Teaching*:

*Having therefore such a hope, we use great boldness in {our} speech, and {are} not as Moses, {who} used to put a veil over his face that the sons of Israel might not look intently at the end of what was fading away. But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ. But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart; but whenever a man turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, {there} is liberty. **But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.** Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we received mercy, we do not lose heart, but we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God. **And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.** For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus’ sake. For God, who said, “Light shall shine out of darkness,” is **the One who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.** (2 Corinthians 3:12–4:6)*

I seriously doubt that very many who read what I have written will actually understand the premise on which Paul’s statements are based: The *invisible* God has no *literal* “image,” that is, “face”—whether visible, hidden, or otherwise. He has only an *invisible parabolic* “face” and an *invisible parabolic* “image,” both of which Believers can readily “see” in “*The Light*” of *The Apostolic Teaching*. The incomprehension of those who fail to understand the *parabolic imagery* associated with

Believers being created in the image and likeness of God is due to the fact that “the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see *the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*” Those so afflicted will most certainly not understand the *parabolic imagery* underlying the phrase “*the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.*” I have already explained what those statements mean, but only in terms “The Many” will understand.

In 2 Corinthians 2:17–4:6, Paul is referring to the *parabolic fulfillment* of this prophecy:

*Therefore thus says the Lord GOD, “Now I shall restore the fortunes of Jacob, and have mercy on the whole house of Israel; and I shall be jealous for My holy name. And they shall forget their disgrace and all their treachery which they perpetrated against Me, when they live securely on their {own} land with no one to make them afraid. When I bring them back from the peoples and gather them from the lands of their enemies, then I shall be sanctified through them in the sight of the many nations. Then they will know that I am the LORD their God because I made them go into exile among the nations, and then gathered them {again} to their own land; and I will leave none of them there any longer. **And I will not hide My face from them any longer, for I shall have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel,**” declares the Lord GOD. (Ezekiel 39:25–29)*

This is “*The Way*” Jesus explained the fulfillment of Ezekiel’s prophecy concerning the outpouring of God’s “*Spirit*”:

*“If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; {that is} the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him, {but} you know Him because He abides with you, and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. After a little while the world will behold Me no more; but you {will} behold Me; because I live, you shall live also. In that day you shall know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. **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." Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us, and not to the world?" 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. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me."*  
(John 14:15–24)

Obviously, an unregenerate person will not be able to understand how the Hebrew idiom "keep the commandments" is *parabolically equivalent* to the idiom "walk in *The Way*." It will be just as impossible for him to visualize the *parabolic image* in which Believers "behold" "the face of Christ" in *The Apostolic Teaching*. Such mentally mangled morons will certainly reject the notion that the Holy "Spirit" takes up residence in the Believer as the *Living Word of God* Who, after Himself being resurrected in the image and likeness of God, seeks to transform all Believers "into the same image from glory to glory." But I am getting slightly off track.

My point is, Paul knew the *Living Word of God* Who speaks *parabolically* through the *oral statements* of "Scripture" had said He would *parabolically* "hide His face" from Israel. He also knew the *Living Word of God* had done just that by concealing Himself (through *oral statements* He made to the Prophets) in the *written text* of "the Scriptures." Since Paul was aware of those things, it was only natural that he would identify "Scripture"—the *oral statements* (both *literal* and *parabolic*) that are made in the *written text* of "the Scriptures"—with the *Living Word of God* Who transcends history. That is what he is doing in the two texts you mentioned:

*For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE I RAISED YOU UP, TO DEMONSTRATE MY POWER IN YOU, AND THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE PROCLAIMED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH."*  
(Romans 9:17)

*And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, {saying}, "ALL THE NATIONS SHALL BE BLESSED IN YOU."*  
(Galatians 3:8)

By the way, there is also *parabolic imagery* in *The Apostolic Teaching* that describes a time when the *Living Word of God* will come out of His hiding place in the Scriptures and *reveal* Himself to unbelievers. The events leading up to that Great Day are normally called "the Apocalypse" simply because the English term *apocalypse* is a transliteration of the Greek word *apokalupsis*, which actually means "revelation." The Apostles are referring to the "revelation" of the *Living Word of God* to unbelievers in these passages:

*Therefore you are without excuse, every man {of you} who passes judgment, for in that you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things. And do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment upon those who practice such things and do the same {yourself,} that you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance? **But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who WILL RENDER TO EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS.***  
(Romans 2:1–6)

*I thank my God always concerning you, for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus, that in everything you were enriched in Him, in all speech and all knowledge, even as the testimony concerning Christ was confirmed in you, so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall also confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.*  
(1 Corinthians 1:4–8)

*In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, that the proof of your faith, {being} more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls. As to this*

salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that {would come} to you made careful search and inquiry, seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into which angels long to look. **Therefore, gird your minds for action, keep sober {in spirit,} fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.**

(1 Peter 1:6–13)

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but **to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing; so that also at the revelation of His glory, you may rejoice with exultation.** If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.

(1 Peter 4:12–14)

The question is, What *literal* event(s) do you suppose the *parabolic* “revelation” of the *Living Word* of God Who has hidden Himself in the Scriptures actually signifies? The Apostle Paul provides a little bit of insight when he mentions the “revelation of the righteous judgment of God.” As I have already pointed out elsewhere, the judgment of God consists in ignorance of the Truth on the part of those who have no love of the Truth:

**“And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who practices the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.”**

(John 3:19–21)

Let me speak plainly. A day is coming when men who hate the Truth will no longer be able to hide from the Truth simply because the Truth will be staring them right in the face—*literally*. That Day is called “Judgment Day” for good reason. This is the way Isaiah describes

the horrifying experience of those who have stupidly chosen to hide from the Truth in this life:

Because you have said,

“We have made a covenant with death,

And with Sheol we have made a pact.

The overwhelming scourge will not reach us

when it passes by,

**For we have made falsehood our refuge and**

**we have concealed ourselves with deception.”**

Therefore thus says the Lord GOD,

“Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone,

A costly cornerstone {for} the foundation, firmly placed.

He who believes {in it} will not be disturbed.

And I will make justice the measuring line,

And righteousness the level;

**Then hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies,**

And the waters shall overflow the secret place.

And your covenant with death shall be canceled,

And your pact with Sheol shall not stand;

When the overwhelming scourge passes through,

Then you become its trampling {place.}

As often as it passes through, it will seize you.

For morning after morning it will pass through,

{anytime} during the day or night.

**And it will be sheer terror to understand what it means.”**

(Isaiah 28:15–19)

In that Great Day, the children of the Liar will be forced to accept the Truth—long after it could ever do them any good. Jeremiah puts it this way:

Thus says the LORD of hosts,

“Behold, evil is going forth

From nation to nation,

And a great storm is being stirred up

From the remotest parts of the earth.

And those slain by the LORD on that day shall be from one end of the earth to the other. They shall not be lamented, gathered, or buried; they shall be like dung on the face of the ground.

Wail, you shepherds, and cry;

And wallow {in ashes,} you masters of the flock;

For the days of your slaughter and your dispersions have come,

And you shall fall like a choice vessel.

Flight shall perish from the shepherds,

And escape from the masters of the flock.

{Hear} the sound of the cry of the shepherds,

And the wailing of the masters of the flock!  
 For the LORD is destroying their pasture,  
 And the peaceful folds are made silent  
 Because of the fierce anger of the LORD.  
**He has left His hiding place like the lion;**  
 For their land has become a horror  
 Because of the fierceness of the oppressing {sword,}  
 And because of His fierce anger."  
 (Jeremiah 25:32–38)

Isaiah has already given True Believers the best advice that anyone could follow in regard to preparing for the "revelation" of the *Living Word of God* the Prophets "sealed up" in the "testimony" they prepared for the Day of Judgment. I will merely point it out here for the benefit of those who still have ears to hear. Again, as I have stated repeatedly over the years, "the law" should be translated "*The Teaching*":

Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples.  
 And I will wait for the LORD  
 who is hiding His face from the house of Jacob;  
 I will even look eagerly for Him.  
 (Isaiah 8:16–17)

Some will ignorantly ignore Isaiah's advice, thinking they need to help others "see" the "face" of the *Living Word of the Lord* they only *think* they "see" in the Scriptures. I have not been called to point out such folly. Those who act that way fail to understand that the skill of a Teacher and his method of teaching are completely immaterial. As a matter of fact, the less skilled a Teacher is, the more Glory the Lord accrues as more and more Believers are able to "see" the same things the Teacher "sees." That is because only the "Spirit" of the Lord can enable Believers to "see" the *parabolic imagery of The Apostolic Teaching*. Yet the foolish among us will go on thinking their miniscule grasp of *The Teaching* came by way of their great intellect.

The Truth is, most of those folks will eventually fail God's test and wander off into idle speculation, never once comprehending that all God requires on the part of True Believers is the patience to "wait for the Lord" and "look eagerly for Him." In other words, anyone who seeks to know the Truth must patiently study to show himself approved, and insight will gradually come as he hears more and more of the Truth explained. A word to the wise is more than sufficient.

**Editor:** This question is from a reader who would like to know why most people tend to emphasize *The Teaching of Paul* over *The Teaching of Jesus*. This person believes that *The Teaching of Jesus* is "totally different" from that of Paul. Would you comment on this?

**Elijah:** Your reader has a valid point. *The Teaching of Jesus* is "totally different" from that of Paul. However, the difference is not in *content*, it is in *style*. The reason people emphasize *The Teaching of Paul* over *The Teaching of Jesus* is because Jesus' explanation of *The Teaching*, like the Prophets' explanation of *The Teaching*, is almost completely *parabolic*. So people don't understand what Jesus *meant* by what He said. They only *think* they do. By contrast, Paul's explanation of *The Teaching* contains a mixture of both *literal* and *parabolic statements*. Again, people mistakenly only *think* they understand the *parabolic statements* he makes, but since they are able to understand the *literal statements*, they do have a better sense of what he is talking about.

The Truth is, people don't fully understand Paul's *Teaching*, and they don't understand Jesus' at all. That is because they don't understand the *parabolic imagery* the Prophets used to explain *The Teaching*. Let me give you an example of what I *mean*. Here is one of Jesus' more easily understood parables:

"Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who PLANTED A VINEYARD AND PUT A WALL AROUND IT AND DUG A WINE PRESS IN IT, AND BUILT A TOWER, and rented it out to vine-growers, and went on a journey. And when the harvest time approached, he sent his slaves to the vine-growers to receive his produce. And the vine-growers took his slaves and beat one, and killed another, and stoned a third. Again he sent another group of slaves larger than the first; and they did the same thing to them. But afterward he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' But when the vine-growers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and seize his inheritance.' And they took him, and threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. Therefore when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vine-growers?" They said to Him, "He will bring those wretches to a wretched end, and will rent out the vineyard to other vine-growers, who will pay him the proceeds at the {proper} seasons." Jesus said to them, "Did you never read in the Scriptures, 'THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED,

THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER {stone;}  
 THIS CAME ABOUT FROM THE LORD,  
 AND IT IS MARVELOUS IN OUR EYES?  
**Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it. And he who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust.** *And when the chief priests and the Pharisees heard His parables, they understood that He was speaking about them. And when they sought to seize Him, they feared the multitudes, because they held Him to be a prophet.*  
 (Matthew 21:33–46)

Did you notice that Jesus begins His parable by quoting from one of Isaiah’s parables? If not, you certainly didn’t understand what He *meant*. That is because He is indicating Isaiah has already defined the *parabolic imagery* He is using. Let me show you:

*Let me sing now for my well-beloved  
 A song of my beloved concerning His vineyard.  
 My well-beloved had a vineyard on a fertile hill.  
 And He dug it all around, removed its stones,  
 And planted it with the choicest vine.  
 And He built a tower in the middle of it,  
 And hewed out a wine vat in it;  
 Then He expected {it} to produce {good} grapes,  
 But it produced {only} worthless ones.  
 “And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah,  
 Judge between Me and My vineyard.  
 What more was there to do for My vineyard  
 that I have not done in it?  
 Why, when I expected {it} to produce {good} grapes  
 did it produce worthless ones?  
 So now let Me tell you what I am going to do to My vineyard:  
 I will remove its hedge and it will be consumed;  
 I will break down its wall and  
 it will become trampled ground.  
 And I will lay it waste;  
 It will not be pruned or hoed,  
 But briars and thorns will come up.  
 I will also charge the clouds to rain no rain on it.”  
**For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel,  
 And the men of Judah His delightful plant.**  
*Thus He looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed;  
 For righteousness, but behold, a cry of distress.*  
 (Isaiah 5:1–7)*

Who does Isaiah identify as the *parabolic* “vineyard” of the Lord? “*The House*” of Israel. Who are the *parabolic* “plants” in that *parabolic* “vineyard”? “The men of Judah,” that is, the Jews (the term *Jew* comes from the term *Judah*). So who are the *parabolic* “vine-growers” who tend the “vineyard”? Clearly, they must be the chief priests and Pharisees. Matthew confirms that by telling us “they understood that He was speaking about them.” Taking all that into consideration, what is the point of the parable? Just this:

*“Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it.”*  
 (Matthew 21:43)

Now anyone who knows anything at all about the Old Testament should already know that Israel is the “kingdom of God.” Moses established a theocratic form of government at God’s behest at Mt. Sinai, and the nation remained a theocracy until the sons of Israel adamantly rejected God as their King, demanding instead that they be given a human king:

*Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah; and they said to him, “Behold, you have grown old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint a king for us to judge us like all the nations.” But the thing was displeasing in the sight of Samuel when they said, “Give us a king to judge us.” And Samuel prayed to the LORD. And the LORD said to Samuel, “Listen to the voice of the people in regard to all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them. Like all the deeds which they have done since the day that I brought them up from Egypt even to this day—in that they have forsaken Me and served other gods—so they are doing to you also. Now then, listen to their voice; however, you shall solemnly warn them and tell them of the procedure of the king who will reign over them.”*  
 (1 Samuel 8:4–9)

Did Israel cease to be the *Kingdom of God* just because the people demanded, and God allowed Samuel to establish, a human monarchy? Of course it didn’t! Nobody can be that stupid! The human kings who ruled over Israel merely reigned as regents for God. God fully intended to reign as King over Israel, and He will

eventually do so in the Person of Jesus Christ. But unfortunately, the Jews are no longer a part of God's Kingdom. That is because, just as Jesus said, God took the Kingdom of God away from the leaders of the Jews and gave it "to a nation producing the fruit of it." So who do you think ended up as leaders of the Kingdom of God? You don't have to guess. Jesus has already told us, and the Apostle Paul explains how it happened. In so doing, Paul used some of the same *parabolic imagery* that Jesus used:

*I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says in {the passage about} Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel? "Lord, THEY HAVE KILLED THY PROPHETS, THEY HAVE TORN DOWN THINE ALTARS, AND I ALONE AM LEFT, AND THEY ARE SEEKING MY LIFE." But what is the divine response to him? "I HAVE KEPT FOR MYSELF SEVEN THOUSAND MEN WHO HAVE NOT BOWED THE KNEE TO BAAL." In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to {God's} gracious choice. But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace. What then? That which Israel is seeking for, it has not obtained, but those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened; just as it is written,*

*"GOD GAVE THEM A SPIRIT OF STUPOR,  
EYES TO SEE NOT AND EARS TO HEAR NOT,  
DOWN TO THIS VERY DAY."*

*And David says,*

*"LET THEIR TABLE BECOME A SNARE AND A TRAP,  
AND A STUMBLING BLOCK AND A RETRIBUTION TO THEM.  
LET THEIR EYES BE DARKENED TO SEE NOT,  
AND BEND THEIR BACKS FOREVER."*

*I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression salvation {has come} to the Gentiles, to make them jealous. Now if their transgression be riches for the world and their failure be riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulfillment be! But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, if somehow I might move to jealousy my fellow countrymen and save some of them. For if their rejection be the reconciliation of the world, what will {their} acceptance be but life from the dead? And if the first piece {of dough} be holy, the lump is also; and if the root be holy, the branches are too. But if some of the branches*

*were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree, do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, {remember that} it is not you who supports the root, but the root {supports} you. You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in." Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear; for if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will He spare you. Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off. And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in; for God is able to graft them in again. For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more shall these who are the natural {branches} be grafted into their own olive tree?*

*(Romans 11:1-24)*

If you take the information concerning the Hebrew idiom "cut off from" that I provided in *Not All Israel Is Israel* and apply it to that passage, you should be able to extract four pieces of information: (1) Jesus Christ has become the *parabolic* olive tree that is Israel; (2) all of the Jews are *parabolic* branches that were "cut off from" the *parabolic* olive tree that was Israel; (3) to become a branch on the *parabolic* olive tree that Israel still is, a Gentile must be "grafted in" and a Jew must be "grafted in" *again* by believing in Christ; and (4) the Jews like Paul who have been "grafted in" to Christ are part of "The Remnant" of Israel that continues on.

Knowing all that, a very simple process of logical reasoning would lead any rational person to the obvious conclusion that the Apostles must have replaced the chief priests and Pharisees as the leaders of Israel. But that intellectual activity is only necessary for knuckleheads who need such exercises to demonstrate their immense mental might. The rest of us have only to read what Jesus said:

*Then Peter answered and said to Him, "Behold, we have left everything and followed You; what then will there be for us?" And Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you*

*also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”*  
(Matthew 19:27–28)

*Editor: This question is from a subscriber who noticed that in your translation of various passages from Genesis you normally translate the Hebrew word ishshah as “woman” rather than “wife” as the NASB translates it. However, the one exception to this is your translation of Genesis 3:20 (The Voice of Elijah®, July 2001, p. 4) where you used the standard translation “wife” rather than “woman.” The subscriber would like to know if this was just a slip or whether it was intentional. Also, can you explain why you use the term woman instead of wife in your translation?*

*Elijah:* The reason I use the English term *woman* rather than *wife* in my translations is because part of my calling is to *restore* the ancient Oriental mind-set reflected in the Scriptures so that “The Many” will be able to think in terms of the same mental (*parabolic*) imagery evoked by the Hebrew idioms in which *The Teaching* has been couched. So I certainly would not advance my cause by inferring that when the ancient Hebrews used the *generic* term I translate as “woman,” they thought in terms of the same mental imagery that is elicited when modern folks use the *legal* term *wife*. As you can see from my slip in translating Genesis 3:20, it is sometimes difficult even for me to escape the modern Western mind-set. I corrected the mistake as soon as you pointed it out. That error crept into my translation in spite of the fact that I have been working to eliminate such concepts from my own mind for more than three decades.

If someone wants to convey an accurate sense of the mind-set represented in the Scriptures, yet objects to my use of the completely neutral term *woman* to refer to a female who has become “one flesh” with a male (as the Hebrews did), they should probably resort to the non-legal term *mate*, since the same term that most translate as “wife” and I translate as “woman” is used in the following two passages to refer to the female of various species other than *homo sapiens*:

*Then the LORD said to Noah, “Enter the ark, you and all your household; for you {alone} I have seen {to be} righteous before Me in this time. You shall take with you of every clean animal by sevens, a male and his female; and of the animals that are not clean two, a male and his*

*female; also of the birds of the sky, by sevens, male and female, to keep offspring alive on the face of all the earth.”*  
(Genesis 7:1–3)

*The tree snake shall make its nest and lay {eggs} there,  
And it will hatch and gather {them} under its protection.  
Yes, the hawks shall be gathered there,  
Every one with its **kind**.  
Seek from the book of the LORD, and read:  
Not one of these will be missing;  
None will lack its **mate**.  
For His mouth has commanded,  
And His Spirit has gathered them.*  
(Isaiah 34:15–16)

It is important to keep in mind that a man’s *wife* has *specific legal rights* in our modern *Western* culture. A man’s *woman* had virtually *no legal rights* under the Old Covenant, and she gained very few *legal rights* under the New. The most *significant* fact as far as *The Teaching* is concerned has to do with the rights related to divorce. Under the Old Covenant, a man who for some reason decided he no longer wanted his “woman” around could divorce her (“send her away”) just by giving her a written statement to that effect. The only restriction was that he could never take her back:

*“When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts {it} in her hand and sends her out from his house, and she leaves his house and goes and becomes another man’s {wife,} and if the latter husband turns against her and writes her a certificate of divorce and puts {it} in her hand and sends her out of his house, or if the latter husband dies who took her to be his wife, {then} her former husband who sent her away is not allowed to take her again to be his wife, since she has been defiled; for that is an abomination before the LORD, and you shall not bring sin on the land which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance.”*  
(Deuteronomy 24:1–4)

I challenge you to find any place in the Scriptures where a man’s “woman” is given the right to divorce (“send away”) a man with whom she has become “one flesh.” The reason you won’t find any such statement is easy to explain. God has never allowed a woman to

repudiate one “man” and move on to another “man.” In the Hebrew Scriptures such an action would not be divorce (“sending away”), it would be *adultery*; and the *parabolic imagery* associated with *adultery* is a key part of *The Teaching*. That is why it is absolutely essential that the legal term *wife* give way to a more general term such as *mate* or *woman*.

In the New Testament, Jesus declares that divorce is allowed only in case of adultery. However, that allowance still does not give a female Believer the right to divorce a man with whom she has become “one flesh.” That is so because the biblical term *adultery* is a specific *legal* term whose definition God accepted when He included it in the Ten Commandments. According to that definition—which must remain *unchangeable* if the term is to have any *meaning* at all—adultery is a sin that can only be committed against a man, never against a woman. (See “O’ What a Lofty Perch This Is!” *The Voice of Elijah*®, January 2004.)

The modern legal system clearly does not define adultery “*The Way*” the Scriptures do. So much for the disparate way that God and man look at the rights of women. I won’t even bother to address the issue of how God looks at slavery. But enough about the divergent “way” blind men “see” things. None of this makes any difference to fools anyway. They ignorantly assume they already think “*The Way*” God thinks.

The Greek New Testament exhibits the same basic mentality as the Hebrew Scriptures do in regard to the Greek term that is normally translated “wife.” That is, the female member of a “one-flesh” relationship is the man’s “woman.” Jesus uses that generic Greek term to address His Own mother in the following two passages. I seriously doubt He intended to call her His “wife”:

*And on the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there; and Jesus also was invited, and His disciples, to the wedding. And when the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to Him, “They have no wine.” And Jesus said to her, “Woman, what do I have to do with you? My hour has not yet come.”*  
(John 2:1–4)

*The soldiers therefore, when they had crucified Jesus, took His outer garments and made four parts, a part to every soldier and {also} the tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece. They said therefore to one another,*

*“Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, {to decide} whose it shall be”; that the Scripture might be fulfilled, “THEY DIVIDED MY OUTER GARMENTS AMONG THEM, AND FOR MY CLOTHING THEY CAST LOTS.” Therefore the soldiers did these things. But there were standing by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother’s sister, Mary the {wife} of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, “Woman, behold, your son!” Then He said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother!” And from that hour the disciple took her into his own {household.}*  
(John 19:23–27)

The issue in regard to the terminology I use in translating the Scriptures always comes back to the same question, How can I best highlight the *parabolic imagery* of *The Apostolic Teaching* for the benefit of Believers who can’t read the original text? For example, most translators choose to translate the Hebrew word for *seed* as “descendant” or “offspring” when it refers to mankind. That is certainly a more readable alternative, but that translation completely obscures the ancient mind-set in regard to the term *seed* and makes it just that much more difficult for modern readers to latch on to the *meaning* and *significance* of the Hebrew idiom “raise up a seed.” It also makes it impossible for them to get the point of Paul’s argument in this passage:

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

As Paul knew full well, the Hebrew noun that means “seed” is a collective. It has no plural form. If that bit of insight makes no difference at all to you, it’s fairly obvious you might as well just start counting *sheeps* and go back to *sleep*. ■