



THE VOICE of ELIJAH

Restoring the hearts of the fathers to the children

The Law and the Prophets Were Until John

Since, then, the law originated with Moses, it terminated with John as a necessary consequence. Christ had come to fulfil it: wherefore "the law and the prophets were" with them "until John." And therefore Jerusalem, taking its commencement from David, and fulfilling its own times, must have an end of legislation when the new covenant was revealed. For God does all things by measure and in order; nothing is unmeasured with Him, because nothing is out of order. Well spake he, who said that the unmeasurable Father was Himself subjected to measure in the Son; for the Son is the measure of the Father, since He also comprehends Him. But that the administration of them (the Jews) was temporary, Esaias says: "And the daughter of Zion shall be left as a cottage in a vineyard, and as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers." And when shall these things be left behind? Is it not when the fruit shall be taken away, and the leaves alone shall be left, which now have no power of producing fruit?

But why do we speak of Jerusalem, since, indeed, the fashion of the whole world must also pass away, when the time of its disappearance has come, in order that the fruit indeed may be gathered into the garner, but the chaff, left behind, may be consumed by fire? "For the day of the Lord cometh as a burning furnace, and all sinners shall be stubble, they who do evil things, and the day shall burn them up." Now, who this Lord is that brings such a day about, John the Baptist points out, when he says of Christ, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire, having His fan in His hand to cleanse His floor; and He will gather His fruit into the garner, but the chaff He will burn up with unquenchable fire." For He who makes the chaff and He who makes the wheat are not different persons, but one and the same, who judges them, that is, separates them. But the wheat and the chaff, being inanimate and irrational, have been made such by nature. But man, being endowed with reason, and in this respect like to

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God, having been made free in his will, and with power over himself, is himself the cause to himself, that sometimes he becomes wheat, and sometimes chaff. Wherefore also he shall be justly condemned, because, having been created a rational being, he lost the true rationality, and living irrationally, opposed the righteousness of God, giving himself over to every earthly spirit, and serving all lusts; as says the prophet, "Man, being in honour, did not understand: he was assimilated to senseless beasts, and made like to them."

God, therefore, is one and the same, who rolls up the heaven as a book, and renews the face of the earth; who made the things of time for man, so that coming to maturity in them, he may produce the fruit of immortality; and who, through His kindness, also bestows [upon him] eternal things, "that in the ages to come He may show the exceeding riches of His grace;" who was announced by the law and the prophets, whom Christ confessed as His Father. Now He is the Creator, and He it is who is God over all, as Isaiah says, "I am witness, saith the LORD God, and my servant whom I have chosen, that ye may know, and believe, and understand that I AM. Before me there was no other God, neither shall be after me. I am God, and besides me there is no Saviour. I have proclaimed, and I have saved." And again: "I myself am the first God, and I am above things to come." For neither in an ambiguous, nor arrogant, nor boastful manner, does He say these things; but since it was impossible, without God, to come to a knowledge of God, He teaches men, through His Word, to know God. To those, therefore, who are ignorant of these matters, and on this account imagine that they have discovered another Father, justly does one say, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God."

Irenaeus, "Against Heresies," Book iv, Chaps. iv-6, in Roberts and Donaldson (Eds.), *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (1867), Vol. 1, p. 466.

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A Note From the Editor

In the past four issues of *The Voice of Elijah*®, I have talked about the fact that we humans lie to ourselves for a variety of reasons. Sometimes we do so to alleviate the emotional distress (guilt, shame, fear, etc.) associated with doing something wrong, and sometimes we do so to experience the emotional high (joy, peace, happiness, etc.) that believing some particular lie produces within us. Regardless of our reason, however, one thing is consistently true: We lie to ourselves because we find lies more comforting (from an emotional and psychological standpoint) than the harsh reality of the Truth. Think about it logically. If the Truth were always more comforting to believe than lies, why would we choose to believe lies over the Truth? We wouldn't.

The fact that the Church today believes a plethora of lies can be traced to the fact that "Christians" prefer to hear comforting words that make them feel secure in their relationship with their imaginary god rather than the Truth that instills fear in the God Who is. Or has it never occurred to you that the cupcake god being preached in the Church today who feels so lovey-dovey toward sinful humans is not the same God of wrath Who demanded a human sacrifice in order to appease His anger toward sin and sinners? If the reality of that thought has escaped you until now, it's probably because you have bought into the lie that the God Who never changes has changed. Unfortunately, that's just another of the many lies Satan has subtly instilled in the "Christian" mind-set.

Although most Church leaders rightly teach that God never changes, they vehemently object to The Teaching that the God of wrath Who hated the Wicked (Ps. 5:4-5, 11:5) in Old Testament times still hates the Wicked—the guilty—today. In their confused and delusional state, these leaders fail to see any inconsistency in the belief that the God Who never changes and Who hated the Wicked in the Old Testament now suddenly has unconditional love for everyone. They fail to see this inconsistency because they refuse to believe the God of the Old Testament ever hated anyone, despite straightforward statements in the Scriptures to the contrary. Since these statements were examined in the last issue of *The Voice of Elijah*®, there is no need to review them again here.

I mentioned the word *inconsistency* twice in the last paragraph because it should be obvious that lies are always inconsistent with the Truth. Logic says this must be true. Unfortunately, logic and consistency of facts are no longer considered important elements of the Christian faith these days. That's because "faith," as defined by the Church these days, is the willingness to believe what you don't understand. For instance, "Christians" often say, "I don't understand it, but I accept it by faith," when discussing some particular doctrinal issue they believe but don't comprehend. Unfortunately, that's not faith; that's wishful thinking based on what they *hope* is true. The notion that faith is hope is another lie the

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Church swallowed hook, line, and sinker years ago. (See "Satan's Fools Are Satan's Tools," *The Voice of Elijah*®, April 1994.)

The Truth is, God has always intended Christian faith to be rooted in a logical understanding of the facts. That is, the True Believer's faith is supposed to be based on the absolute certainty that something is true because one has listened carefully to a Teacher and found his explanation of the facts to be logical and consistent with the evidence found in the Scriptures. The Berean Christians, who were taught by the Apostle Paul, are a good example:

And the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea; and when they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, {to see} whether these things were so. Many of them therefore believed, along with a number of prominent Greek women and men.
(Acts 17:10-12)

Notice the sequence here. First, the Bereans listened to the oral Teaching of the Apostle Paul as he explained the Word of God to them. Then they examined the Hebrew Scriptures (daily) to see if the evidence presented therein confirmed the Word Paul was explaining. (Note that the Word of God the Bereans "received" is distinct from the Hebrew Scriptures they used to confirm that Word.) Finally, because the oral Teaching of Paul made sense and was consistent with the evidence found in the written text of the Scriptures, many of the Bereans believed (put their faith in) the Word he proclaimed.

The Bereans believed the Word they heard because it made sense and was consistent with the evidence found in the Old Testament (Hebrew Scriptures). That is, they believed The Apostolic Teaching because they saw good reason to believe it. There was no "leap of faith" or wishful thinking on their part, and there shouldn't be any on our part either. So don't buy the lie that you are demonstrating great "faith" when you blindly accept something

as true that doesn't make sense or have biblical support. That's not faith; that's stupidity.

Another lie that is commonly accepted and regularly touted in the Church these days is the notion that every good thing that happens in the life of a "Christian" is a "blessing" from God. This is not to say that God, in His mercy and kindness, doesn't bestow good things on His "Children." But it is a mistake to assume that every "Child" of God who enjoys health, wealth, success, and the like, has been directly "blessed" by God. Here are just a few reasons you shouldn't make that assumption.

First, "prosperity theology" is impossible to "prove." For instance, if a "Christian" wins the lottery, how can anyone (other than a Prophet who receives revelation from God) say that God was responsible for making that happen? They can't. The second reason you should avoid judging who God has or hasn't "blessed" is because that's exactly what the Pharisees did in Jesus' day. That alone is reason enough to avoid making similar judgments. However, another reason one shouldn't assume that every good thing enjoyed by a "Child" of God is a "blessing" from God is because not every "Child" enjoys similar "blessings." Some of God's "Children" actually live in abject poverty. Does this mean they are somehow less deserving of God's "blessings"? I don't think so. But this misses the crux of the matter.

Folks in the Church today have a skewed view of what God's "blessing" is. They think good health, material wealth, personal success, and the like, are indicators of how much God has "blessed" someone. That's not true. The fact is, the blessing God seeks to bestow on His "Children" is not external; it is an internal knowledge of The Teaching. True Believers who are granted insight into that body of knowledge have received the blessing God seeks to bestow on all His "Children," regardless of their lot in life. It may be comforting to believe that God desires to bestow something more than knowledge and understanding on His "Children" down here (and He often does), but the blessing of God is the promise of a phenomenal new life in the hereafter. There is no such promise attached to the here and now.

Allen Fries

Pharisees, Phoneyes, and a Phairly Phenomenal Phalanx of Phools

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

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

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

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

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

In the fourth article of the series, which I titled "And Now Let Me Tell You What I Am Going to Do to My Vineyard" (**The Voice of Elijah**®, October 2004), I explained what Jesus had in mind when He referred to Himself as "the Son of the man." That phrase is normally translated as "the Son of Man." Not surprisingly, He is

appealing to the fact that He has taken on the image and likeness of Adam.

In this, the fifth article of the series, I will explain what Jesus was talking about when He used the parabolic image of "blindness."

Don't Tell Blind Men They Can't See

If you honestly (or dishonestly) believe that any segment of the Church today is what God intended the Church to be, you really should stop to consider just how ridiculous that belief is. What, exactly, do you *think* God wants the Church to be? Where, exactly, did you get that information? And finally, how could anyone be so stupidly silly as to base their hope of the eternal hereafter on something somebody quite obviously pulled out of thin air?

Now that I've gotten straight to the point, let me remind you that historical evidence indicates all people have a distinctly innate tendency—in spite of their best efforts and indignant protests to the contrary—to repeat the same stupid mistakes that former generations made. If you doubt that, it is most likely because you like it that way. After all, dopey dullards display a decided disposition for doing dumb deeds. Which reminds me of something Jesus once said that somehow seems appropriate to the current situation in the Church. It just so happens that, in so doing, He was addressing the religious leaders of His day. Those folks were—like most of the mindless moronic mentors menacing the members of the Church today—so stolidly stupid that they actually thought their little backwater "church" was exactly what God required. Jesus rather rudely reminded them the Father didn't "see" things quite the same way they did:

Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and His disciples, saying: *“The scribes and the Pharisees have taken a seat on the chair of Moses. Therefore, do and pay attention to whatever they have said to you; but don’t do according to their works, for they say and don’t do. And they bind up heavy weights and put them on the shoulders of men; but they themselves are not willing to move them with even their finger. They do all their works in order to be seen by men; for they make their phylacteries large and the tassels long. And they love the place of honor at the banquets, and the seats of honor in the synagogues, and the greetings in the markets, and to be called ‘Rabbi’ by men. But you yourselves should not be called ‘Rabbi.’ For One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers. And don’t call a father yours on the Earth, for One is your heavenly Father. Neither be called ‘leader,’ because your Leader is One—the Christ—and the greatest of you will be your servant. And whoever exalts himself will be humiliated; and whoever humbles himself will be exalted. **But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees—hypocrites!** Because you shut up the kingdom of Heaven before men. For you do not enter yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to enter... **Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees—hypocrites!** Because you go around the sea and dry land to make one proselyte. And when he becomes {one}, you make him a son of hell—twice as much as you. **Woe to you, blind guides—**those who say: ‘Whoever swears by the temple, that is nothing. But whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is obligated.’ **Morons and blind men!** For which is greater, the gold or the temple that made the gold holy? And: ‘Whoever swears by the altar, that is nothing. But whoever swears by the offering on it, he is obligated.’ **Blind men!** For which is greater, the offering or the altar which makes the offering holy? Therefore, (1) the one who swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it; and (2) the one who swears by the temple swears by it and by the One Who inhabits it; and (3) the one who swears by Heaven swears by the throne of the {Living} God and by the One Who sits on it. **Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees—hypocrites!** Because you give a tenth of mint, dill, and cumin, but let go of the important {parts} of the Law—the Judgment, the Mercy, and the Belief. Yet it was necessary to do these and not let go of the others. **Blind guides!** Those who strain off a gnat and gulp down a camel! **Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees—hypocrites!** Because you clean the outside of the cup and the dish. Yet inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. **Blind Pharisee!***

*Clean first within the cup so that what is without may also become clean. **Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees—hypocrites!** Because you are like whitewashed tombs which—on the outside—look lovely, but—on the inside—are full of bones of dead {people} and all {sorts of} uncleanness. Likewise, you yourselves—on the outside—look right to men, but—on the inside—you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. **Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees—hypocrites!** Because you build the tombs of the Prophets and make the monuments of the innocent beautiful, and you say, ‘If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been their partners in the blood of the Prophets.’ Therefore, you testify against yourselves—that you are sons of those who murdered the Prophets. So fill up the measure {—the cup—} of your fathers. **Snakes! Offspring of vipers!** How will you escape the Judgment of Hell? Because of this, Look! I am sending to you Prophets, and wise {men}, and scribes. Some of them you will kill and crucify; and some of them you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from city to city so that on you will come all innocent blood shed on the Earth, from the blood of Abel—the innocent—to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. Without doubt, I say to you, all these things will come on this Generation. Jerusalem! Jerusalem! The one who kills the Prophets and stones those who have been sent to her! How many times have I been willing to gather your children together the way a hen gathers her chicks together under her wings, but you were not willing? Look! Your house is left to you empty. For I say to you, you will not see Me from now until you say, ‘BLESSED IS THE ONE WHO IS COMING IN “THE NAME” OF HIS MAJESTY.’”*

(Matthew 23:1–39) —my interim translation

We’ll come back to that passage a little later on in this article and go through it carefully so that you don’t overlook the acrid contempt Jesus held for mendacious morons. Right now, I want to show you something you need to know but may not have thought much about. Did you happen to notice as you read that passage how many times Jesus called the religious leaders of His day “hypocrites”? And when He wasn’t rather rudely repudiating their ridiculous religiosity by ridiculing their sanctimonious stupidity, He was flat out insulting them by slapping some other not-quite-so-flattering label on them. I sort of like “morons and blind men” myself, but maybe you prefer the more cutting “snakes” and

“offspring of vipers.” I wouldn’t argue with you; both of those appellations are fairly accurate descriptions of any religious leader who does what the scribes and Pharisees were doing—emphasizing *doing* over *being*, which is exactly where the leaders of the Church are today in their pompous, pious pretense.

As you may have already concluded, Jesus called the scribes and Pharisees “blind guides” because they were seducing similarly situated simpletons into a stupendously stupid state of focusing on *doing* instead of *being*. The deduction demanded by His damning descriptor? Numerous numskulls are directing a drove of decidedly dimwitted dullards into damnation because they blithely believe their pompously pietistic posturing perfectly prevents God from peering into their pathetic pretense. (So sorry. Such astounding stupidity merits much more monumental mockery than one can muster through the written word.)

Have you ever looked into how the Prophets, the Apostles, and Jesus Himself used the *parabolic image* of “blindness”? I *mean*, really looked into it? If not, you might want to do that sometime. When you do, you will discover the Prophet Isaiah built quite an elaborate edifice on the rock-solid foundation established by the *parabolic imagery* the Prophet Moses provided. (If you want to find where Moses mentions such things, first think “God accepts no blind sacrifice”; then think “God accepts only the *sacrificial* Body of Christ.”)

In your research into the *parabolic imagery* of “blindness,” you will also eventually come across the following three passages in which Jesus, while quite obviously speaking *parabolically*, ridicules the “blind guides” of His Own day. What Jesus says to the scribes and Pharisees applies equally as well to every other generation—especially the present generation, where one can find little more than a rancid regurgitating of nonstop nonsense on the telly. So you should probably pay close attention to the *parabolic imagery* Jesus used to display a distinctly derisive disdain for the spiritual forebearers of the “blind guides” plying their trade in the Church today. That *parabolic imagery* might contribute a great deal more to your understanding of the message of the Scriptures than you could ever imagine.

Exhibit #1

The first of the three passages I mentioned above clearly indicates Jesus was using *physical* blindness as a *parabolic image* to describe the *mental* state manifested by

mendacious morons firmly fixated on a falsehood that fooled them into feeling they understood the message of the Hebrew Scriptures when the Truth is, they didn’t understand anything at all. A wise person will seriously consider whether Jesus’ words might apply equally as well to him. A fool will go on believing Satan’s lie:

But He also told them a parable: “A blind man is not able to guide a blind man, is he? Will not both fall into a pit? A disciple is not above the Teacher; but having been thoroughly prepared, everyone will be like his Teacher. But why do you see the {wood} chip in your brother’s eye, yet not notice the beam of wood in your own eye? How are you able to say to your brother, ‘Brother, let me remove the {wood} chip that is in your eye,’ not seeing the beam of wood in your eye? ***Hypocrite! First remove the beam of wood from your eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the {wood} chip in your brother’s eye.***” (Luke 6:39–42) —my interim translation

In that passage, Jesus not only defines what He *means* by the remarkably descriptive *parabolic image* of “blindness,” He also reveals the real-life *context* to which that *parabolic image* applies. That is, *physical* blindness is *parabolically* LIKE the *mental* inability of idiots, morons, and imbeciles to “see” that what they believe is not true. (See “Don’t Confuse a Fool; Let the Idiot Think He Knows,” *The Voice of Elijah*®, October 2000.) To overcome that *mental* handicap, Jesus slyly infers that one should listen to, and learn the Truth from, a Teacher who actually knows the Truth.

Unfortunately, most “blind” folks don’t want to hear what Jesus said about them. Their *mental* “blindness” and *psychological* “dumbness” (inability to hear) is so severe that they are absolutely convinced they have no need for *anyone* to explain the things the Prophets hid in their writings. They would rather “stumble” around “blindly” in the *parabolic* “darkness” of their own ignorance and try to figure out such things for themselves. That way, they can impress both themselves and other like-minded morons by proudly “showing what they know” and pointing out where others with a somewhat less severe form of *mental* “blindness” (that is, those who can at least “see” they don’t know the Truth) have gone wrong.

I assume, since you are still reading my distinctly derisive diatribe, that you may be one of the very few in our generation who can still “see” that you don’t understand the Truth. You are fortunate in that respect.

Through the absolutely ludicrous comparison (parable) in which He depicts one person as having a small chip of wood in his eye and another person—who thinks himself competent to remove that “chip”—as having a huge wooden pole sticking out of his, Jesus makes the point that some folks are so stupid that they *think* they can “see” when they are *mentally* as “blind” as a bat.

Amazingly enough, the similitude (parable) Jesus uses to make His point is such an accurate depiction of reality that the pole-eyed polecats in our generation can’t even begin to understand His parable. (If you are not familiar with the term *polecat*—*mustela putorius*—feel free to substitute the more commonly used term *skunk*.) Pole-eyed pontificators, being the malodorous mammals they are, find it absolutely impossible to peer past the pole that has been permanently plunged into their peepers. Since the beliefs of brainless bimbos arise from a basic built-in buffoonery, they carry around a crushing compulsion to constantly correct chip-eyed cretins who can at least catch a corner of the constituent components of the Truth.

More than a few pole-eyed pulpit parrots will undoubtedly accuse me of being one of those whom Jesus condemned in His parable, so let me respond to that dimwitted denunciation. If God has not called me to teach those of whom His Evangelists have already “made disciples” (Matt. 28:19), I readily confess to being the “blindest” of all pole-eyed pontificating polecats. But if He has instead made it possible for me to remove the *parabolic* “beam of wood” that once obstructed my own view of the Scriptures so that I might be qualified to remove the *parabolic* “chip of wood” obstructing the “eyes” of those who are honestly seeking the Truth, the “blind guides” making such contentious calumnies undoubtedly have a surprise awaiting them on Resurrection Morn. Let’s not spoil it for them. Okay?

Since you, the reader, are presumedly not one of the mental midgets whom Jesus *parabolically* describes as blindly leading others into the Pit, you should trust your own informed opinion of me rather than that of some dimwitted dunce with a *parabolic* phone pole protruding from his eye.

Exhibit #2

In the second passage where Jesus calls the scribes and Pharisees “blind guides,” He is again *talking about* their overweening obsession with teaching others

the genuinely goofy things they *thought* they could “see” in the Scriptures. You would do well to ingest, digest, and assimilate the *parabolic* “bread” that Jesus had in mind when He used the *parabolic image* of “blindness” to ridicule religious retreats for rigidly retaining some definitely dumb doctrines. His contempt also falls on the pious, pompous Pretenders preaching today; but they are so “blind” they can’t even “see” His parables indict them as well:

*Then some of the Pharisees and scribes come to Jesus from Jerusalem, saying: “Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they don’t wash their hands when they eat bread.” But answering, He said to them: “And why do you transgress the commandment of the {Living} God because of your tradition? For the {Living} God said, ‘HONOR THE FATHER AND THE MOTHER’ and ‘LET WHOEVER SPEAKS EVIL OF FATHER OR MOTHER COME TO AN END IN DEATH.’ But you say, ‘Anyone may say to the father or the mother, “Whatever by which you could have been helped is an offering from me.”’ He will not honor his father {or his mother}; and **you nullify the word of the {Living} God because of your tradition. Hypocrites!** Isaiah correctly prophesied concerning you, saying: ‘THIS PEOPLE, WITH THE LIPS, HONORS ME; BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR FROM ME. AND THEY WORSHIP ME IN VAIN, TEACHING TEACHINGS—PRECEPTS OF MEN.’” And summoning the crowd, He said to them, “Listen, and put {it} together: What goes into the mouth does not defile ‘the man,’ but what comes out from the mouth—this defiles ‘the man.’” Then His disciples, coming, say, to Him, “Did You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard the word?” But answering, He said: “Every plant which My heavenly Father did not plant will be uprooted. Let them go! **They are blind guides {of the blind}. And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit.**” But Peter, answering, said to Him, “Explain the parable to us.” And He said: “Are you still without understanding? Don’t you understand that everything that goes into the mouth makes room in the stomach and is eliminated in the toilet? **But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart; and those things defile the man. For from the heart come bad thoughts, murders, adulteries, sexual immorality, stealing, false witness, slanders. These are the things that defile the man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man.**”*

(Matthew 15:1–20) —my interim translation

To understand why Matthew included that acidic exchange between Jesus and the scribes and Pharisees, you first need to know that it sits squarely in the middle of an ongoing discussion Jesus was having with His disciples about the Hebrew idiom “raise up a seed.” That is, He was giving them a detailed explanation of how He was *parabolically* LIKE a “loaf” of “bread” made from the “Seed” that God sent down from Heaven so that men might “eat” and live forever. To get a more complete understanding of what Jesus told them, one has to put Matthew’s account together with things John records in his Gospel. (See “Thy Kingdom Come. Thy Will Be Done, on Earth,” *The Voice of Elijah*®, April 1997 and “If You Plan to Reap What You Sow, You Had Better Watch What You Plant,” *The Voice of Elijah*®, April 1998.) Should you decide to do that bit of homework, just keep in mind that, *parabolically* speaking, the “bread of life” that began as a “Seed” that came down from Heaven is *The Teaching* that Jesus Christ is and always has been. The ultimate basis for everything Jesus says in regard to Himself as the *parabolic* “bread of life” is what Moses wrote in the following verse:

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

(Deuteronomy 8:3) —my interim translation

As you were reading that passage, I trust you noticed that Moses is speaking *parabolically* in terms of the Man just as Jesus did in the passage above. I mention that only because Matthew indicates Jesus had already explained to His disciples what Moses and the Prophets wrote about the Man. (See “And Now Let Me Tell You What I Am Going to Do to My Vineyard,” *The Voice of Elijah*®, October 2004.)

Insight into Matthew’s mind-set is absolutely essential to a comprehensive understanding of the various events he chose to include in his Gospel. But even without the benefit of that insight, one can easily understand what Jesus said in His confrontation with the scribes and Pharisees. When they asked, “Why do Your disciples transgress *the tradition of the elders*?” they were referring to an *oral tradition* they claimed had been accurately *handed down* to them from Moses. (See

The Way, The Truth, The Life.) If you want to know what that *oral tradition* included, the Jews have, for the past 1800 years, insisted it was written down in a collection of writings known as the Mishnah. Unfortunately, that literary collection blatantly bases its *raison d’être* on this not-so-insignificant lie:

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

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

As I explained in *The Way, The Truth, The Life* and again in *The Mystery of Scripture, Volume 1*, Moses most certainly did *receive* an *oral tradition* at Mt. Sinai, just as the Jews claim. But he did not *deliver* *The Teaching* to Joshua so that he might *deliver* it to the Elders, so that the Elders might *deliver* it to the Prophets. In the Book of Deuteronomy, Moses clearly indicates he *delivered* *The Teaching* to the Levitical priests and solemnly charged them with the responsibility for *handing it down orally* to the next generation.

The Hebrew Scriptures just as clearly reveal the Prophets did not *receive* their insight into *The Teaching* from the Elders. They got it directly from God. (See *The Way, The Truth, The Life.*) A careful reading of the Prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel should have dissipated that lie long ago. After all, those two do repeatedly make the claim that “the word of the Lord came to me.” But, I suppose, if one does not understand that God called the Prophets to *restore* *The Teaching* to the Levitical priesthood, one can’t even begin to understand what that statement *means*.

Jesus completely repudiated the teaching of the scribes and Pharisees. So only a pompous, pious, pole-eyed pulpit parrot would still be bumbling around blindly believing some variant form of the ridiculous “do this, don’t do that” nonsense that Judaism got from the Pharisees. Not only does Jesus reject the claim that the *oral tradition* they taught had been *handed down* to them from the time of Moses; He also tells them their *oral tradition* flatly contradicts the *oral tradition* God gave to Moses. (And Jesus should know, since *The Teaching* of

Moses is the *oral tradition* He restored to Israel when He *delivered* it to His disciples.)

Jesus quotes the Prophet Isaiah to the effect that the *parabolic* “puke” preached by pompous, pious, pole-eyed prevaricators in His day was preposterous. He knew their nonsense was something that had spewed out of the mouth of some anonymous “prophet” during the “Great Synagogue” the Pharisees convened solely to deny the Sadducees the power of the priesthood after the Maccabean revolt roughly a century and a half before Christ. It certainly did not come from Moses, the Prophet who was the first “mouth” of God. But after Jesus quotes Isaiah, He says the one thing that every rabid Pharisee—to this very day—finds absolutely impossible to accept:

“Listen, and put {it} together: What goes into the mouth does not defile the man, but what comes out from the mouth—this defiles the man.”

(Matthew 15:10b–11) —my interim translation

Now that you have heard what Peter later calls “the word” directly from the Lord Himself, let’s see how you score on a little quiz designed to identify Pharisees:

1. Does drinking coffee defile you?
2. Does drinking alcohol defile you?
3. Does eating pork defile you?
4. Does eating blood defile you?
5. Does eating fat defile you?
6. Does chewing tobacco defile you?
7. Does smoking tobacco defile you?

You can grade yourself now and determine how staunch a Pharisee you are by how many of those questions you answered “yes.” The only reason you would contradict Jesus and insist that any or all of those things is a sin is because you have been taught by Pharisees. And those are the same sorry sort of semi-conscious *homo sapiens* that Jesus ostentatiously offended by flatly rejecting their idiotic “do this but don’t do that” nonsense. So let me explain why none of the activities listed above can possibly defile anyone. To do that, I must first tell you that God will indeed judge you for your actions (Rom. 2:6). But He will not judge you solely on the basis of *what you did*, He will also take into account *why you did it*. To put it bluntly, you can do

the right thing until Hell freezes over; but if you do it for the wrong reason, the eternal flame generated by your soul burning will effectively ensure that Hell never freezes over again.

In the *parabolic statements* Jesus made to the scribes and Pharisees, He was *parabolically* comparing the effects that stem from *receiving* the *oral tradition* of the scribes and Pharisees with the effects that stem from eating *literal* bread. He chastened Peter for asking Him to explain “the parable” because He had already explained how *receiving* *The Teaching* is *parabolically* LIKE eating a “bread of life” which remains in the “heart” and then comes back out of the mouth to give life to others:

And He said: “Are you still without understanding? Don’t you understand that everything that goes into the mouth makes room in the stomach and is eliminated in the toilet? But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart; and those things defile the man. For from the heart come bad thoughts, murders, adulteries, sexual immorality, stealing, false witness, slanders. These are the things that defile the man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man.”

(Matthew 15:16–20) —my interim translation

Were you surprised to find that Jesus rather graphically described what we all know goes on in the loo? Maybe; maybe not. “Christian” translators, by and large, can’t bring themselves to admit that the Scriptures sometimes describe activities that their most sanctimonious selves find offensive. So they censor things a bit here and there so as not to defile the most holy eyes and ears of other “Christians.” Pay attention now; Jesus is comparing what comes out the bottom end with what comes out up top. He focuses on the entry of what comes out down below only because the holier-than-thou Pharisees were absolutely fanatical about not defiling themselves by eating or drinking things their *oral tradition* prohibited. But notice that Jesus does not, likewise, mention how the “stuff” that comes out the top end got in there in the first place. He assumed His disciples already knew that from what He had already told them. And Matthew included the account in his Gospel because he assumed his reader also knew. Do you?

The *context* clearly tells you Jesus was *talking about* the teaching of the scribes and Pharisees. Are *you* still

without understanding? Perhaps. But that is only because you were not privy (sorry, couldn't resist) to all the conversations Jesus had with His disciples. So let's start at the very beginning.

It should not need to be explained that Jesus is speaking *parabolically*. But it does. So you need to keep firmly in mind the *context* to which He addressed His parable. The scribes and Pharisees were insisting that His disciples were defiling themselves by eating without first washing their hands. So, speaking *parabolically*, Jesus *compares* the effects of His disciples eating *literal* bread with the effects of the disciples of the scribes and Pharisees eating the *parabolic* "bread" of their false teaching. In doing that, He is using a *parabolic image* in *The Teaching* which depicts *The Teaching* itself as the "bread of life."

Simply put, Jesus' parable says the *physical* elements of the universe that one ingests don't matter in the least because they pass right on through; but the *metaphysical* elements do matter because, after they enter the person who believes them, they remain in his "heart." Once there, they generate all sorts of nasty thoughts; and those nasty thoughts result in nasty actions. But Jesus is not focusing even on the nasty actions; His concern is strictly the false teaching of the scribes and Pharisees that results in those actions. He is emphasizing that, after the *metaphysical* elements of their false teaching have been assimilated, they come right back out of the mouths of their disciples (in the form of statements that mislead others) and thereby defile them.

Here are four fundamental Truths on which this particular parable of Jesus is based: (1) we are what we believe; (2) we speak and act in accordance with what we believe; (3) every time we speak or act, we confirm what we believe; (4) if someone has repented and believed the Gospel, the only thing that can defile him is believing a lie and then speaking or acting in accordance with that lie. As Jesus said, "Listen, and put {it} together." Unfortunately, if you are still listening to and believing the false teaching of some preening pole-eyed pulpit polecat, the *parabolic* "puke" proceeding from your top end is nothing more than the regurgitated "vomit" you got from his top end. You would do well to find someone who has been called to serve you the "bread of life" that came out of the "mouth" of God. Jesus explains the ultimate effect of that *parabolic* "bread" this way:

Jesus responded to them and said: "Without doubt! Without doubt! I say to you, you seek Me not because you saw signs but because you ate from the bread and were satisfied. Don't 'work' for the food that spoils but for the 'Food' that remains into eternal life—which the Son of the man will give you, for the Father, the {Living} God, has 'sealed' this {One}." Therefore, they said to Him, "What must we do that we may work the works of the {Living} God?" Jesus responded to them and said, "This is the 'work' of the {Living} God: That you believe into the One Whom that One sent." Therefore, they said to Him: "Then what sign do You do so that we may see and believe You? What work do You do? Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, just as it is written: 'HE GAVE THEM BREAD FROM HEAVEN TO EAT.'" Therefore, Jesus said to them: "Without doubt! Without doubt! I say to you, Moses did not give you the 'Bread from Heaven,' but My Father is giving you the true 'Bread from Heaven.' For the 'Bread' of the {Living} God is the One Who comes down from Heaven and gives life to the world." Therefore, they said to Him, "Lord, give us this 'Bread' all the time!" Jesus said to them: "I am the 'Bread of Life.' The one who comes to Me will {never} be hungry and the one who believes into Me will never be thirsty. But I say to you that although you have seen Me, yet you do not believe. Everyone the Father gives Me will come to Me, and I will definitely not throw out anyone who comes to Me, because I have come down from Heaven, not to do My Own will but the will of the One Who sent Me. But this is the will of the One Who sent Me: That I not lose any from Him He has given Me but {that} I raise it up on the last 'day.' For this is the will of My Father: That everyone who 'sees' the Son and believes into Him has eternal life, and {that} I raise him up on the last 'day.'"

(John 6:26–40) —my interim translation

"Blind" folks can't "see" that Jesus is *talking about The Teaching* in that passage because the "wooden beam" in their "eye" prevents them. But some of you can plainly "see" that what I have told you is true because you had only a small "chip" that needed to be removed. As a matter of fact, pole-eyed prevaricators are so "blind" that they won't even admit we are what we believe. But some of you know better. You have already "seen" *"The Light"* of the Gospel, and you know full well the amazing internal transformation that accompanied your willingness to repent and believe

that simple Truth. Unfortunately, the pole-eyed Pretenders among us have never had that experience.

If you are able to “see” what the “blind guides” in the Church today can’t, God expects you to move on from an elementary understanding of the Gospel into an even greater understanding of “*The Light*” of *The Teaching*. He does not require you to *do* anything, but He does expect you to *be* everything He requires. Since we *are* what we believe, the only way you can ever *be* what God requires is by *believing* what God demands. As Jesus said, the only “work” that God requires of you is “that you believe *into* the One Whom that One sent.” That is, you must “believe *into*” *The Teaching* that Jesus Christ is. That is not a “work” that you *do*; it is a “work” that He does within you so that you can *be* what He requires. That *means* you aren’t going to get to Heaven by listening to and believing the putrid pablum a pole-eyed, preening parrot precariously perched in some pulpit preaches to pea-brained Pretenders.

Like the Protestant Reformers said, salvation is by faith (belief) alone. But that is faith in the sense of *what you believe*; not faith in the sense of *that you believe*. Face the self-evident facts: Everybody believes something about God; but not everyone believes the Truth. Do you?

Exhibit #3

The Apostle John recorded the third passage where Jesus *talks about* the “blindness” of the Pharisees. The account is rather humorous on several levels, but it is most *significant* because it cuts to the heart of the *parabolic statements* Isaiah makes concerning the *meaning* of the various *parabolic pantomimes* that Jesus conducted:

And passing by, He saw a man, blind from birth. And His disciples asked Him, saying, “Rabbi, who sinned—this one, or his parents—that he was born blind?” Jesus answered: “Neither this one nor his parents sinned, but so that the works of the {Living} God might be made apparent in him. It is necessary for us to ‘work’ the ‘works’ of the One Who sent Me while it is ‘day.’ ‘Night’ is coming, when nobody is able to ‘work.’ Whenever I am in the world, I am the world’s ‘Light.’” Having said these things, He spit on the ground and made clay from the spit, and anointed his eyes with the clay. And He said to him, “Go! Wash in the pool of Siloam” (which is translated “sent”). Therefore, he went

*and washed, and came seeing. Therefore, the neighbors and those who had seen him before when he was a beggar were saying, “Is this not the one sitting and begging?” Some were saying, “This is!” Others were saying, “No, but he is like him.” He was saying, “I am!” Therefore, they were saying, “Then how were your eyes opened?” That one responded, “The man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes, and said to me, ‘Go into Siloam and wash!’ Therefore, I went and washed, and I gained sight.” And they said to him, “Where is He?” He says, “I don’t know.” They brought him—the one formerly blind—to the Pharisees. **Now it was a Sabbath on the day when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes.** Therefore, the Pharisees were also—again—asking him how he gained sight. But he said to them, “He put clay on my eyes; I washed, and I see.” Therefore, some of the Pharisees were saying, “This man is not from God because He does not keep the Sabbath.” But others were saying, “How is a sinful man able to do such signs?” And there was dissension among them. Therefore, they speak to the blind man again, “What do you say about Him, since He opened your eyes?” But he said, “He is a Prophet.” Therefore, the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he was blind and had gained sight, until they summoned the parents of the one who had gained sight. And they asked them, saying: “Is this your son, the one you say was born blind? Then how does he see now?” Therefore, his parents responded and said: “We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind. But how he sees now, we don’t know; or who opened his eyes, we don’t know. Ask him; he is of age, he will speak for himself.” His parents said these things because they feared the Jews. **For the Jews had already decided that if anyone confessed Him as Anointed, he would be expelled from the synagogue.** For this reason his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.” Therefore, they summoned the man who was blind a second time, and said to him: “Give glory to the {Living} God! We know that this Man is a sinner!” Therefore, he responded: “I don’t know if He is a sinner. I do know one thing: I was blind; now I see.” Therefore, they said to him: “What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?” He responded to them: “I told you already and you didn’t listen. Why do you want to hear again? You do not also want to become His disciples, do you?” **And they ridiculed him and said: “You are a disciple of that One, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that the {Living} God spoke to Moses, but we don’t know where this One is from.”** The man responded and said to them: “By all means! The amazing thing in this is, you*

don't know where He is from, yet He opened my eyes! We know that the {Living} God does not hear sinners, but if anyone is God-fearing and does His will, He hears this one. From the ages it has not been heard that anyone has opened eyes born blind. If this One were not from God, He could not do anything!" They responded and said to him, "You were born totally in sins, yet you are teaching us?" And they threw him out. Jesus heard that they threw him out and, finding him, said, "Do you believe in the Son of the man?" He responded and said, "And who is He, Lord, so that I may believe in Him?" Jesus said to him, "You have seen Him; and He is the One speaking with you." Then he said, "I believe, Lord!" And he worshiped Him. And Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, so that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind." Those of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these things and said to Him, "We are not also blind, are we?" Jesus said to them: "If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, 'We see!' your sin remains."
(John 9:1–41) —my interim translation

It is impossible to "see" what Jesus meant by what He said about "light" and "blindness" if one does not understand that *parabolic pantomime* as part of John's ongoing explanation that (*parabolically* speaking) the incarnate Jesus was "The Light" of the Living Word of God—*The Teaching*—Who came into the world so that men might be able to "see" the Truth. He told you that was his purpose in the introduction to his Gospel:

In the beginning was the Word; and the Word was with the {Living} God; and God was the Word. This One was in the beginning with the {Living} God. Everything came into being through Him, and without Him nothing that has come into being came into being. Life was in Him, and the life was "The Light" of men. And "The Light" is shining in "the darkness," and "the darkness" has not grasped Him. A man who had been sent by God came; his name was John. This one came for a witness, so that he might testify concerning "The Light," so that everyone might believe through Him. That one was not "The Light," but {came} so that he might testify concerning "The Light." "The (true) Light" was the One Who enlightens every man who comes into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His Own, and His Own did

not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the ability to become Children of God—to those who believe into His "Name." These were not engendered from blood nor from a desire of flesh nor from a desire of a male, but from God. And the Word became flesh, and He took up residence in us, and we "saw" His Glory—a Glory like an only begotten by a father, full of goodwill and Truth.
(John 1:1–14) —my interim translation

Just an aside, but you might find it interesting to study what John says about the Glory of God in his Gospel and the three epistles he wrote. Of course, you have to keep in mind the fact that the Glory of God is depicted *parabolically* as a brilliant white *Light*. The point of that *parabolic image* is, nothing remains hidden from the view of anyone who "stands" in "The Light" that God is. The same can be said for those who "walk in The Light." But you probably already knew that. If not, you can easily understand the *parabolic image*—unless, of course, you are a purblind pole-eyed Pretender.

As Jesus plainly told His disciples, the man had been born blind just so he would be available when Jesus needed him to conduct His *parabolic pantomime*. However, the blind man is not the only "prop" that Jesus used. Don't disregard the spit and the clay from which He made the "anointing" He smeared on the man's eyes. The same goes for the fact that He deliberately "anointed" the man's eyes on the Sabbath day. And one certainly should not slight the role of the "blind guides" who were arrogantly strutting around with *parabolic* poles protruding from their "eyes." They delectably depict any and all such simpletons before or since who consider themselves smart enough to peer past the seven "seals" with which the Prophets "sealed" what they wrote.

The Pharisees were absolutely magnificent at making the point Jesus had in mind: When folks come in contact with the "anointing," some gain an incredible *mental* ability to "see," while others immediately go irreversibly "blind." The only difference between the two groups is how they react when they are told they must go "wash." Of course, if one does not know what *parabolic* "anointing" Jesus had in mind when He made a slippery slime out of spit and clay, then that person would not understand the *meaning* of the *parabolic pantomime*, would he? John tells us the pompous, pious, pole-eyed polecats who pretentiously presided over an

absolutely imbecilic interrogation of a blind man and his parents had already decided Jesus was not “anointed.” What about you? Do you believe He was (and still is) “the Anointed”? If you say you do, perhaps you should ask yourself this question, Anointed with what?

The point of Jesus’ *parabolic pantomime* is reinforced by the statement He made to the blind man after that man made his honest confession of belief:

And Jesus said, “For judgment I came into this world, so that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.”

(John 9:39) —my interim translation

If that statement sounds vaguely like something you may have read somewhere, perhaps you are thinking about the passage where Jesus said this:

*“For the {Living} God did not send the Son into the world so that He might judge the world but so that the world might be saved through Him. The one who believes into Him is not judged; but the one who does not believe into Him has been judged already, because he has not believed into ‘The Name’ of the only-begotten Son of God. **But this is the judgment: That ‘The Light’ has come into the world and the men loved ‘The Darkness’ rather than ‘The Light,’ for their works are evil.** For all the one who is doing bad things hates ‘The Light,’ and he does not come to ‘The Light’ so that his works won’t be exposed. But the One who is doing the Truth comes to ‘The Light’ so that His works might be made known, because they have been worked in God.”*

(John 3:17–21) —my interim translation

The remarkable thing about the judgment of God is this: He allows you to judge yourself. Either you have a “love of the Truth” or you don’t. It’s your choice, so you must decide; and decide you will, one way or the other. That is, after all, what we have been *talking about*: Whether or not you will decide to believe the Truth. So until the “chip” in your eye has been removed and you are able to “see” clearly that *what you believe* is not true, it might be better for you to just take Jesus’ advice and admit that you are blind:

Those of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these things and said to Him, “We are not also blind, are we?” Jesus said to them: “If you were blind, you would not

have sin. But now that you say, ‘We see!’ your sin remains.”

(John 9:40–41) —my interim translation

Exhibit #4

Now that you have taken a gander (that’s an idiom) at three other passages where Jesus uses *parabolic imagery* taken from *The Teaching* to ridicule the “blind guides” of His day, let’s go back to the first passage I showed you and go through it bit by bit so that you get the point of what Jesus said:

*Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and His disciples, saying: “The scribes and the Pharisees have taken a seat on the chair of Moses. Therefore, do and pay attention to whatever they have said to you; but **don’t do according to their works, for they say and don’t do.** And they bind up heavy weights and put them on the shoulders of men; but they themselves are not willing to move them with even their finger. **They do all their works in order to be seen by men; for they make their phylacteries large and the tassels long.** And they love the place of honor at the banquets, and the seats of honor in the synagogues, and the greetings in the markets, and to be called ‘Rabbi’ by men. But you yourselves should not be called ‘Rabbi.’ For One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers. And don’t call a father yours on the Earth, for One is your heavenly Father. Neither be called ‘leader,’ because your Leader is One—the Christ—and the greatest of you will be your servant. And whoever exalts himself will be humiliated; and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.”*

(Matthew 23:1–12) —my interim translation

I have already explained the basics in regard to what Jesus was *talking about* when He said, “The scribes and the Pharisees *have taken a seat* on the chair of Moses.” Just as He did in Matthew 15:1–9, He is emphatically rejecting their ridiculous claim that their forefathers had accurately *handed down* *The Teaching of Moses* through a continuous teacher/disciple relationship—which is what they were saying. You do remember what the Pharisees said to the blind man that Jesus healed, don’t you? They said this:

*And they ridiculed him and said, “You are a disciple of that One, but **we are disciples of Moses.**”*

(John 9:28) —my interim translation

Can you believe it? Those dimwitted dullards actually believed their forefathers had successfully *handed down* *The Teaching* from the time of Moses. The Truth is self-evident, they missed the point the Prophets repeatedly make in their writings: The sons of Israel couldn't hold on to *The Teaching* much longer than it took to poach an egg—provided they already had the water boiling. So what made the Pharisees think the generations following the “Great Synagogue” were any different than generations before? The Serpent. But Jesus is going to take them to task for that numskull notion a bit later on in this passage, so I'll say no more.

Before you get the idea that the scribes and Pharisees were unique in thinking the Truth had somehow been accurately *handed down* to them, you should probably take a good, long look at the stupidity going on around you. The mindless morons menacing the Church today don't even know the Church ever had *The Teaching* in its possession, yet they firmly believe that what they believe is true. Furthermore, the leaders of the Protestant Church have long since disavowed the most fundamental of all the accusations the Protestant Reformers leveled at the Roman Catholic Church—that the Church lost the Truth of the Gospel somewhere along the way. So before you get your indignant britches pulled up way too high for your own good, perhaps you should pay attention to what Jesus said. To put it succinctly: Stop being a Pharisee—pretending you are what you aren't. That is, stop claiming you can “see” the Truth and admit that, more often than not, you “stumble” all over yourself just because you have a “chip” blocking your *mental* vision.

Like Jesus said, the pole-eyed Pharisaic polecats in every religion love to lay heavy burdens on the ignorant by telling them, “do this, but don't do that.” They also bask in the adulation and acclaim they garner by flamboyantly removing small “chips” of wood from the eyes of folks who are not quite as certain they know the Truth. And they dearly do love their titles, don't they? Unfortunately for them, you don't need anyone to explain to you what you should and should not *do*. You already know that. What you need is a Teacher. And, as Jesus told His disciples, your Rabbi, Teacher, Father, and Leader should be *The Teaching* He *handed down* to them and they *handed down* to the Church. If you don't know where that information can be found, perhaps you should start looking for a *parabolic* “servant” who has been called to “serve” it to you

(LIKE food). As you go looking for someone who “serves” that Truth, remember what Jesus said: If you say “I see” before you find the Truth, your sin remains.

Woe #1

The next thing Jesus tells us is that God has but one basic bone to pick with false teachers and the fabulously frivolous fabrications they favor:

“But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees—hypocrites! Because you shut up the kingdom of Heaven before men. For you do not enter yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to enter.”
(Matthew 23:13) —my interim translation

What Jesus *means* is, there ain't but one *parabolic* “key” to the “door” of Heaven. So if you arbitrarily *think* some pole-eyed pulpit prevaricator has that “key” in his possession, you should probably double-check the vacant space between your ears. Carefully. Surely you have another *think* in there somewhere.

Woe #2

Maybe not. Asinine beliefs being what they are, most Pharisaic Pretenders are simply too hell-bent and hide-bound to admit the Truth. They have a lifetime invested in preaching lies, and they are going to make those lies into the Truth even if it kills them. And it will—eternally. The trouble is, along the way they reproduce themselves by repeatedly teaching their lies to others. And some of the dolts who believe their lies are more fanatical than they ever were about making sure that others believe the same lies that they believe:

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees—hypocrites! Because you go around the sea and dry land to make one proselyte. And when he becomes {one}, you make him a son of hell—twice as much as you.”
(Matthew 23:15) —my interim translation

Woe #3

In the natural progression of a lie, illogical beliefs eventually become so exaggerated that they reveal the lie for what it is. The only difficulty in that regard has to do with the people who already firmly believe the

lie. Outsiders can readily see how stupid their beliefs are, but those who believe lies find it impossible to see the lies that they believe as anything but true. Jesus provides a couple of excellent examples of the more ridiculous lies the scribes and Pharisees taught:

“Woe to you, blind guides—those who say: ‘Whoever swears by the temple, that is nothing. But whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is obligated.’ Morons and blind men! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that made the gold holy? And: ‘Whoever swears by the altar, that is nothing. But whoever swears by the offering on it, he is obligated.’ Blind men! For which is greater, the offering or the altar which makes the offering holy? Therefore, (1) the one who swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it; and (2) the one who swears by the temple swears by it and by the One Who inhabits it; and (3) the one who swears by Heaven swears by the throne of the {Living} God and by the One Who sits on it.”
(Matthew 23:16–22) —my interim translation

To understand why Jesus arbitrarily interjects that last statement about the throne of God, you need to pay attention to the question He asks concerning the other two: “Which is greater?” He is ridiculing the ignorance of the scribes and Pharisees by referring to Himself as “The Man” Who will forever sit on the throne of God. His point is, they were ignorantly speaking directly to the One Who is greater than Heaven itself.

Woe #4

The flaw in every belief system is not what its adherents get right; it is what they get wrong. The scribes and Pharisees were certainly no exception. But Jesus wants it understood that, in this case, the one thing they got wrong negates everything they got right:

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees—hypocrites! Because you give a tenth of mint, dill, and cumin, but let go of the important {parts} of the Law—the Judgment, the Mercy, and the Belief. Yet it was necessary to do these and not let go of the others. Blind guides! Those who strain off a gnat and gulp down a camel!”
(Matthew 23:23–24) —my interim translation

Did you notice the *parabolic imagery* Jesus had in mind when He says the scribes and Pharisees “strain

off a gnat and gulp down a camel”? He is *parabolically* depicting them as “drinking” from a “cup.” I’ll explain that *parabolic imagery* in a bit. Jesus says those fanatical folks were extremely careful to remove every little *parabolic* contaminant (lie) from the “cup,” yet they ended up swallowing a lie that is far bigger than the ones they removed. His farcical description of their “big lie” as a “camel” is essentially the same as what He did in His exaggerated comparison of a *parabolic* “chip of wood” to a *parabolic* “wooden beam” in the parable we looked at earlier. He wanted His disciples to clearly understand that the scribes and Pharisees were believing something so totally ridiculous that they deserved nothing but ridicule—just like the ignorant imbeciles instructing the Church today.

Pay close attention to the three things Jesus says the religious leaders of His day “let go of” so that they could firmly hold on to their “do this, and don’t do that” nonsense. In the original Greek text, those three things are not an indefinite “judgment/justice,” “mercy,” and “faith/faithfulness.” All three words occur with the definite article (*the*) because Jesus is referring to the three basic elements of the Gospel: (1) *the Judgment* of God, (2) *the Mercy* of God, and (3) *the Belief* in the Truth that God requires.

The Pharisees (like most in the Church today) knew nothing at all about those three things because their forefathers had already “let go” of them long before some fool “prophet” pretended to *hand down The Teaching of Moses* to the Pharisees in the “Great Synagogue.” Yet, taken together, those three aspects of the Gospel succinctly summarize the total *content* of *The Teaching*: If someone responds to the Truth concerning *the Judgment* of God, all he needs to *do* is seek *the Mercy* of God, and demonstrate *the Belief* that God requires. Obviously, one cannot manifest *the Belief* that God requires of every Believer unless one first knows what *content* God requires him to believe. That is what *The Teaching* provides.

The basic lie the Pharisees believed is the same lie the Church believes today—that the only way anyone can be saved is by *doing* something. Unfortunately, not everybody agrees on what one must *do* to be saved. Some say we must do this; some say we must do that. Everybody seems to agree that, at a minimum, one must go to church on Sunday. But in all cases, salvation comes down to a fundamental “do this, and don’t do that” simply because nobody is willing to admit that

saving faith must have a definite *content*. Not only is the “do this, and don’t do that” lie the *parabolic* “camel” that nearly everybody in our day has “gulped down,” it is also the “wooden beam” that prevents them from seeing the Truth. Jesus responded to that lie by saying that if one takes care of what goes on inside, the outside will take care of itself. But I’m getting ahead of the story.

Woe #5

The *parabolic* “cup” that Jesus alluded to in the last verse depicts the Teacher in a teacher/disciple relationship. As I have already explained, the discipleship method of *handing down* an *oral tradition* was common among the Greeks at that time. (See “Where Are Jesus’ Disciples?” *The Voice of Elijah*®, April 1991.) That’s why Jesus could easily use it as the pattern the Church was to follow in *handing down* the *oral tradition* of *The Apostolic Teaching*. Unfortunately, the Church failed at its assigned task just as the sons of Israel had failed so many times before. (See *The Way, The Truth, The Life*.) If the Church had succeeded, God would not have called me to do what I’m doing.

Look at it this way: As a disciple “drank” from the *parabolic* “cup” of knowledge that his Rabbi was, he was expected to constantly examine his understanding of the things he was being taught so that he did not contaminate the teaching of his Rabbi by adding his own ideas and opinions. Jesus depicts that process as one in which the disciples were straining “gnats” out of the “cup” of knowledge from which they “drank.”

After a disciple was fully trained, he became a Rabbi himself. Voila! The “drinker” in Jesus’ parable suddenly becomes the “cup” from which his disciples “drink.” If you expand that *parabolic imagery* to depict a Rabbi’s teaching as both “food” and “drink,” the Rabbi is viewed as being *parabolically* LIKE both a “cup” and a “dish.” That is where the “camel” contaminating the *contents* of the “cup” of the scribes and Pharisees bobs up to the surface. The inside of the “cup” itself needs to be “cleaned”:

*“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees—hypocrites! Because you clean the outside of the cup and the dish. Yet inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. **Blind Pharisee!** Clean first within the cup so that what is without may also become clean.”*

(Matthew 23:25–26) —my interim translation

To put in slightly more straightforward terms what Jesus stated *parabolically*: If you believe the right thing, you will do the right thing. So don’t waste your time trying to *do* the right thing; focus instead on *believing* the right thing. Since the Truth is clearly the right thing to believe, all you need to *do* is figure out which “cup” contains the unadulterated Truth and “drink” from that “cup.” That is your responsibility, and God expects you to take your responsibility seriously. Since not everyone will appreciate the urgency of that task, perhaps I should point out something the Apostle John said concerning folks who pick the wrong “cup” at the End of the Age:

Another (a third) messenger followed them, saying in a loud voice: “If anyone worships the beast and his image, and accepts a brand on his forehead or on his hand, he will also drink from the wine of God’s wrath which has been stirred undiluted in the cup of His anger, and he will be tortured in fire and molten rock in the presence of holy messengers and the Lamb.”

(Revelation 14:9–10) —my interim translation

Woe #6

To emphasize just how completely abominable God considered the lies of the scribes and Pharisees to be, Jesus switches the *parabolic imagery* from one in which He depicts them as a “cup” and a “dish” to one which would have repulsed any staunch Pharisee:

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees—hypocrites! Because you are like whitewashed tombs which—on the outside—look lovely, but—on the inside—are full of bones of dead {people} and all {sorts of} uncleanness. Likewise, you yourselves—on the outside—look right to men, but—on the inside—you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.”

(Matthew 23:27–28) —my interim translation

One of the most severe contaminations a Pharisee could encounter was contact with the dead. So Jesus depicts the scribes and Pharisees as being receptacles in constant contact with “the dead” which are *parabolically* residing inside them. The *parabolic imagery* He had in mind might be easier for you to understand if you stop to consider the fact that exactly the opposite would reside in those who believe the *Living Word* of God.

Woe #7

Having just mentioned “whitewashed tombs,” Jesus now turns to the monstrous sin the scribes and Pharisees have committed by adamantly insisting their *oral tradition* came from the Prophets:

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees—hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the Prophets and make the monuments of the innocent beautiful, and you say, ‘If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been their partners in the blood of the Prophets.’ Therefore, you testify against yourselves—that you are sons of those who murdered the Prophets. **So fill up the measure {of the cup} of your fathers.**”

(Matthew 23:29–32) —my interim translation

To fully appreciate what Jesus says, one must not only know that the Pharisees were usurpers, he must also focus on the command: “So fill up the measure {of the cup} of your fathers.” Jesus is referring to the fact that Moses assigned the Levitical priests the responsibility for teaching Israel, which is why the Prophets repeatedly indicted them for failing at their assigned task. Shortly after the Maccabean revolt, the Pharisees convened the Great Synagogue specifically to usurp that priestly function. The primary argument they made at that time was to claim that their *oral tradition* was more legitimate because it had been *handed down* by the Prophets, not the priests. That was a complete fabrication, but it served Satan’s purpose because belief in that lie will eventually result in the Antichrist being accepted as the messiah of the Jews. As Jesus indicates by what He says, that event will occur when the “measuring cup” of the “fathers” of the scribes and Pharisees is “full.” If you are interested in such *parabolic imagery*, you can find that “cup” mentioned repeatedly in the Prophets and in the Book of Revelation.

Summary

Having just alluded to the time of the Antichrist as the time when the “cup” of the scribes and Pharisees will finally be “filled” to the brim with the ridiculous lies the Serpent had begun preparing more than a century and a half earlier, Jesus continues that train of thought by sarcastically addressing those pious Pretenders as having been engendered by Satan’s lies:

“Snakes! Offspring of vipers! How will you escape the Judgment of Hell? Because of this, Look! I am sending to you Prophets, and wise {men}, and scribes. Some of them you will kill and crucify; and some of them you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from city to city so that on you will come all innocent bloodshed on the Earth, from the blood of Abel—the innocent—to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. **Without doubt, I say to you, all these things will come on this Generation.** Jerusalem! Jerusalem! The one who kills the Prophets and stones those who have been sent to her! How many times have I been willing to gather your children together the way a hen gathers her chicks together under her wings, but you were not willing? Look! **Your house is left to you empty.** For I say to you, you will not see Me from now until you say, ‘BLESSED IS THE ONE WHO IS COMING IN “THE NAME” OF HIS MAJESTY.’”

(Matthew 23:33–39) —my interim translation

In verse 36, Jesus *parabolically* refers to Himself as “this Generation,” as He occasionally did. But He only did that when He was thinking in terms of the *parabolic pantomime* in which He intentionally orchestrated His Own death as a Passover sacrifice to *parabolically* depict the death of the man Adam at the End of the Age. In this case, He has been *talking about* the time of the Antichrist as the time when the *parabolic* “cup” of the scribes and Pharisees is finally “filled” and Satan appears as the fulfillment of all the lies they have been teaching. That *parabolic imagery* is what prompts Him to depict Himself as the final generation of Israel.

When Jesus addresses Jerusalem and says, “Your house is left to you empty,” He is pointing to the fact that when He died, the sole remaining Member of “*The House*” of Israel died. In resurrecting Him from the dead, God “built” an eternal “house” for Abraham, Isaac, Israel, and David just as He had *promised* them He would. However, the two most important “names” that God “raised up” at that time were His Own “Name” and “*The Name*” of Adam. Those two “Names” now reside *parabolically* in the One Person, Jesus Christ. According to the *parabolic statements* the Prophets made while speaking in terms of the ancient Canaanite *zonah* ritual, “*The Woman*” they *parabolically* call “Jerusalem” “made a name” for God, thereby merging Her “people,” the “people” of Adam, with the “People” of God. But that is another story.

Conclusion

If you have been able to understand even a few of the things I have explained in this article, you should go back and study those things carefully. I say that because the point of everything I have explained can be summed up in one very simple statement: Very few “Christians” in our generation have actually *received* an ability to “see” the Truth the Prophets hid in the Hebrew Scriptures. Most of those who claim to be “Christian” today are nothing more than Pretenders—people who have never responded in contrition to the simple Gospel message so that they might be born again. Consequently, they cannot “see” anything but the goofy notions generated by their own unregenerate mind. If you have repented and been born again, you have *received* the “Spirit” of the *Living Word* of God. *Parabolically* speaking, that “Spirit” is “*The Light*” of the Glory of God, which has given you the ability to “see” through the “darkness” of the abject ignorance that is all around you. The Apostle Paul put it this way:

And even if our Gospel has been concealed, it has been concealed to those who are perishing. In whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of those who don't believe, so that they cannot clearly see “The Light” of the Gospel of the Glory of the Christ—which is the image of God. For we do not preach ourselves but Jesus Christ, and ourselves as your slaves through Jesus. Because the {Living} God is the One Who said, “A Light will shine out of darkness” —the One which has shone in our hearts for an enlightenment of the knowledge of the Glory of the {Living} God in the face of Jesus Christ.

(2 Corinthians 4:3–6) —my interim translation

Most “Christians” today are firmly convinced they already know the Truth. As a matter of fact, they are so *mentally* “blind” that they get angry when anyone even so much as suggests they *may not know* the Truth. So if you can at least “see” that you don’t know the Truth, you still have hope. But God expects you to move on from there and seek a complete knowledge of the Truth, wherever you believe the Truth can be found. Just remember this: God never intended the Truth to be debated; He intended it to be believed. So if you don’t believe the Truth can be found here, but for some reason feel an overwhelming compulsion to

argue about it, you might want to consider something the Apostle Paul said about the “sight” that only God can give:

Yet we do speak a wisdom among those who are COMPLETE—but a wisdom not of this age nor of the rulers of this age, those who are being abolished. But we speak God's wisdom in a mystery—the hidden {wisdom}, which the {Living} God decided beforehand, before the ages, for our Glory—which {mystery} none of the rulers of this age understood; for if they had understood, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. But just as it is written, “WHAT EYE HAS NOT SEEN, AND EAR HAS NOT HEARD, AND HAS NOT COME UP ON THE HEART OF A MAN—WHAT THE {LIVING} GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM.” Yet the {Living} God revealed them to us through the Spirit, for the Spirit fathoms everything, even the depths of the {Living} God. For who among men has come to know the things of the man except the spirit of the man which is in him? So also nobody knows the things of the {Living} God except the Spirit of the {Living} God. And we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is from the {Living} God, so that we might come to know the things freely given to us by the {Living} God. Which things also we speak—not in words taught of human wisdom, but in those taught of a Spirit—interpreting spiritual things by spiritual things. But an unregenerate man does not grasp the things of the Spirit of the {Living} God, for it is foolishness to him, and he is not able to understand because it is spiritually discerned. Yet the spiritual discerns everything, but he is not discerned by anyone. For WHO UNDERSTOOD HIS MAJESTY'S MIND THAT HE COULD ADVISE HIM? But we have Christ's mind.

(1 Corinthians 2:6–16) —my interim translation

The “mystery” Paul mentions in that passage is “*The Mystery*” the Prophets explain in the seven messages they sealed up in their writings. Those messages contain all you need to know to be able to “see” clearly that pole-eyed pontificators in our generation are just as *mentally* “blind” as the scribes and Pharisees. If you are familiar with what the Prophets wrote, you know that they *talk about “The Way”* all the time. That is because the second of the seven messages *parabolically* describes *The Teaching of Moses* as “*The Way*” of the Lord. One of my personal favorites is the following passage from Isaiah, where he *parabolically* describes what it will

be LIKE when the *mentally* “blind” are suddenly given the ability to “see” *The Teaching* and “walk in *The Way*” at the End of the Age:

*The wilderness and the desert will be glad,
And the Arabah will rejoice and blossom;
Like the crocus
It will blossom profusely
And rejoice with rejoicing and shout of joy.
The glory of Lebanon will be given to it,
The majesty of Carmel and Sharon.
They will see the glory of the LORD,
The majesty of our God.
Encourage the exhausted, and strengthen the feeble.
Say to those with anxious heart,
“Take courage, fear not.
Behold, your God will come {with} vengeance;
The recompense of God will come,
But He will save you.”
Then the eyes of the blind will be opened,
And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped.
Then the lame will leap like a deer,
And the tongue of the dumb will shout for joy.
For waters will break forth in the wilderness
And streams in the Arabah.
And the scorched land will become a pool,
And the thirsty ground springs of water;
In the haunt of jackals, its resting place,
Grass {becomes} reeds and rushes.
And a highway will be there, a roadway,
And it will be called the Highway of Holiness.
The unclean will not travel on it,
But it {will} be for him who walks {that} way,
And fools will not wander {on it.}
No lion will be there,
Nor will any vicious beast go up on it;
These will not be found there.
But the redeemed will walk {there,}
And the ransomed of the LORD will return,
And come with joyful shouting to Zion,
With everlasting joy upon their heads.
They will find gladness and joy,
And sorrow and sighing will flee away.
(Isaiah 35:1–10)*

Isaiah says other things about the *mentally* “blind” being able to “see” the Truth of the Scriptures and the Redeemed of the Lord rejoicing as they “walk in *The*

Way.” In every case, he is *parabolically* describing what it will be LIKE when the Lord “heals” those who are able to accept the fact that they are *mentally* “blind.” As for those who cannot even “see” that Isaiah is *talking about* the Hebrew Scriptures when he mentions “the Book” that has been *parabolically* “sealed,” the words that Jesus quoted to the scribes and Pharisees still apply:

Be delayed and wait.

Blind yourselves and be blind.

They become drunk, but not with wine;

They stagger, but not with strong drink.

For the LORD has poured over you a spirit of deep sleep,

He has shut your eyes, the prophets;

And He has covered your heads, the seers.

And the entire vision shall be to you like the words of a sealed book, which when they give it to the one who is literate, saying, “Please read this,” he will say, “I cannot, for it is sealed.” Then the book will be given to the one who is illiterate, saying, “Please read this.” And he will say, “I cannot read.” Then the Lord said,

“Because this people draw near with their words

And honor Me with their lip service,

But they remove their hearts far from Me,

And their reverence for Me consists of tradition

learned {by rote,}

Therefore behold, I will once again deal marvelously

with this people, wondrously marvelous;

And the wisdom of their wise men shall perish,

And the discernment of their discerning men

shall be concealed.”

Woe to those who deeply hide their plans from the LORD,

And whose deeds are {done} in a dark place,

And they say, “Who sees us?” or “Who knows us?”

You turn {things} around!

Shall the potter be considered as equal with the clay,

That what is made should say to its maker,

“He did not make me”;

Or what is formed say to him who formed it,

“He has no understanding”?

Is it not yet just a little while

Before Lebanon will be turned into a fertile field,

And the fertile field will be considered as a forest?

And on that day the deaf shall hear words of a book,

And out of {their} gloom and darkness

the eyes of the blind shall see.

(Isaiah 29:9–18) ■



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

This is my fifteenth year of recording the things I understand from the Scriptures. The world has changed quite a bit in that decade and a half. Most of that change is related in some way to the invasion of Kuwait by Saddam Hussein, which is what precipitated my contributing to this newsletter. When I heard the news on that sultry summer day in early August 1990, I knew immediately that Saddam Hussein had made a colossal blunder. And I also knew that, if my understanding of Isaiah 14 was correct, he would eventually pay for that with his life. We have not yet seen that payment made. But I am convinced we will. Only the how and when have yet to be determined.

Two of the most absolutely astounding results of that mental midget's monumental mistake have been the polarization of the governments of the free world and the precipitation of an extremely radical and virulent form of Islamic fundamentalism. If my current understanding of the Scriptures is accurate, those two phenomena will eventually contribute to circumstances which allow the Antichrist to come to power as a virtual dictator in what is now the democratic nation of Israel.

One of the organizations from which I continue to expect a defiant response is the Arab League of Nations. Don't kid yourself. Democracy is a four-letter word as far as the leaders of those nations are concerned; and the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq by the United States and other countries did not sit well with them. If the United States government continues

to push for the spread of democracy throughout the Middle East, you can expect the leaders of the Arab League of Nations to respond—but not favorably. Whether or not that *means* they will use oil as a weapon of last resort would be nothing more than speculation on my part. Unfortunately, if one radical leader forces the hand of another, radical things tend to occur—rather rapidly. Saddam Hussein was a radical leader. Osama bin Laden is another. Both pushed and pushed until others were finally forced to push back. But rogues like those two are not the only radical leaders in positions of power today. Look around you. France, Russia, the United States You be the judge.

We have already begun the countdown to the Final Days. Folks don't realize it—yet—but things have changed dramatically over the past fifteen years. The world has become an extremely lawless place. Would you, as an American, feel safe traveling around the world? Only if you were not aware of the dangers. Rampant lawlessness is going to continue to increase throughout the world. But that "spirit" in which everyone becomes a law unto himself will not be just a threat to your *physical* well-being. If you are not careful, it will affect your *eternal* well-being as well:

*And as He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be, and what {will be} the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" And Jesus answered and said to them, "See to it that no one misleads you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many. And you will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars; see that you are not frightened, for {those things} must take place, but {that} is not yet the end. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. But all these things are {merely} the beginning of birth pangs. Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations on account of My name. And at that time many will fall away and will deliver up one another and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise, and will mislead many. **And because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold.** But the one who endures to the end, he shall be saved."*

(Matthew 24:3–13)

Let the one who has ears to hear ■



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

Editor: You are currently in the process of explaining the meaning of Jesus' parables and how they are all related to an ongoing discourse Jesus had with His disciples in which He was explaining The Teaching to them. Although I'm willing to wait for you to complete your series of articles on this subject, I am also curious to know what Jesus is talking about in the Parable of the Shrewd/Unrighteous Steward in Luke 16:1–13 because I recently heard someone try to explain this parable. Although I'm sure he got it wrong, I'm also certain I don't understand what Jesus is talking about in this parable either. I assume it is not coincidence that He told this parable shortly after the Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11–32). The fact that the prodigal son and the unrighteous steward both "squandered" "possessions" entrusted to them (Luke 15:13; 16:1) seems to tie these two parables together. But I don't understand why the "master" praised the "unrighteous steward" for being "shrewd" after he "squandered" his "master's" "possessions" (Luke 16:8). What is Jesus talking about in this parable?

Elijah: You are right in surmising that Jesus is—parabolically—talking about the same thing in those two parables. But to understand what He meant by what He said, you need to pay close attention to the fact that He tells the Parable of the Prodigal Son to the scribes and

Pharisees in response to their criticizing Him for eating with people they found totally unacceptable. This is what Luke says:

*Now all the tax-gatherers and the sinners were coming near Him to listen to Him. And both the Pharisees and the scribes {began} to grumble, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them."
(Luke 15:1–2)*

In responding to their criticism, Jesus first tells them the Parable of the Lost Sheep and the Parable of the Lost Coin. He does that to emphasize the extremely high value that God places on the very people that they deem to be worthless. Then He tells them the Parable of the Prodigal Son to mock them by explaining how God, likewise, rejects their goofy criticism of Him. Take a look:

And He said, "A certain man had two sons; and the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the estate that falls to me.' And he divided his wealth between them. And not many days later, the younger son gathered everything together and went on a journey into a distant country, and there he squandered his estate with loose living. Now when he had spent everything, a severe famine occurred in that country, and he began to be in need. And he went and attached himself to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he was longing to fill his stomach with the pods that the swine were eating, and no one was giving {anything} to him. But when he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men."' And he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him, and felt compassion {for him,} and ran and embraced him, and kissed him. And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet; and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has

been found.' And they began to be merry. Now his older son was in the field, and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. And he summoned one of the servants and {began} inquiring what these things might be. And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.' But he became angry, and was not willing to go in; and his father came out and {began} entreating him. But he answered and said to his father, 'Look! For so many years I have been serving you, and I have never neglected a command of yours; and {yet} you have never given me a kid, that I might be merry with my friends; but when **this son of yours came, who has devoured your wealth with harlots, you killed the fattened calf for him.**' And he said to him, '{My} child, you have always been with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to be merry and rejoice, for **this brother of yours was dead and {has begun} to live, and {was} lost and has been found.**'"
(Luke 15:11–32)

I have already explained that Jesus is *parabolically* depicting Himself as being LIKE God's "younger" son Israel, the One Who came down to Earth and "squandered" the "inheritance" His Father had given Him. He sarcastically portrays the scribes and Pharisees as being LIKE the "older" son Israel, the one who remained above it all and never once availed himself of the vast wealth of his own "inheritance." That is, they had never profited from *The Teaching of Moses* that the Living Word of God is because they refused to believe it. (See "I Tell You What: Odds Are, You'll Never Beat God at His Shell Game," *The Voice of Elijah*®, October 1998.)

In *parabolically* depicting His association with tax-gatherers, "sinners," and harlots as "loose living," Jesus was sarcastically ridiculing the completely pompous, pious, and self-righteous attitude of the scribes and Pharisees. They found it nearly impossible to even acknowledge the humanity of those they considered to be morally inferior, much less associate with them. (If that sounds like some of the snooty religious bigots who call themselves "Christian" today, it is only because the Prince of Darkness has once again found his Cinderella—and the glass slipper fits them perfectly.) To the scribes and Pharisees, Jesus Himself was a "sinner."

The key to understanding the Parable of the Unrighteous Steward lies in knowing that Jesus told that parable to *His disciples* (as opposed to the scribes

and Pharisees) to explain what He *meant* by His use of the *parabolic image* in which He had already depicted Himself as the "younger son" who, by "loose living," had "squandered" the "inheritance" He *received* from the Father. Jesus' point in the Parable of the Prodigal Son is, He "squandered" His *inheritance of the promise* by explaining it to tax-gatherers, "sinners," and harlots. But you must not lose sight of the fact that, in *parabolically* portraying His preaching of the Gospel that way, His only purpose was to deride the bigotry of the scribes and Pharisees, who were criticizing Him for associating with those they considered morally inferior.

You also need to keep in mind that, in *parabolically* depicting Himself as "sinful" or "unrighteous," Jesus was again mocking the scribes and Pharisees (and the equally ignorant leaders of the Church today) because, if any of them would have had any real insight at all into the *parabolic imagery* of *The Teaching of Moses*, they would have understood how He (as *Corporate Israel*) became guilty of the sins of everyone (past and present) who has ever been a member of Israel. That is, they would have understood how Moses and the other Prophets of Israel *parabolically* explained the Christian doctrine known as "substitutionary atonement." The Apostle Paul explains the guilt of Jesus this way:

And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, {saying}, "ALL THE NATIONS SHALL BE BLESSED IN YOU." So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer. For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT ABIDE BY ALL THINGS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW, TO PERFORM THEM." Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, "THE RIGHTEOUS MAN SHALL LIVE BY FAITH." However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, "HE WHO PRACTICES THEM SHALL LIVE BY THEM." Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE"—in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.
(Galatians 3:8–14)

It seems obvious to me that God could not have rightly demanded the death of Jesus Christ if He did not actually find Him guilty, but perhaps I am being

much too rigid about such things. Maybe the whole Crucifixion was just a farce—you know, a charade. (Don't get your knickers in a twist, I'm just mocking those idiots who can't comprehend the obvious: Either Jesus was guilty or God is unjust for cursing Him.)

Now that I've stirred up a few lamebrains, let's look at the parable you mentioned. Luke indicates Jesus told that parable to His disciples immediately after He told the Parable of the Prodigal Son to the scribes and Pharisees:

*Now He was also saying to the disciples, "There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and this {steward} was reported to him as squandering his possessions. And he called him and said to him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.' And the steward said to himself, 'What shall I do, since my master is taking the stewardship away from me? I am not strong enough to dig; I am ashamed to beg. I know what I shall do, so that when I am removed from the stewardship, they will receive me into their homes.' And he summoned each one of his master's debtors, and he {began} saying to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' And he said, 'A hundred measures of oil.' And he said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.' Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' And he said, 'A hundred measures of wheat.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.' And his master praised the **unrighteous steward** because he had acted shrewdly; for the sons of this age are more shrewd in relation to their own kind than the sons of light. And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that when it fails, they may receive you into the eternal dwellings. He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much. If therefore you have not been faithful in the {use of} **unrighteous mammon**, who will entrust the true {riches} to you? And if you have not been faithful in {the use of} that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own? No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. **You cannot serve God and mammon.**"*

(Luke 16:1–13)

I only gave you that translation so that you could compare it to the following:

*But He was also saying to the disciples: "A certain man who had a manager was rich; and this one was falsely accused to him—that he was squandering his assets. And summoning him, he said to him: 'What is this I am hearing about you? Give the word of your management, for you can no longer be manager.' But the manager said to himself: 'What should I do, since my lord is taking the management away from me? I am not strong enough to dig. I am ashamed to beg. I know what I will do, so that when I am removed from the management, they will receive me into their houses.' And he called each one of his lord's debtors to himself, and he said to the first, 'How much do you owe my lord?' And he said, 'One hundred baths {800–900 gallons} of oil.' So he said, 'Take your notes and sit down, quickly write fifty.' Next, he said to another, 'And you, how much do you owe?' And he said, 'One hundred kors {1000–1200 bushels} of wheat.' He says to him, 'Take your notes and write eighty.' And the lord praised **the manager of the injustice** because he acted shrewdly; because **the sons of this age are more shrewd toward their own race than the sons of "The Light."** And I Myself say to you: 'Make yourself friends out of **the wealth of the injustice** so that when it comes to an end, they may receive you into eternal dwellings. **The one who is trustworthy in what is least is also trustworthy in much; and the one who is unjust in what is least is also unjust in much.** Therefore, if you have not been trustworthy in **the unjust wealth**, who will entrust the true to you? And if you have not been trustworthy in what is another's, who will give you what is your own? No house slave can serve two lords; for he will either hate the one and love the other, or he will cling to one and despise the other. **You cannot be a slave to God and to wealth.**"*

(Luke 16:1–13) —my interim translation

I intentionally made my translation somewhat cumbersome just to draw attention to the various Greek terms and expressions that Jesus used to provide clues as to the meaning of His parable. You need to be able to see those things because Jesus carefully chose terms that point back in some way to the way they are used in the Greek Septuagint. The first such term is *lord*. In the Septuagint, the Jewish translators used that term as a substitute for "The Name" (*Yahweh*). Jesus uses it in His parable as a subtle indication that God is the ultimate parabolic "Rich Man" He had in mind. I should also tell you God's parabolic "assets" are *The Teaching*.

The second *significant* term that Jesus uses is the Greek term *adikia*, which I have translated “injustice.” As you can see from my translation, Jesus does not say the man was an “unjust/unrighteous manager”; He says he was a “manager of the *injustice*.” Translators completely ignore the fact that the Greek term *adikia* (“injustice/unrighteousness”) is a noun rather than an adjective. They also seem totally oblivious to the fact that it does not agree in either case or gender with the noun *manager* that they *think* it modifies.

Jesus is using the Greek term *adikia* (“injustice”) as a substitute for *physical* “wealth/riches.” That term is an antonym of *dikaosune* (“justice/righteousness”). Jesus used it as a substitute for *physical* “wealth/riches” because He was intentionally contrasting the temporal value of *physical* possessions with the eternal *metaphysical* value of *The Teaching*—which becomes *dikaosune* (“justice/righteousness”) to the one who treasures it. Get it? *Physical* wealth becomes “injustice/unrighteousness” to the one who finds it more valuable than the Truth. Paul said something about that (1 Tim. 6:10).

The third *significant* term that Jesus uses in the Parable of the Unrighteous Steward is the Greek adjective *pistos*, which is normally translated “faithful.” That term comes from the same root as the noun *pistis*, which is usually translated “faith” (belief/trust). I have translated it as “trustworthy” only because that is the sense with which the author of the Book of Hebrews uses the term. His point is, those who are “believable” are also “trustworthy.” Jesus is using the term to slyly remind His disciples that God only finds those who *believe The Teaching* (the *metaphysical* “much” that He *parabolically* contrasts with the *physical* “what is least”) to be “trustworthy.” Jesus is also contrasting the one whom God finds “trustworthy” with the one He finds to be “unjust.” His point has to do with the fact that God distinguishes between the “just” and the “unjust” on the basis of what they deem to be most valuable. (See “The Righteous and the Wicked: One Simple Distinction Lies Between Them,” *The Voice of Elijah*®, April 2002.)

The fourth *significant* term that Jesus uses in His parable is the Aramaic term *mammon*, which is normally *transliterated* rather than translated. According to the Mishnah, the Aramaic-speaking Jews of that day would have understood the term to *mean physical* “wealth” as opposed to the *metaphysical* “wealth” of the soul. Some scholars have argued that *Mammon* was a Syrian god,

but when Jesus uses the term, He has nothing more in mind than its Rabbinic definition as *physical* rather than *metaphysical* possessions. He uses the term only because the scribes and Pharisees were themselves using it to distinguish between a man’s *physical* possessions (his “wealth”) and his most valuable *metaphysical* possession (his “soul”). He is also alluding to the link that exists between a knowledge of (and belief in) the Truth and the salvation of the soul.

The final *significant* term that Jesus uses is the term I have translated “race.” In using that term, He is simultaneously pointing back to both the original Hebrew term that the Greek term represents in the Septuagint translation and how that original Hebrew term relates to specific *parabolic imagery* in *The Teaching of Moses*. The Jews who produced the Septuagint were somewhat ambivalent as to how they should translate the Hebrew terms for “people” and “nation” into Greek. That is, they were not consistent. But, in general, they used the term that Jesus used here as an equivalent for “people” and another Greek term to translate “nation.” I have already explained a bit about the Hebrew term for “people” in *Not All Israel Is Israel* (pp. 9 ff. and pp. 87 ff.).

The point that Jesus is making (to His disciples) by using a Greek term that generally *means* “race” is one of the most fundamental elements of *The Teaching*. A distortion of this Truth is, in fact, what led the scribes and Pharisees to consider themselves superior to everyone else. The *parabolic imagery* of *The Teaching* depicts the individual members of *Corporate Israel* as members of the “People,” that is, the “race,” of God Himself. To put it bluntly, they are “gods.” But before some high-minded, self-righteous, anti-polytheistic moron (who, nonetheless, illogically considers himself—or even worse, every other member of the human race—to be a “child of God”) takes offense at that *parabolic statement*, I should remind you that the *parabolic imagery* related to the “Children of God” does nothing more than provide a *parabolic* depiction of a *spiritual* reality we have no other way of understanding.

Now that I’ve gotten all that out of the way, let me briefly summarize what Jesus said to His disciples in the Parable of the Unrighteous Steward. He says: “You are to do exactly what I have done as the Prodigal Son. Be LIKE the ‘manager of the injustice’ I have just described. Take the *metaphysical* ‘wealth’ of *The Teaching* of your ‘Lord’ and do just LIKE he did with the *physical*

'wealth' of his 'lord'—ensure your own future by paying down the debts that others owe your 'Lord.' But keep one thing in mind, if you cannot be trusted to use *physical* 'wealth' appropriately, God will not trust you with the *metaphysical* 'wealth' of the Truth. That is because a person can only be fully committed to one 'wealth' or the other."

Now comes the humorous part. The scribes and Pharisees mistakenly thought Jesus was only *talking about physical wealth*, so He sarcastically ridicules them for their ignorance by telling them that some of the "sinners" they despise have already come to appreciate the immeasurable value of *The Teaching*. After hearing Him explain the simple Gospel message, they are already *parabolically* "breaking and entering" just to get into "the kingdom of God." Then Jesus makes a *parabolic statement* that appears to have no relevance whatsoever to anything He has said:

But when the Pharisees—who were lovers of money—heard these things, they were sneering at Him. And He said to them: "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but the {Living} God knows your hearts. Because what is highly valued among men is detestable before the {Living} God. The Law and the Prophets were until John. From that time, the gospel of the kingdom of the {Living} God is being preached and everyone is forcibly entering it. But it is easier for the Heaven and the Earth to pass away than for one 'horn' of the Law to fall. Everyone who divorces his woman and marries another commits adultery, and the one who marries one who has been divorced commits adultery."

(Luke 16:14–18)—my interim translation

You tell me. Why does Jesus suddenly bring up the topic of divorce? If you know the answer to that question, you can undoubtedly "see" the *parabolic imagery* that Moses and the other Prophets of Israel had in mind when they *talked about* the same thing. Knowing that, you should also be able to easily explain why He then tells *the scribes and Pharisees* this parable:

"Now a certain man was rich; and he regularly dressed in purple and fine linen—enjoying himself splendidly every day. But a certain poor man named Lazarus—who had been severely wounded—had been thrown at his gate. And he wanted to be fed from the things falling from the table of the rich man, but the dogs that came were also licking his

wounds. But it happened that when the poor man died and he was carried by the messengers into Abraham's inner circle, then the rich man also died and was buried. And lifting up his eyes in Hell, being in severe pain, he sees Abraham from a distance—and Lazarus in his inner circle. And calling out, he said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am being tormented by this flame.' But Abraham said: 'Child, remember that you received your good things during your life, and Lazarus likewise the bad things. But now he is being comforted and you are being tormented. And in {addition to} all this, between you and us a great chasm has been established so that those who want to cross over from here to you are not able, and neither may any cross over from there to us.' But he said, 'Therefore, I beseech you, father, that you send him to the house of my father—for I have five brothers—in order that he may solemnly testify to them, so that they do not also come into this place of severe pain.' But Abraham says: 'They have Moses and the Prophets. Let them hear them.' But he said: 'No, Father Abraham! But if someone should journey to them from the dead, they will repent!' But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be made to believe if someone should arise from the dead.'"

(Luke 16:19–31)—my interim translation

Okay, what does that parable have to do with divorce? Nothing, if you take it *literally*; but everything, if you understand it *parabolically*. So let me ask (and answer) a few fairly simple questions: Who does the "rich man" depict? The scribes and Pharisees. Who does Lazarus depict? The average Jew to whom earlier generations of the scribes and Pharisees had *parabolically* refused to provide even a "crumb" of the "bread of life" (because they were ignorant of that Truth). What is the *parabolic* point of the parable? Simply that the *parabolic* "divorce" Jesus had in mind is final, and the *parabolically* divorced "woman" is absolutely prohibited from ever returning to the man who divorced her.

It should be self-evident (to anyone but an idiot) that Jesus is not *talking about literal* divorce right before He launches into the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus. If you believe He was, you must think He had Attention Deficit Disorder. The Truth is, He is speaking *parabolically* about the scribes and Pharisees in terms of what the Prophets said about God's "divorce" of "The

(*adulterous*) Woman” Israel. That *parabolic* divorce is the primary link between the *parabolic images* of “*The (adulterous) Woman*” and the “rich man” depicted in Jesus’ Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus.

The *parabolic image* Jesus had in mind is simply this: The scribes and Pharisees, although they had been *individually* “cut off from” Israel, were still *collectively* claiming to be Israel. So by mentioning divorce, Jesus *parabolically* (and sarcastically) depicts them *collectively* as “*The (adulterous) Woman*” Israel whom God has “divorced.” Under the Old Covenant, God required the death of an adulterous woman. But since “the Law and the Prophets were until John,” the scribes and Pharisees had been “divorced” instead of killed.

Jesus refers to the only two circumstances under which divorce can occur—either the woman is guilty of adultery, or she is innocent. But He mentions both cases only as a diversion. The basic point He has in mind has nothing to do with the woman’s guilt or innocence; it has to do with the fact that *The Law of Moses* prohibits any divorced woman (innocent or guilty) from ever returning to the man who divorced her (Deut. 24:1–4). That “great chasm” is what separates the scribes and Pharisees from their father Abraham, and it is one they cannot *collectively* cross.

Jesus’ point is, the scribes and Pharisees have no hope of salvation because they continue to insist they are still *collectively* “*The Woman*” Israel. Therefore, God cannot take them back. Because of their love of money and their belief in the “big lie” that physical descent from Abraham cannot be abrogated, they are also LIKE a rich man who has died and gone to Hell. They (the leaders of *Corporate* Israel) once had the incredible “wealth” of *The Teaching of Moses* in their possession, but their current abject ignorance of that Truth (*parabolic* “death”) is preventing them from ever again becoming members of Israel. That is why Jesus concluded the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus with a biting, sarcastic reference to how the scribes and Pharisees would react to His Own Resurrection from the dead:

“But he said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be made to believe if someone should arise from the dead.’”

(Luke 16:31) —my interim translation

Isn’t it remarkable how we have finally come full circle? The Pretenders in the Church today are just LIKE

the scribes and Pharisees. They know nothing at all about the “great chasm” that cordons them off to the hell-fire and brimstone that *parabolically* depicts the white-hot hatred of the angry God of Israel, yet they are absolutely convinced they are still members of the Body of Christ (*Corporate* Israel). The Prophet who wrote the Book of Proverbs describes them this way:

This is the way of an adulterous woman:

She eats and wipes her mouth,

And says, “I have done no wrong.”

(Proverbs 30:20)

The scribes and Pharisees had not the slightest inkling that God considered them to be a complete abomination. The Pretenders in the Church today are equally as “blind.” They refuse to even consider that the following words of Jesus might apply to them:

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.’”

(Matthew 7:21–23)

Like the scribes and Pharisees, who were absolutely convinced they knew the Truth that God revealed to Moses at Mt. Sinai, the Pretenders in control of the Church today find it absolutely impossible to even imagine that their idiotic clichés and platitudes—which is all they have to offer—are nothing more than pious puffery. Unfortunately, God is currently holding them up to even greater ridicule than Jesus heaped on the scribes and Pharisees when He *parabolically* talked about things of which they were totally ignorant.

Editor: I recently had a conversation with a subscriber who had concluded on his own that the two witnesses spoken of in Revelation 11:3 are Enoch and Elijah. He concluded this based on Hebrews 9:27 which states that all men are “appointed to die once.” Since Enoch and Elijah were both “taken” to Heaven prior to death (Gen. 5:24; 2 Kin. 2:11; Heb. 11:5), he concluded they must be the two witnesses of Revelation 11:3 because he believes they must still face their “appointment” with death as

Hebrews 9:27 says all men must. Although he correctly surmised that "Enoch" and "Elijah" are the two "witnesses" who appear prior to the End, he clearly believes these men literally return to Earth. Can you explain why this is not accurate and also explain what Hebrews 9:27 is talking about? Then would you explain the significance of Enoch and Elijah being "caught up" to Heaven prior to their death?

Elijah: A major handicap one has to accept in reading a translation of the Scriptures instead of the original text is the fact that the emphasis of the author sometimes gets skewed due to the translator's ignorance of what the author actually *meant*. In this case, however, one has only to read Hebrews 9:27 *in context* for the emphasis of the author to come through loud and clear. I'll boldface the one word the author uses *repeatedly* as well as all the other words and phrases he contrasts with it so that you can better understand what he *means* by what he says in that one verse:

*For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a {mere} copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; nor was it that He should offer Himself **often**, as the high priest enters the holy place year by year with blood not his own. Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer **often** since the foundation of the world; but now **once** at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die **once** and after this {comes} judgment, so Christ also, having been offered **once** to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time for salvation without {reference to} sin, to those who eagerly await Him. For the Law, since it has {only} a shadow of the good things to come {and} not the very form of things, can never by the same sacrifices **year by year**, which they offer **continually**, make perfect those who draw near. Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers, having **once** been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins? But in those {sacrifices} there is a reminder of sins **year by year**.
(Hebrews 9:24–10:3)*

As you can see, the author's emphasis is not on the fact that men have been appointed *to die*, but is instead on the fact that they have been appointed to die only *once* instead of time after time. In addition to

that bit of insight, if the person you mentioned had spent a little time gaining a better knowledge of the Scriptures instead of speculating, it would have also become obvious that the Apostle Paul says not everybody will die. In explaining the heavenly nature of the resurrected body, Paul says those Believers alive at the End of the Age will not die; they will be "changed":

*Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Behold, I tell you a mystery; **we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed**, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and **the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed**. For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.
(1 Corinthians 15:50–53)*

I suppose that somebody who is absolutely mesmerized by Satan's lie could continue to argue vociferously that when Paul says "sleep," he does not *mean* "die." But to maintain that goofy belief, that person would have to flatly contradict what Paul says earlier in the chapter (1 Cor. 15:6, 18, 20) and Jesus' Own *parabolic* use of that same verb in the following context:

*This He said, and after that He said to them, "Our friend **Lazarus has fallen asleep**; but I go, that I may awaken him out of sleep." The disciples therefore said to Him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover." Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that He was speaking of literal sleep. Then Jesus therefore said to them plainly, "Lazarus is dead."
(John 11:11–14)*

Now that the non-issue of God mandating that everybody has to die has been laid to rest, let me show you how Paul's statement that "we shall all be changed" also refutes the nonsense you mentioned. The author of the Book of Hebrews makes the following statement in regard to the "change" that occurred in the priesthood after Jesus was resurrected as High Priest in the image and likeness of God:

*For when the priesthood is changed, of necessity there takes place a change of law also.
(Hebrews 7:12)*

This is where you really need to remember what I told you earlier about the difficulties one faces in trying to do biblical research based on a translation of the Scriptures. Sometimes, more than just the emphasis of the original text gets lost in translation. In the following passage, the author of the Book of Hebrews uses terms from exactly the same verbal root that the translator translated “changed” in the verse above, yet this time the translator decides the verbal root should be translated “took up”—not once, but *three times*:

By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death; AND HE WAS NOT FOUND BECAUSE GOD TOOK HIM UP; for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God.
(Hebrews 11:5)

Here is my own translation of that verse:

Because of trust, Enoch was changed so as to not see death; AND HE WAS NOT FOUND BECAUSE THE {Living} GOD CHANGED HIM. For before the change he was attested to be pleasing to the {Living} God.
(Hebrews 11:5)—my interim translation

To be fair, the original Hebrew text quoted in that verse says simply “because God took him.” And it is true the Greek verb translated “took up” can be used to mean “change position.” But the author of the Book of Hebrews is not translating from the Hebrew text; he is quoting the Greek text of the Septuagint translation of Genesis 5:24. And from what he does elsewhere in the Book of Hebrews, it is obvious that he has a habit of emphasizing extremely minor nuances in the Septuagint text to make a point that he knows is true, but one that is not made in the original Hebrew text. In this case, he also uses a Greek noun that routinely means “change” to reveal what he has in mind when he quotes the statement “Enoch was changed so as to not see death.” That noun tells us he did, indeed, take the verb to mean “change.”

Let’s disregard for the moment the fact that Paul says some folks alive at the End of the Age will not die but will instead be “changed.” What did the author of the Book of Hebrews just tell you? He says “Enoch was changed so as to not see death.” Now I don’t know about you, but that sounds to me like the Lord “changed” Enoch’s *physical* body so that he would not have to go

through the experience of *physical* death. If that be true, why would anybody insist God would later reconsider His decision and “change” Enoch’s resurrected body back into the *physical* body it was before He “changed” it into its resurrected form? Someone with an agenda.

I should probably also explain a statement you made in regard to the question you asked. You said this:

Although he correctly surmised that “Enoch” and “Elijah” are the two “witnesses” who appear prior to the End, he clearly believes these men literally return to Earth.

Your readers may not know where you got your understanding concerning “Enoch” and “Elijah,” but it seems fairly clear that it came from what the Early Fathers Irenæus and Hippolytus wrote. (See *The AntiChrist* on the Order Form.) The Apostle John does not name either of the “two witnesses” he mentions in this passage:

“And I will grant {authority} to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.” These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. And if anyone desires to harm them, fire proceeds out of their mouth and devours their enemies; and if anyone would desire to harm them, in this manner he must be killed. These have the power to shut up the sky, in order that rain may not fall during the days of their prophesying; and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to smite the earth with every plague, as often as they desire. And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and overcome them and kill them. And their dead bodies {will lie} in the street of the great city which mystically is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. And those from the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations {will} look at their dead bodies for three and a half days, and will not permit their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb. And those who dwell on the earth {will} rejoice over them and make merry; and they will send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth. And after the three and a half days the breath of life from God came into them, and they stood on their feet; and great fear fell upon those who were beholding them. And they heard

a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." And they went up into heaven in the cloud, and their enemies beheld them. And in that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell; and seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.

(Revelation 11:3–13)

Editor: *Why was it necessary for Jesus to ascend to Heaven or "go away" (John 16:7) before "the Helper"—the Holy Spirit—could be sent on the Day of Pentecost? Why was the wait necessary? Did something specific transpire in Heaven during the time span between Christ's Ascension and the Holy Spirit's descent on the Day of Pentecost? If so, what?*

Elijah: You are asking me to explain things that can only be understood *parabolically*. So let's go over a few *parabolic images*. First of all, Jesus Christ intentionally provoked the Jews into crucifying Him at Passover so that He would be killed as part of the *parabolic pantomime* He had been conducting ever since He demanded that John the Baptist baptize Him in the River Jordan. In that *parabolic pantomime*, He depicted Himself as Israel, the Firstborn Son of God. When He died on the cross as the *parabolic* Firstborn Son of God, He *parabolically* became LIKE a Passover sacrifice God "gave" so that He could use His "flesh" and "blood" as a communal "meal" to ratify a New Covenant with the twelve "tribes" of Israel. That is the *parabolic imagery* Jesus was referring to when He conducted the *parabolic pantomime* of the Last Supper the night before He died:

And when the hour had come He reclined {at the table,} and the apostles with Him. And He said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I shall never again eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." And when He had taken a cup {and} given thanks, He said, "Take this and share it among yourselves; for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on until the kingdom of God comes." And when He had taken {some} bread {and} given thanks, He broke {it,} and gave {it} to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." And in the same way {He took} the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood."

(Luke 22:14–20)

If one does not understand that Jesus was *parabolically* The Teaching that He believed (which is itself *parabolically* LIKE "bread" and "wine"), what He says to His disciples at the Last Supper probably doesn't make a whole lot of sense. Perhaps His Own *parabolic* explanation of those things will help:

"I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread also which I shall give for the life of the world is My flesh." The Jews therefore {began} to argue with one another, saying, "How can this man give us {His} flesh to eat?" Jesus therefore said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me. This is the bread which came down out of heaven; not as the fathers ate, and died, he who eats this bread shall live forever." These things He said in the synagogue, as He taught in Capernaum. Many therefore of His disciples, when they heard {this} said, "This is a difficult statement; who can listen to it?" But Jesus, conscious that His disciples grumbled at this, said to them, "Does this cause you to stumble? {What} then if you should behold the Son of Man ascending where He was before? It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life."

(John 6:51–63)

So much for the basic *parabolic imagery* related to the Passover sacrifice of Corporate Israel. We can talk about the significance of those things some other time. The next thing you need to keep in mind in regard to the Ascension of Jesus is the fact that God's *parabolic* "harvesting" of the individual members of Israel began on the day after Passover, at which time Jesus Christ was resurrected as the "first fruits" from the dead:

But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. For since by a man {came} death, by a man also {came} the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first

fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, then {comes} the end, when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power.
(1 Corinthians 15:20–24)

In that passage, Paul uses a combination of both *parabolic* and *literal statements* to explain what is yet to come. But this is the way that Moses describes the *parabolic pantomime* by which the Levitical priests were to *parabolically* depict the *literal* Resurrection of Jesus:

“Speak to the sons of Israel, and say to them, ‘When you enter the land which I am going to give to you and reap its harvest, then you shall bring in the sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest to the priest. And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD for you to be accepted; on the day after the sabbath the priest shall wave it. Now on the day when you wave the sheaf, you shall offer a male lamb one year old without defect for a burnt offering to the LORD. Its grain offering shall then be two-tenths {of an ephah} of fine flour mixed with oil, an offering by fire to the LORD {for} a soothing aroma, with its libation, a fourth of a hin of wine. Until this same day, until you have brought in the offering of your God, you shall eat neither bread nor roasted grain nor new growth. It is to be a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwelling places. You shall also count for yourselves from the day after the sabbath, from the day when you brought in the sheaf of the wave offering; there shall be seven complete sabbaths. You shall count fifty days to the day after the seventh sabbath; then you shall present a new grain offering to the LORD.’”
(Leviticus 23:10–16)

The essence of the *parabolic pantomime* prescribed by that passage is this: God's “harvest” was to begin on the first day after Passover (a sabbath), and the Day of Pentecost (Feast of Weeks) was to be observed on the fiftieth (*pentekoste*) day after Passover. Moses makes that fairly clear in this passage:

“You shall count seven weeks for yourself; you shall begin to count seven weeks from the time you begin to put the sickle to the standing grain. Then you shall celebrate the Feast of Weeks to the LORD your God with a tribute of a freewill offering of your hand, which you shall give just as the LORD your God blesses you.”
(Deuteronomy 16:9–10)

The point of the *parabolic pantomimes* described in those two passages is this: God's barley “harvest” of the “seed” of Corporate Israel began on the day after the Passover Sabbath (on Sunday morning) when He resurrected Jesus from the dead. His wheat “harvest” (the resurrection of all the other members of Corporate Israel) began on the Day of Pentecost. But to fully understand the *significance* of that *parabolic imagery*, one needs to keep in mind that the events Luke describes in the Book of Acts as having occurred on the Day of Pentecost were themselves a *parabolic pantomime* in the same way that the Crucifixion and Resurrection of the Man Jesus were a *parabolic pantomime*. If one does not know that those two *parabolic pantomimes* *parabolically* depict the death and resurrection of the man Adam at the End of the Age, one has no real insight into the many *parabolic statements* the Apostles make concerning the “resurrection life” of the Believer.

Luke tells us that Jesus remained on the Earth for forty days after His Resurrection before He ascended to Heaven:

The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when He was taken up, after He had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom He had chosen. To these He also presented Himself alive, after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over {a period of} forty days, and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God. And gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, “Which,” {He said,} “you heard of from Me; for John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” And so when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, “Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?” He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.” And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.
(Acts 1:1–9)

On the basis of that passage, we know that ten days elapsed between the time that Jesus ascended and

the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. Your question is, What happened during that span of time and why could the Holy Spirit not take up residence within Believers earlier? The short (*parabolic*) answers to your questions are, Jesus was “anointed” King and High Priest of Israel; and He then, as High Priest, had to cleanse the *parabolic* “tabernacle” of God in Heaven so that the “Spirit” of God might take up residence there. The long answer is much too detailed an explanation to get into here, since it deals with the reality of events that occurred in the fifth dimension. So I’ll just repeat what the author of the Book of Hebrews has to say about those things. But you might want to pay attention to what He cleansed:

But when Christ—a High Priest of the coming good things—arrived by means of the greater and more COMPLETE tent not made by hands (that is, not by {anyone in} this creation), not by means of the blood of goats and calves, but by means of His Own blood, He entered once for all into the “holy place,” obtaining eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats, bulls, and ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have become profane makes {them} holy with regard to cleanness of the flesh, how much more {will} the blood of the Messiah, Who—by means of a Holy Spirit—offered Himself unblemished to the {Living} God, cleanse our conscience from dead works to serve a Living God? And for this reason He is mediator of a new testament, so that—a death having occurred for the releasing of those who transgressed against the first covenant—those who have been called might receive the eternal inheritance. For where there is a testament, death of the testator must be borne. For {only} a testament {made} by the dead is valid; it has no meaning whatsoever while the testator is alive. Wherefore, not even the first was renewed without blood. For every commandment having been spoken—according to the Law—by Moses to all the people, taking the blood of the calves and the goats with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, he sprinkled both the book and all the people, saying, “THIS IS THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT WHICH THE {Living} GOD COMMANDED YOU.” Both the tent and all the utensils of the ministry he likewise sprinkled with the blood. And nearly everything is cleansed by blood—according to the Law—and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. Therefore, it is necessary for the patterns of those things in Heaven to be cleansed, but the things in Heaven with much better sacrifices than these. For Christ did not enter into “holy places”

made with hands—representations of the true ones—but into Heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of the {Living} God on our behalf; not so that He would offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the “holy place” every year with blood of another. Otherwise He would need to suffer often—from the foundation of the world. But now once at the COMPLETION of the Ages for abolition of “the sin” through His sacrifice, He has been made known. And just as it is destined for men to die once and after this judgment, so also the Messiah, having been offered once to offer up the sins of many, will be seen for a second time—without sin—by those who eagerly await Him for salvation. For the Law, having a shadow of the coming good things—not the very image of the actions—by the same sacrifices which they offer every year can never permanently COMPLETE those who approach. Otherwise, would they not have stopped offering because, having been cleansed once, none of those who serve would still have a consciousness of sins? But in those is a recollection of sins every year. For blood of bulls and goats is not able to remove sins. Therefore, coming into the world, He says: “A SACRIFICE AND AN OFFERING YOU DID NOT DESIRE; BUT YOU PREPARED A BODY FOR ME. AND IN BURNT OFFERINGS FOR SIN YOU DID NOT TAKE PLEASURE. THEN I SAID, ‘LOOK! I COME—AT THE HEAD OF THE BOOK IT IS WRITTEN CONCERNING ME—TO DO—O GOD—YOUR WILL.’” After saying above that “SACRIFICE AND OFFERING” “AND BURNT OFFERINGS FOR SIN” “YOU DID NOT DESIRE” and “YOU DID NOT TAKE PLEASURE IN”—which are offered according to law, He then said, “LOOK! I COME ... TO DO YOUR WILL.” He removes the first to raise up the second. By which “will” we have been made holy through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And indeed every priest stands every day ministering and often offering the same sacrifices—which are never able to take away sins. But this One, after offering one sacrifice for sins permanently, SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND of the {Living} God, waiting from then on UNTIL HIS ENEMIES ARE MADE A FOOTSTOOL FOR HIS FEET. For by one offering He has COMPLETED permanently those who are being made holy. But the Holy Spirit also testifies to us {internally}. For after having said, “BECAUSE THIS IS THE TESTAMENT THAT I WILL MAKE AS A WILL WITH THEM AFTER THOSE DAYS,” says HIS MAJESTY; “WHILE PUTTING MY LAWS UPON THEIR HEARTS, UPON THEIR MINDS I WILL ALSO WRITE THEM. AND THEIR SINS AND THEIR LAWLESSNESS I WILL NO LONGER REMEMBER.”

(Hebrews 9:11–10:17) —my interim translation ■