

The Old Testament
Gospel
of
Jesus Christ

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Mesquite, Texas

The Old Testament Gospel of Jesus Christ
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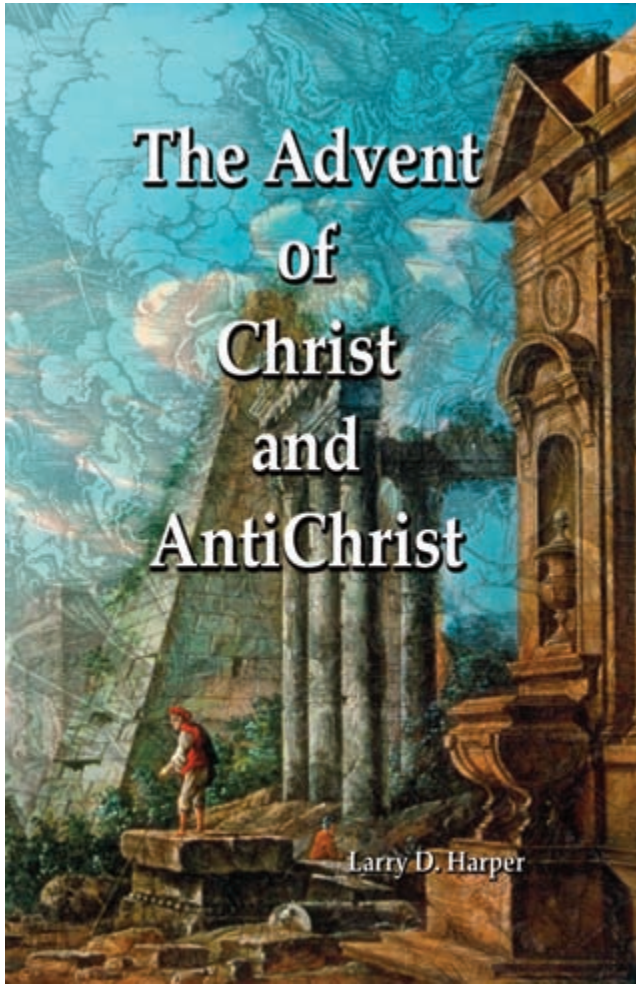
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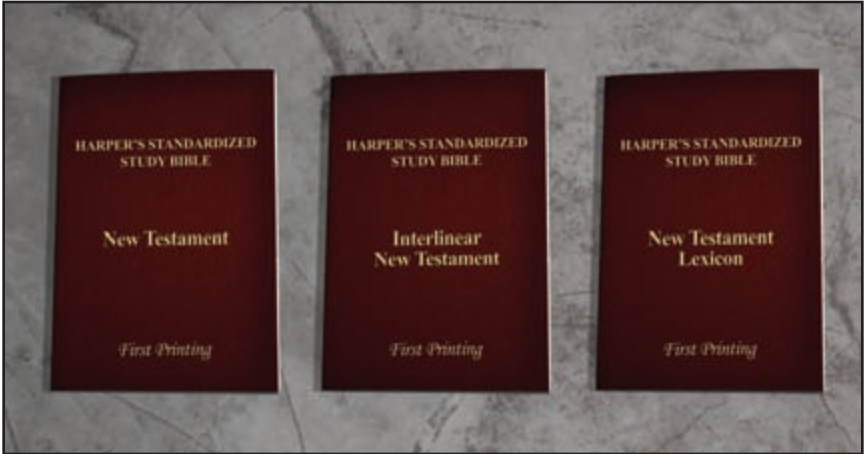


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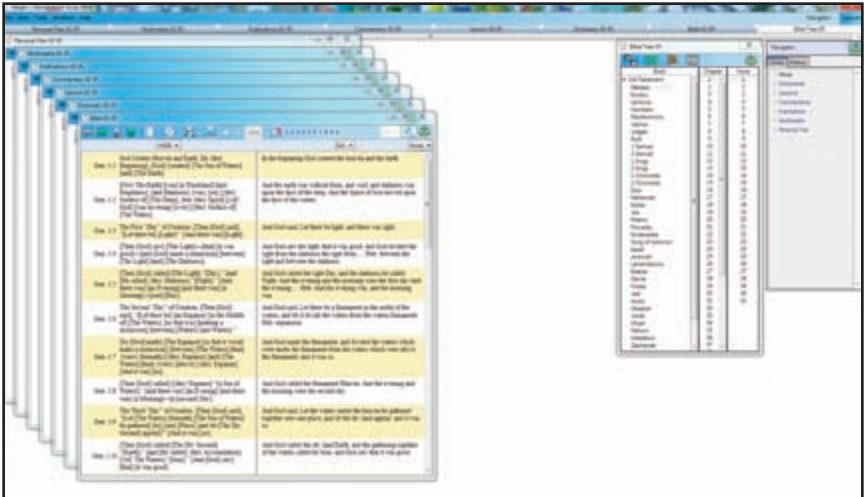
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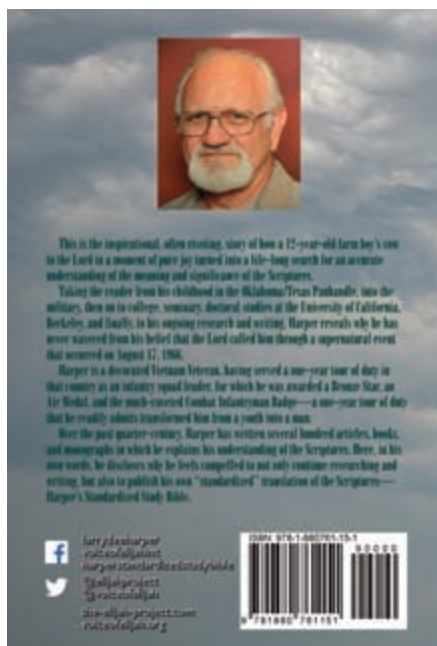
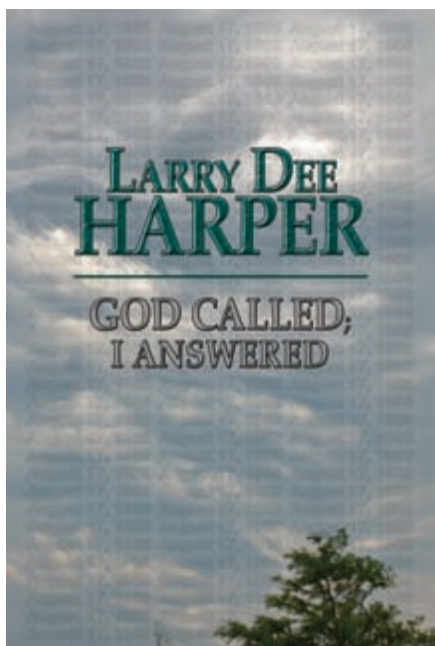


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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
BELIEF MUST HAVE A CONTENT	5
SATAN IS A LIAR	11
SATAN IS STILL LYING	17
THE CHURCH HAS LOST THE TRUTH—AGAIN	25
THE ORIGINAL SIN WAS UNBELIEF	27
CREATION IS NOT FINISHED	31
THE GOSPEL IS A <i>PROMISE</i>	41
YOU MUST BELIEVE THE TRUTH	47
JESUS CHRIST SUFFERED FOR YOUR SIN	53
GIVE GOD WHAT GOD REQUIRES	57
CONCLUSION	59

INTRODUCTION

God called me as a Teacher to prepare born-again Believers for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ; but as a Teacher, I also have the authority to preach the Gospel as an Evangelist.¹ So,

¹To understand the Truth of the Old Testament Gospel of Jesus Christ that you find here, you must first be able to accept one simple fact: The Truth does not change. If something was held to be true by a past generation of Church leaders, you should ask yourself why it is no longer held to be true by the current generation of Church leaders. If something was held to be true by several earlier generations of Church leaders, the question should be even more of a concern to you. A belief that was held for centuries should carry much more weight than a doctrine that was introduced later, especially so if that doctrine contradicts it.

Many of the things I explain here will flatly contradict things that are widely taught in the Church today. That is because, as I explain below, the leaders of the Church have once again lost the Truth of the Gospel. That is, Church leaders today are teaching things that contradict the Truth that earlier generations of Church leaders believed and held as undeniable Truth. In some cases, Church leaders are now teaching things that contradict what has been fundamental Christian doctrine since the very inception of the Church.

Some of the things that I explain in these pages will be confirmed by things the leaders of the Protestant Church have written over the course of the past 500 years. Still others will be confirmed by things the leaders of the Early Church wrote. Many of the things I present will be completely novel ideas to you. Just keep this in mind: The things I tell you do not *contradict* the things believed by earlier generations of Church leaders, they *complement* and *confirm* them.

If you are seeking to know the Truth, I challenge you to test the things I explain here. They will prove themselves to be true.

over the next several minutes, I am going to explain the things you need to know to become a born-again Believer.

The Bible tells us Jesus Christ was born, lived, and died about 2,000 years ago, and the Roman government crucified Him on a cross for crimes He did not commit. It also tells us that after Christ died, He was resurrected—that He came back from the dead—and ascended to Heaven. The biblical text plainly tells us Jesus said He would die so that we could be saved and live forever.²

But Jesus also said you have to be born again if you want to have eternal life. Listen to what the Apostle John says Jesus told a man named Nicodemus:

²Jesus explained this Truth in a variety of ways. He plainly foretold His death and resurrection on the following occasion:

And from there they went out and {began} to go through Galilee, and He was unwilling for anyone to know {about it}. For He was teaching His disciples and telling them, "*The Son of Man is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him; and when He has been killed, He will rise three days later.*"

(Mark 9:30–31)

On other occasions, Jesus spoke *parabolically* concerning the significance of His death and resurrection:

"*I am the good shepherd; and I know My own, and My own know Me, even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. And I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they shall hear My voice; and they shall become one flock {with} one shepherd. For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again.*"

(John 10:14–17)

In the following passage, He is speaking *parabolically* concerning His death on the cross and the need for belief on the part of those who want to live forever:

"*No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day. It is written in the prophets, 'AND THEY SHALL ALL BE TAUGHT OF GOD.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me. Not that any man has seen the Father, except the One who is from God; He has seen the Father. Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life.*"

(John 6:44–47)

Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, **unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.**"
(John 3:3)

The other Gospels tell us you have to repent and believe the Gospel if you want to live forever. Jesus said this about repentance:

"I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."
(Luke 5:32)

Repentance is nothing more than an honest, heart-felt apology.³ So, to repent, you first have to feel sorry for what you have done to offend God, and then you have to *honestly* apologize for it. But here's the fly in the ointment as far as repenting is concerned:

To honestly feel sorry for what you have done, you first have to know the Truth about what offends God. That is, you can't apologize to God for something that didn't offend Him and expect Him to forgive you for something else. Forgiveness doesn't work that way. You have to know what you actually did and apologize for that.

³You can easily see that the basic *meaning* of the Greek noun translated "repentance" is "apology," and the basic *meaning* of the Greek verb translated "repent" is "apologize" from the way it is used in the following passage:

*"Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he **repents**, forgive him. And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, 'I **repent**,' forgive him."*
(Luke 17:3-4)

THE OLD TESTAMENT GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST

BELIEF MUST HAVE A CONTENT

So, before you can *honestly* apologize, you have to believe a *specific content* in regard to your situation. Only then can you repent—that is, *honestly* apologize to God—on the basis of the Truth.

It should be patently obvious to anyone of average intelligence that you can't believe just anything and everything about the God Who is and expect Him to respond favorably to you. That is, you can't go to God on the basis of your belief in a lie and expect to be born again. You have to believe the Truth that can be found only in what the Bible calls "the Gospel."⁴

⁴In the Book of Galatians, the Apostle Paul stridently warns Believers to guard against anyone who changes the Gospel message so that it does not agree with the Gospel message he preached. He insists that is because the Gospel message he received through revelation has the Truth as its *specific content*:

I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; which is {really} not another; only there are some who are disturbing you, and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed. For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ. For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but {I received it} through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

(Galatians 1:6–12)

Fifty years ago, that Truth was readily available. That's no longer the case.

Today, people are circulating an absolute plethora of lies that they claim to be "the Gospel." That's because Satan has intentionally corrupted the Gospel message so that people will not hear the Truth and be born again. Most people today avoid talking about Satan; but Jesus talked about him time and time again.⁵

⁵The Gospels sometimes call Satan "the devil":

*But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, **Satan!** You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's."*

(Matthew 16:23)

*And He called them to Himself and began speaking to them in parables, "How can **Satan** cast out **Satan**? And if a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. And if **Satan** has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but he is finished!"*

(Mark 3:23–26)

*And He said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? And how will you understand all the parables? The sower sows the word. And these are the ones who are beside the road where the word is sown; and when they hear, immediately **Satan** comes and takes away the word which has been sown in them."*

(Mark 4:13–15)

*And the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." And He said to them, "I was watching **Satan** fall from heaven like lightning."*

(Luke 10:17–18)

*But the Lord answered him and said, "You hypocrites, does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the stall, and lead him away to water {him}? And this woman, a daughter of Abraham as she is, whom **Satan** has bound for eighteen long years, should she not have been released from this bond on the Sabbath day?"*

(Luke 13:15–16)

*"You are of {your} father **the devil**, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own {nature;} for he is a liar, and the father of lies."*

(John 8:44)

And the Apostle Paul warned us to beware of him.⁶ But I'll talk more about that later.

⁶Paul also refers to Satan as “the devil” on occasion. The following instances do not include those:

*And the God of peace will soon crush **Satan** under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.*

(Romans 16:20)

*{I have decided} to deliver such a one to **Satan** for the destruction of his flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.*

(1 Corinthians 5:5)

*Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again lest **Satan** tempt you because of your lack of self-control.*

(1 Corinthians 7:5)

*But whom you forgive anything, I {forgive} also; for indeed what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, {I did it} for your sakes in the presence of Christ, in order that no advantage be taken of us by **Satan**; for we are not ignorant of his schemes.*

(2 Corinthians 2:10–11)

*But what I am doing, I will continue to do, that I may cut off opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the matter about which they are boasting. For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even **Satan** disguises himself as an angel of light.*

(2 Corinthians 11:12–14)

*And because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of **Satan** to buffet me—to keep me from exalting myself!*

(2 Corinthians 12:7)

*For we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, more than once—and {yet} **Satan** thwarted us.*

(1 Thessalonians 2:18)

*Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have delivered over to **Satan**, so that they may be taught not to blaspheme.*

(1 Timothy 1:20)

*Therefore, I want younger {widows} to get married, bear children, keep house, {and} give the enemy no occasion for reproach; for some have already turned aside to follow **Satan**.*

(1 Timothy 5:14–15)

After Christ was resurrected, He told His disciples to go into all the world, to preach the Gospel, and to teach the same things that He taught.⁷ A bit later, He ascended into Heaven with a *promise* that He would one day return.⁸ The return of Jesus Christ is called the Second Coming. Shortly before He was crucified, Jesus talked to His disciples about the events that would occur right before the Second Coming. At that time, He specifically warned them that True Believers would need to be very careful not to believe just anything and everything that people said about Him. Listen to what Matthew tells us Jesus said:

⁷The instructions that Jesus left with His disciples are commonly called "The Great Commission." He said this:

And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

(Matthew 28:18–20)

⁸Jesus said the following about His return:

"Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather. But immediately after the tribulation of those days THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken, and then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory. And He will send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other."

(Matthew 24:28–31)

The most definite statement regarding the return of Christ was not made by Christ Himself, but by two messengers who spoke to His disciples after His Ascension:

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. And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was departing, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them; and they also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven."

(Acts 1:9–11)

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."

(Matthew 24:4–5)

On another occasion, Jesus told a parable in which He explained why it is absolutely essential that you be careful what you believe about Him. He said Satan would "plant" Pretenders—He calls them "tares"—in the Church.⁹ Matthew says this:

He presented another parable to them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares also among the wheat, and went away. But when the wheat sprang up and bore grain, then the tares became evident also. And the slaves of the landowner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' And he said to them, 'An enemy has done this!' And the slaves said to him, 'Do you want us, then, to go and gather them up?' But he said, 'No; lest while you are gathering up the tares, you may root up the wheat with them. Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, 'First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn.'"

(Matthew 13:24–30)

Later on, Jesus explained the *meaning* of that parable, and Matthew tells us what Jesus said. This is what Matthew says:

Then He left the multitudes, and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field." And He answered and said, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man, and the field is the world; and {as for} the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil {one;} and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the end of the age; and the reapers are angels. Therefore just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather

⁹If you want to know the Truth, the single issue that should concern you is how to identify the "tares" Satan has "planted" in the Church. Consider this: If the things I explain here are true, the answer should be obvious. A "tare" is anyone who vehemently denies the Truth.

out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”
(Matthew 13:36–42)

What Jesus says in that parable—which is called “The Parable of the Tares”—indicates He knew there would be people who would come into the Church¹⁰ pretending to be born again, but they wouldn’t really be born again. They would just pretend to be.¹¹

¹⁰The second-century leaders of the Church knew they were fighting the “tares” (Pretenders) who “sprouted” from the “tare seed” (false doctrine) Satan was “planting” in the Church. Tertullian says this:

*For after the Bishop of Rome had acknowledged the prophetic gifts of Montanus, Prisca, and Maximilla, and, in consequence of the acknowledgment, had bestowed his peace on the churches of Asia and Phrygia, he, by importunately urging false accusations against the prophets themselves and their churches, and insisting on the authority of the bishop’s predecessors in the see, compelled him to recall the pacific letter which he had issued, as well as to desist from his purpose of acknowledging the said gifts. By this Praxeas did a twofold service for the devil at Rome: he drove away prophecy, and he brought in heresy; he put to flight the Paraclete, and he crucified the Father. Praxeas’ tares had been moreover sown, and had produced their fruit here also, while many were asleep in their simplicity of doctrine; but these tares actually seemed to have been plucked up, having been discovered and exposed by him whose agency God was pleased to employ. Indeed, Praxeas had deliberately resumed his old (true) faith, teaching it after his renunciation of error; and there is his own handwriting in evidence remaining among the carnally-minded, in whose society the transaction then took place; afterwards nothing was heard of him. We indeed, on our part, subsequently withdrew from the carnally-minded on our acknowledgment and maintenance of the Paraclete. **But the tares of Praxeas had then everywhere shaken out their seed, which having lain hid for some while, with its vitality concealed under a mask, has now broken out with fresh life. But again shall it be rooted up, if the Lord will, even now; but if not now, in the day when all bundles of tares shall be gathered together, and along with every other stumbling-block shall be burnt up with unquenchable fire.***

Roberts, Alexander and Donaldson, James: *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Volume III: *Translations of the Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325*. Eerdmans reprint, 1973, pp. 597–598.

¹¹It may appear that the “tares” that Satan “planted” have taken over the Church. Not to worry. Appearances are once again deceiving. The Truth is, the “tares” are already being removed from “His kingdom.”

SATAN IS A LIAR

To fully understand the *significance* of the things Jesus said in “The Parable of the Tares,” you need to know what He said about the lies that He knew Satan would “plant” in the Church. Jesus said Satan is a liar, that he lies to people, and the reason why he lies to people is to kill them. Here is what Jesus said:

Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love Me; for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me. Why do you not understand what I am saying? {It is} because you cannot hear My word. You are of {your} father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own {nature;} for he is a liar, and the father of lies. But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me.”
(John 8:42–45)

That alone should tell you Satan does not want you to have eternal life. He does not want you to be born again; and he spreads lies here, there, and everywhere so that you will not know the Truth you need to believe to be born again.¹²

¹²If you really want to know the Truth, you first have to question everything you have been taught by the “tares” that Satan has “planted” in the Church. Then, you must go back and compare the things you believe with the things taught by earlier generations of Church leaders. In most cases, you will find that what the leaders of the Church today have taught you flatly contradicts what earlier generations held to be a fundamental Truth. The question is: Who will you *choose* to believe?

Over the past 50 years, Satan has completely distorted the simple Truth of the Gospel so that, rather than believing what you need to believe to be born again, you will believe something else and not gain eternal life. An interesting thing about Satan's lies that you should keep in mind is this: In the Book of Revelation, John tells us that right before Jesus Christ returns, Satan will somehow be able to deceive the whole world. John says this:

And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. And the dragon and his angels waged war, and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, **the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world**; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.
(Revelation 12:7-9)

A bit later John says this:

And I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spoke as a dragon. And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence. And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed. And he performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men. **And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast**, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life. And there was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast might even speak and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed. And he causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves, to be given a mark on their right hand, or on their forehead, and {he provides} that no one should be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark, {either} the name of the beast or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for the number is that of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six.
(Revelation 13:11-18)

That passage is describing the activities of an individual that most Christians believe to be the Antichrist.¹³ John says that individual will somehow be able to deceive the whole world immediately before Christ returns. In 2 Thessalonians, the Apostle Paul says basically the same thing.¹⁴ He tells us that

¹³In *The Advent of Christ and AntiChrist*, I have gathered together the things the Early Church Fathers Hippolytus and Irenæus wrote about the Antichrist and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. That book, and other things I have published, can be obtained from *The Voice of Elijah* web site: www.voiceofelijah.org.

¹⁴In the following passage, the Early Church Father Irenæus, who was one of the most prominent leaders of the second-century Church, ties what John says regarding the Antichrist together with the things that Paul tells us in 2 Thessalonians 2:1–12:

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

2. *And for this reason the apostle says: "Because they received not the love of God, that they might be saved, therefore God shall also send them the operation of error, that they may believe a lie, that they all may be judged who have not believed the truth, but consented to unrighteousness." For when he (Antichrist) is come, and of his own accord concentrates in his own person the apostasy, and accomplishes whatever he shall do according to his own will and choice, sitting also in the temple of God, so that his dupes may adore him as the Christ; wherefore also shall he deservedly "be cast into the lake of fire:" [this will happen according to divine appointment], God by His prescience foreseeing all this, and at the proper time sending such a man, "that they may believe a lie, that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but consented to unrighteousness;" whose coming John has thus described in the Apocalypse: "And the beast which I had seen was like unto a leopard, and his feet as of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion; and the dragon conferred his own power upon him, and his throne, and great might."*

Roberts, Alexander and Donaldson, James: *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Volume I: *Translations of the Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325*. Eerdmans reprint, 1973, pp. 556–557.

right before Christ returns, God Himself will send a deluding influence on people who don't love the Truth so that they will believe the lies that Satan is using to deceive the world. Paul says this:

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

(2 Thessalonians 2:1–12)

In that passage, Paul plainly tells us that right before Christ returns, God Himself will send a deluding influence on people who don't love the Truth so that they will believe the lies that Satan uses to deceive the whole world. In 1 Thessalonians, Paul says much the same thing. He says those who don't believe the Truth will be caught completely off guard when Christ returns. Listen to what he says:

Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. While they are saying, "Peace and safety!" then destruc-

tion will come upon them suddenly like birth pangs upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day should overtake you like a thief; for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober. For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night. But since we are of {the} day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation. For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with Him.

(1 Thessalonians 5:1–10)

That passage makes it clear that those who have been born again will know the Truth about the events that occur right before Christ returns. But those who do not believe the Truth—that is, those who have chosen to believe something other than the Truth—will be caught completely unprepared when Christ returns. They will not realize what is happening until it is too late for them to be saved. Jesus said exactly the same thing. He said this:

“For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, they were marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so shall the coming of the Son of Man be.”

(Matthew 24:37–39)

That passage is clearly describing a circumstance in which people have been lulled into a false sense of security because they do not know the Truth. That will happen because Satan has deceived people into believing his lies so that they do not respond to the Truth of the Gospel.

SATAN IS STILL LYING

The only way you can be born again is if you believe the Gospel message that Jesus told His disciples to preach. So I am going to tell you what you need to know in order to be born again, so that you can avoid Satan's delusion. If you believe what I tell you, and you *honestly* apologize to God, you can be born again.

The most important thing you need to know about Satan's deception is this: He has been constantly working over the past 2,000 years to distort the Truth of the Gospel¹⁵ so that everyone

¹⁵If you did not know that Satan seeks to completely distort the Truth, you are already a victim of his lies. But you are not alone. This generation is totally unaware of what the Early Church Fathers knew:

The devil, however, as he is the apostate angel, can only go to this length, as he did at the beginning, [namely] to deceive and lead astray the mind of man into disobeying the commandments of God, and gradually to darken the hearts of those who would endeavour to serve him, to the forgetting of the true God, but to the adoration of himself as God.

Roberts, Alexander and Donaldson, James: The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume I: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325. Erdmans reprint, 1973, pp. 552–553.

In various ways has the devil rivalled and resisted the truth. Sometimes his aim has been to destroy the truth by defending it. He maintains that there is one only Lord, the Almighty Creator of the world, in order that out of this doctrine of the unity he may fabricate a heresy.

Roberts, Alexander and Donaldson, James: The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume III: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325. Erdmans reprint, 1973, p. 597.

would believe things that are not true. His goal is to keep people from gaining eternal life. At various times down through the centuries, he has been very successful in that endeavor.

But about 500 years ago, some men rose up against the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church, and they insisted that the leaders of the Church were no longer preaching the Truth of the Gospel message of salvation. They said that because the leaders of the Church were telling people that all anyone had to do to gain eternal life is contribute a specific amount of money to the Church as penance for their sins.¹⁶ That is, the leaders of

¹⁶The practice in which a Roman Catholic priest would grant forgiveness in exchange for money began with the practice of granting what is called an "indulgence." John Calvin and the other Protestant Reformers found the practice to be a complete abomination:

5. Moreover, to say nothing of these abominations, who taught the Pope to enclose the grace of Jesus Christ in lead and parchment, grace which the Lord is pleased to dispense by the word of the Gospel? Undoubtedly either the Gospel of God or indulgences must be false. That Christ is offered to us in the Gospel with all the abundance of heavenly blessings, with all his merits, all his righteousness, wisdom, and grace, without exception, Paul bears witness when he says, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," (2 Cor. 5:20, 21). And what is meant by the fellowship (κοινωνία) of Christ, which according to the same Apostle (1 Cor. 1:9) is offered to us in the Gospel, all believers know. On the contrary, indulgences, bringing forth some portion of the grace of God from the armory of the Pope, fix it to lead, parchment, and a particular place, but dis sever it from the word of God. When we inquire into the origin of this abuse, it appears to have arisen from this, that when in old times the satisfactions imposed on penitents were too severe to be borne, those who felt themselves burdened beyond measure by the penance imposed, petitioned the Church for relaxation. The remission so given was called indulgence. But as they transferred satisfactions to God, and called them compensations by which men redeem themselves from the justice of God, they in the same way transferred indulgences, representing them as expiatory remedies which free us from merited punishment. The blasphemies to which we have referred have been feigned with so much effrontery that there is not the least pretext for them. Calvin, J., trans. Henry Beveridge, Institutes of the Christian Religion, Book iii, Chapter v, Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, reprint 1993, pp. 575-576.

the Church had become nothing more than con artists—selling something that Jesus said you can have for free if you just believe the Truth and *honestly* apologize to God.

So 500 years ago, these men rose up and insisted that what the leaders of the Church were saying was not true. They said the Truth is exactly what the Bible says: The only thing you have to do to be born again is believe the Gospel and *honestly* apologize to God. But they also insisted the Gospel has a *specific content*, and they contended the leaders of the Church were no longer preaching that content.¹⁷

They did not say you can believe whatever you want to believe and be born again, which is what the leaders of the Church are saying today. No, these men insisted you have to believe the Truth of the Gospel. You see, they were going back to what Jesus said. They were saying you can be born again *only if* you believe a *specific content*¹⁸ and *honestly* apologize to God.

Needless to say, the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church at that time did not take their accusations lying down. They tried to kill them. But those men ignited a revolt against the leaders of the Church. That revolt is known as the Protestant Reformation.

At that time, those men—who were called “Protestants”—were saying the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church had somehow lost the Truth of the Gospel. But in so doing, they emphasized the fact that the Gospel has a specific content.

They said the basic Truth of the Gospel is this: All you have to do to be born again is to believe the Truth, *honestly* feel sorry

¹⁷I have shown elsewhere that the Protestant Reformers, in claiming the leaders of the Church had lost the Gospel, were also tacitly admitting they had lost *The Apostolic Teaching* as well. See the article “The Protestant Confession: The Church Lost *The Teaching*,” *The Voice of Elijah*, January 1992.

¹⁸I have already explained why “faith” must always have a content—and “saving faith” must have the Truth as its content—in two articles: “The Demons Also Believe (Poor Devils!)” and “Do You Believe the Gospel of Jesus Christ?” *The Voice of Elijah*, October 1991.

for your sins, and apologize to God.¹⁹ That claim has provided the ostensible basis for the formation of all the Protestant churches in existence today.

The sad thing is, if you look back over the past 500 years, you can see that the Protestant Reformation did not stop Satan from continuing to distort the Truth. Not at all. Satan has remained as determined as ever to deceive people; so you also need to know what he has done since the Protestant Reformation.

¹⁹It is not difficult to see how far the current generation of Church leaders have strayed from the Truth. The accepted view today is, biblical Truth is whatever anyone wants to believe. However, the Protestant Reformer John Calvin clearly states the Truth that he and the founders of the Protestant Church understood:

*13. It is necessary to attend to the ambiguous meaning of the term: for faith is often equivalent in meaning to sound doctrine, as in the passage which we lately quoted, and in the same Epistle where Paul enjoins the deacons to hold "the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience;" in like manner, when he denounces the defection of certain from the faith. The meaning again is the same, when he says that Timothy had been brought up in the faith; and in like manner, when he says that profane babblings and oppositions of science, falsely so called, lead many away from the faith. Such persons he elsewhere calls reprobate as to the faith. On the other hand, when he enjoins Titus, "Rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith;" by soundness he means purity of doctrine, which is easily corrupted, and degenerates through the fickleness of men. **And indeed, since in Christ, as possessed by faith, are "hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," (Col. 1:2, 3), the term faith is justly extended to the whole sum of heavenly doctrine, from which it cannot be separated.***

Calvin, J., trans. Henry Beveridge, Institutes of the Christian Religion, Book iii, Chapter ii, Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, reprint 1993, p. 481.

In an article titled "Satan's Fools Are Satan's Tools," *The Voice of Elijah*, April 1994, I have explained the role that the pseudo-philosopher Søren Kierkegaard (1813–1855) played in the current confusion that exists in regard to the term *faith*. The Greek term translated "faith" in most English translations means "belief." However, Satan has people today believing it means nothing more than "hope." Consequently, they believe they will be saved because they "hope" they will be saved. That is, they have no *specific content* that they believe. "Saving faith" has the Truth of the Gospel as its content.

During the Protestant Reformation, people left the Roman Catholic Church and started new churches because they could see the leaders of the Church had lost the Truth of the Gospel. Some of those people were called Lutherans. But it wasn't very long before Satan managed to deceive the leaders of the Lutheran Church in the same way that he had deceived the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church prior to that time. So born-again Believers rejected the leaders of the Lutheran Church and formed other Protestant denominations.

But the key to understanding what has happened in the Protestant Church over the past 500 years is this: Legitimate Evangelists have been preaching the Gospel to unbelievers who have been becoming born-again Believers.²⁰ That bit of information is essential. Evangelists have not been preaching to Believers, they have been preaching to unbelievers. And some of those unbelievers have become born-again Believers through their belief in the Gospel.

So when new Believers came into a church and saw that it

²⁰The leaders of the Protestant Church generally recognize John Wesley (1703–1791), Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758), and Charles Finney (1792–1875) as legitimate Evangelists. All three clearly understood the importance of believing the Truth. John Wesley writes:

1. *If any doctrines within the whole compass of Christianity may be properly termed fundamental, they are doubtless these two, — the doctrine of justification, and that of the new birth: The former relating to that great work which God does for us, in forgiving our sins; the latter, to the great work which God does in us, in renewing our fallen nature. In order of time, neither of these is before the other: in the moment we are justified by the grace of God, through the redemption that is in Jesus, we are also "born of the Spirit;" but in order of thinking, as it is termed, justification precedes the new birth. We first conceive his wrath to be turned away, and then his Spirit to work in our hearts.*

2. *How great importance then must it be of, to every child of man, throughly to understand these fundamental doctrines! From a full conviction of this, many excellent men have wrote very largely concerning justification, explaining every point relating thereto, and opening the Scriptures which treat upon it. Many likewise have wrote on the new birth: And some of them largely enough; but yet not so clearly as might have been desired.*

Wesley, J. *Sermons on Several Occasions: "Sermon 45, The New Birth,"* Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., (1999).

was being led by someone who was only pretending to be born again, they left that church and started a new one.²¹ That same

²¹The same sort of scenario played itself out in regard to the *specific content* that one must believe in order to be a “Christian.” One of the last great battles over valid beliefs occurred from 1890 to 1930, as conservative theologians lost control of Princeton Seminary to liberal theologians:

The Presbyterian furor reached its peak in the 1890s. Early in the decade moderately liberal leaders attempted a revision of the Confession of Faith, which was defeated in 1893. In the meantime conservatives counterattacked by bringing in succession formal action against three of the most famous of the progressive seminary professors, Charles A. Briggs, Henry Preserved Smith, and Arthur Cushman McGiffert. By the end of the decade all three had left the Presbyterian church as a result of these actions. Union Theological Seminary in New York severed its ties with the denomination in 1892 in response to the General Assembly’s actions against Professor Briggs. Although some broad issues of departure from Calvinist orthodoxy were involved, in each case the specific allegations concerned the narrow issue of inerrancy. On several occasions during the decade the General Assembly declared that the doctrine of inerrancy was a fundamental teaching of the church.

As in other denominations, something of a truce seemed to prevail during most of the first two decades of the twentieth century; yet conservative Presbyterians were using the time to retrench themselves in the positions they had committed themselves to and successfully defended during the intense battles of the 1890s. This defensive strategy had an important bearing on the larger fundamentalist movement. For one thing it seemed to establish a precedent for the successful restraint of liberalism by formal ecclesiastical action. For another, it helped to characterize the movement as committed to defending a few fundamentals of faith. This latter effect, which was ironic in view of the elaborate confessionalism of conservative Presbyterians, apparently was not entirely intended. In 1910 the Presbyterian General Assembly, in response to some questions raised about the orthodoxy of some of the graduates of Union Theological Seminary, adopted a five-point declaration of “essential” doctrines. Summarized, these points were: (1) the inerrancy of Scripture, (2) the Virgin Birth of Christ, (3) his substitutionary atonement, (4) his bodily resurrection, and (5) the authenticity of the miracles. These five points (which included both the narrow issue of inerrancy and some of the broad issues concerning the supernatural in Christianity) were not intended to be a creed or a definitive statement. Yet in the 1920s they became the “famous five points” that were the last rallying position before the spectacular collapse of the conservative party.

Marsden, George A., Fundamentalism and American Culture, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980, p. 117.

scenario has occurred repeatedly over the past 500 years, and it's part of the reason why there are so many different Protestant denominations in existence today.

That is, many Protestant denominations are the result of True Believers trying to get away from church leaders they could see only claimed to know the Truth. So today you can go into a Lutheran church, a Presbyterian church, a Pentecostal church, an Evangelical Free church, or any one of the Heinz 57 varieties of Baptist churches.

If you study the history of the Protestant Church, you will find this same scenario has repeated itself time and time again over the past 500 years. The Presbyterians, the Methodists, the Baptists, and many others have their origin in the process I just described.²² Those denominations were founded by men who knew and believed the Truth of the Gospel. But over time those denominations were taken over by men who had not been born again and did not believe the Truth of the Gospel. So True Believers left those churches to found new churches.

Finally, just over 100 years ago, the final group of born-again Believers left churches that were led by men who no longer believed the Truth of the Gospel. The result was the formation of the Pentecostal churches.²³ At that time, Pentecostal Evangelists were still preaching the Truth of the Gospel. That is,

²²I have provided a survey of the history of the Protestant Church in the article "Protestants All Agree on This: Somebody Laid an Egg!" *The Voice of Elijah*, January 1994.

²³The Pentecostal doctrine of the "Baptism of the Holy Spirit" as a "second definite work of grace" derives from the fact that the founders of the Protestant Church not only restored the Truth of the Gospel, they also set in motion a desperate search for other Truths that they realized the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church had lost. For the most part, the Protestant search for lost Truth has been focused on the "right" form of church government. Little did the leaders of the Church realize that what had been lost was nothing less than the Truth of *The Apostolic Teaching* itself. The lack of clarity in the thinking of current Church leaders in regard to what earlier generations were seeking can clearly be seen from the articles published in *The American Quest for the Primitive Church*, ed. Richard T. Hughes, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988.

they insisted one had to believe the Gospel and *honestly* apologize to God in order to be born again.

THE CHURCH HAS LOST THE TRUTH —AGAIN

Unfortunately, over the past 100 years the leaders of the Pentecostal churches did precisely what others before them had done. They lost the Truth of the Gospel. But this time, there haven't been many leaving the Pentecostal churches to start new churches.²⁴ The reason for that is this: Legitimate Evangelists are no longer preaching the Truth of the Gospel to unbelievers. Instead, Pretenders are preaching a false gospel to people who mistakenly think they have already been born again.

Fifty years ago, there were still legitimate Baptist and Pentecostal Evangelists who were preaching the Truth of the Gospel. At that time, Evangelists like Billy Graham were preaching the Gospel in revival meetings held around the world. Itinerate Evangelists were also holding revival meetings in local

²⁴In the late 1960s and early 1970s, as part of what has been called the "Charismatic Movement," many "seekers" came out of mainline denominations that had long since lost the Gospel. But the goal these people sought was not some new Truth; it was instead to obtain the Pentecostals' "second definite work of grace"—that is, the experience of speaking in tongues. These people had never heard the Gospel in the churches they left, and for the most part, they did not hear it in the churches they joined. Many of these "seekers" came out of the Roman Catholic Church, which lost the Truth of the Gospel more than 500 years ago. Consequently, the net result of the "Charismatic Movement" was the dilution of what little Truth of the Gospel that remained in the Pentecostal churches they joined.

churches where they would preach the Gospel to the young people of the church before moving on to another local church to do the same thing. So people were still being born again because they were believing the Gospel and repenting. That is, they were *honestly* confessing that they knew they had sinned, and they were apologizing to God for their sins.

But the Evangelists who were preaching the Truth 50 years ago are, for the most part, all gone today; and nobody has stepped up to replace them. Today, Satan has nearly everybody believing his lies, and those lies are preventing people from believing the Truth of the Gospel so that they can *honestly* apologize to God. Therefore, I am going to tell you what you need to know to be born again. That is, I am going to explain the Truth of the Gospel so that you can understand what you need to know.

If you believe what I tell you, you can then go to God and *honestly* apologize. You can say, "I know how I have sinned against You. I know I'm not worthy of salvation, but I sincerely apologize for what I've done." You will at least have the opportunity to be born again because you will understand the basics of the Gospel message.

THE ORIGINAL SIN WAS UNBELIEF

I assume you have heard that Adam and Eve sinned; but you most likely do not know the nature of their sin. So I am going to tell you. Moses tells us that Satan came to Eve and asked her a question—a leading question—because he wanted her to believe something other than the Truth. Keep that in mind.

Satan wanted Eve to believe a lie, so he asked her a simple question: “Do you want to know things that you don’t know right now?” And Eve said, “Sure, I want to know everything.” So Satan said, “Well, God has told you that you must not eat from this tree of the knowledge of good and evil because you will die. But the Truth is, if you do what God has told you not to do, you will then know everything that God knows.”

That’s when Eve sinned. She made the mistake of believing God had lied to her. That was her sin. That was what offended God. She called God a liar. Keep that in mind. But keep this in mind also: If you hear the Truth of the Gospel and you don’t believe it, you are doing exactly what Eve did. You are calling God a liar.²⁵

²⁵The Apostle John says that in this passage:

*If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for the witness of God is this, that He has borne witness concerning His Son. The one who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; **the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the witness that God has borne concerning His Son.***

(1 John 5:9–10)

The unfortunate thing is, Satan deceived Eve by making her believe he had said something he didn't actually say. Here is what Moses tells us about their conversation:

Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?" And the woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, lest you die.'" And the serpent said to the woman, "You surely shall not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and **you will be like God, knowing good and evil.**" When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make {one} wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings.

(Genesis 3:1-7)

Satan deceived Eve through his use of the Hebrew idiom "knowing good and evil." He expected her to take that idiom *literally*, and she did. The Truth is, "knowing good and evil" sometimes carries a *meaning* other than the *literal meaning* of the words. Its *idiomatic meaning* is, "able to procreate."

We speak in idioms all the time. For example, a person who "bought a lemon" may not have bought a piece of fruit; he may have bought a car that is in constant need of repair; and a person who "bought the farm" may not be planning to plant anything. The Truth is, he may already be "pushing up daisies."

My point is, when Satan spoke to Eve, he was intentionally speaking *idiomatically*, knowing she would take what he said *literally*. She thought she was going to get some special insight into things that only God knew. The text plainly says that. She thought that if she did what Satan wanted her to do, she would know things that only God knew.

But the Truth is, Satan knew that God had already told Eve the Truth. He knew that if she ate from that tree, she would immediately begin to die. He also knew that Eve was about 12

years old, and as soon as the aging process set in, she would go through puberty and become sexually mature.²⁶ That is what the Hebrew idiom “knowing good and evil” means. It means, “able to procreate.”²⁷ Satan knew that, but he deceived Eve by taking something that was *figurative*, and leading her to believe he *meant* it *literally*. Keep that in mind. He is lying to our generation in precisely the same way.

I assume you have heard of the *literal* theory of interpretation? The leaders of the Church are telling us the Bible can only be interpreted *literally*. But that theory makes no sense at all. If you say the Bible can only be understood *literally*, you are saying God could never say anything that didn't make sense *literally*. That would *mean* God could never use idioms, which is obviously not true, because God is all-powerful. He is certainly

²⁶That is why Adam and Eve suddenly “knew” that they were naked. When they began to die, they became sexually mature and aware of human sexuality. If you have ever seen prepubescent children run around naked, you already know how unaware they are of their nakedness.

²⁷The following two passages reflect the *idiomatic meaning* of the idiom “knowing good and evil”:

“Then the LORD heard the sound of your words, and He was angry and took an oath, saying, ‘Not one of these men, this evil generation, shall see the good land which I swore to give your fathers, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him and to his sons I will give the land on which he has set foot, because he has followed the LORD fully.’ The LORD was angry with me also on your account, saying, ‘Not even you shall enter there. Joshua the son of Nun, who stands before you, he shall enter there; encourage him, for he shall cause Israel to inherit it. Moreover, your little ones who you said would become a prey, and your sons, who this day have no knowledge of good or evil, shall enter there, and I will give it to them, and they shall possess it.’”

(Deuteronomy 1:34–39)

“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel. He will eat curds and honey at the time He knows {enough} to refuse evil and choose good. For before the boy will know {enough} to refuse evil and choose good, the land whose two kings you dread will be forsaken.”

(Isaiah 7:14–16)

able to express Himself in any way that we can. If the *literal* theory of interpretation were true, the Prophets and Apostles would never speak in idioms. The Truth is, they use *idiomatic* expressions all the time.

But take note of what Eve's sin was. Her sin was, she chose not to believe God; and by not believing, she called Him a liar. That is still the only thing that God holds against us. He is angry that we are sinning because we do not know and believe the Truth about Him.

That is why the only thing that God requires for you to be born again is to believe the Truth and confirm your belief by *honestly* apologizing for having done things you knew were wrong. That's all He requires. He wants you to do precisely the opposite of what Eve did. He wants you to believe Him.

God is not asking you to do anything to prove yourself worthy of salvation. He's just saying, "If you hear the Truth, believe the Truth, and *honestly* apologize for the wrongs you have done, you can live forever." That's all there is to it.

CREATION IS NOT FINISHED

Now, I want to point out something else you need to know. In the very first chapter of the Book of Genesis, Moses tells us God created a man who is called “Adam.”²⁸ But the biblical text plainly says God did that on the sixth “day” of Creation.²⁹ Here is what Moses says:

Then God said, “Let the waters teem with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth in the open expanse of the heavens.” And God created the great sea monsters, and every living creature that moves, with which the waters

²⁸The following translation reflects my understanding of the things that I explain here. The future tense in my translation is derived from Moses’ use of a Hebrew verbal form known as the “*prophetic perfect*”:

Then God said, “Let Us make an Adam in the image we have, according to the likeness we have, so that they may exercise authority over the fish of the sea and over the flyer of the Sea of Waters, and over the beast, and over all the Earth, and over all the crawling thing—the {one} that crawls on the Earth.” And God will create the Adam in the image He has. In the image of God He will create Him; male and female He will create them. Then God will bless them; and God will say to them, “Bear fruit and become many, and fill the Earth, and subdue her; and exercise authority over the fish of the sea, and over the flyer of the Sea of Waters, and over every living {thing}—the {one} that crawls on the Earth.”

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

²⁹You will find a more complete explanation of the things I explain here in the article titled, “Transformed Into the Image and Likeness of God,” *The Voice of Elijah*, April 2003. That article is also available in a booklet titled *In the Image and Likeness of God*, which is available without charge from *The Voice of Elijah* web site: www.voiceofelijah.org.

swarmed after their kind, and every winged bird after its kind; and God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." And there was evening and there was morning, a fifth day. Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind: cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth after their kind"; and it was so. And God made the beasts of the earth after their kind, and the cattle after their kind, and everything that creeps on the ground after its kind; and God saw that it was good. Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

(Genesis 1:20–27)

That passage plainly tells us God created a **man** on the sixth "day" of Creation. The Hebrew term *translated* "man" in that passage is *transliterated* "Adam" in other instances.³⁰ But take note of what the text says. That "Adam" was created *after* all of the birds, fish, and animals were created on the fifth and sixth days of Creation. Remember that. On the sixth day, *after* all the other creatures had been created, God created a man called "Adam" in His Own image and likeness.

Now, if you turn to the second chapter of the Book of Genesis, you will find Moses mentions another man who is also called "Adam." But the biblical text just as plainly tells us this "Adam" was created *before* God created the animals. Here is what Moses says:

³⁰The decision as to when the Hebrew word '*adam*' should be *transliterated* as "Adam" because it refers to the man that we call "Adam" or *translated* as "man" or "mankind" because it refers to mankind in general is an *interpretation* that all translators apply to their translation. In my own translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, I *transliterate* '*adam*' as "Adam" and leave it up to the reader to understand what Moses and the other Prophets of Israel intended by their use of the term. I do that because the Hebrew term '*adam*' quite often refers to the "second Adam," Jesus Christ, rather than the first "man" that God created.

Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him." And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought {them} to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. And the man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him.

(Genesis 2:18–20)

Most people think that account and the account in Genesis 1 are both referring to the same "Adam." But that is obviously not true, because Moses tells us the "Adam" described in Genesis 1 was created *after* the animals, and the "Adam" described in Genesis 2 was created *before* the animals. So the two accounts can't be referring to the same "Adam." One "Adam" was created *before* God created the animals; the other "Adam" was created *after* He created the animals. So how are we going to resolve that conundrum?

Well, the Truth is, the two "Adams" are not the same "Adam." The "Adam" described in Genesis 2—the one who was created *before* the animals—is quite obviously our forefather, because you can track all of the genealogies in the Bible back to him.³¹

But what about the other "Adam"—the One mentioned in Genesis 1? Who is that other "Adam"? Well, let me begin by telling you that one of Satan's most pernicious lies will prevent most people from believing what I am going to tell you now. So,

³¹The fact that the "Adam" described in Genesis 2 is our forefather can easily be seen if one compares the genealogy that Moses provides in Genesis 5:3–32 with the genealogy of Jesus that Luke provides in Luke 3:23–38. Those two genealogies are linked to the "Adam" who was expelled from the Garden of Eden by this text:

And Adam had relations with his wife again; and she gave birth to a son, and named him Seth, for, {she said,} "God has appointed me another offspring in place of Abel; for Cain killed him." And to Seth, to him also a son was born; and he called his name Enosh. Then {men} began to call upon the name of the LORD.

(Genesis 4:25–26)

if you can see the Truth in what I say, you are one of the fortunate few.

In contrast to many of his other lies, this particular lie of Satan did not exist anywhere in the Church 200 years ago. It is the lie that says the Bible can only be understood *literally*. That lie was introduced into the Church about 180 years ago.³² Satan is using that lie to conceal the Truth about the “second Adam”—the One mentioned in Genesis 1.

You see, the Truth is, Genesis 1 is a summary of the entire history of Creation. And the account in Genesis 1 is describing Jesus Christ being resurrected in the image and likeness of God on the sixth “day” of Creation.³³ But you have to let go of the lie

³²I have explained the origin of that lie and how it spread throughout the Church in an article titled “Wanna Hear the Whopper the Liar Came up With? (I Doubt You’ll Believe It!)” in *The Voice of Elijah*, October 1996. I have since published that article in the booklet titled *Wanna Hear a Whopper?* You may obtain a free copy at www.voiceofelijah.org.

³³The Truth regarding the death of Jesus Christ on the sixth “day” of Creation was lost sometime after A.D. 200. That can be seen from what the Early Church Father Irenæus wrote about the death of Christ:

2. Thus, then, in the day that they did eat, in the same did they die, and became death's debtors, since it was one day of the creation. For it is said, "There was made in the evening, and there was made in the morning, one day." Now in this same day that they did eat, in that also did they die. But according to the cycle and progress of the days, after which one is termed first, another second, and another third, if anybody seeks diligently to learn upon what day out of the seven it was that Adam died, he will find it by examining the dispensation of the Lord. For by summing up in Himself the whole human race from the beginning to the end, He has also summed up its death. From this it is clear that the Lord suffered death, in obedience to His Father, upon that day on which Adam died while he disobeyed God. Now he died on the same day in which he did eat. For God said, "In that day on which ye shall eat of it, ye shall die by death." The Lord, therefore, recapitulating in Himself this day, underwent His sufferings upon the day preceding the Sabbath, that is, the sixth day of the creation, on which day man was created; thus granting him a second creation by means of His passion, which is that [creation] out of death.

Roberts, Alexander and Donaldson, James: The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume I: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325. Eerdmans reprint, 1973, p. 551.

found in the *literal* theory of interpretation in order to believe that. Most people won't be able to let go of Satan's lie.

If Jesus Christ is the "second Adam"—the "Adam" Who was created in the image and likeness of God—that *means* He must have been resurrected on the sixth "day" of Creation³⁴ just as Moses says. But Christ was resurrected nearly 2000 years

³⁴The Truth that Jesus Christ was resurrected in the image and likeness of God on the sixth "day" of Creation so that we might also be resurrected in God's image and likeness was lost in two stages. Satan first used a man named Tatian to introduce the now-prevalent notion that our forefather Adam was created in the image and likeness of God. Satan did that so that he could later use that lie to completely replace the Truth. Tatian eventually revealed himself to be a complete imposter. But unfortunately, by the end of the second century, the lie he introduced had already spread through the Church. You will find it stated by no less an authority than Irenæus in the following quote. Nevertheless, the Truth concerning the resurrection of Believers in the image and likeness of God still remained:

And thus was the hand of God plainly shown forth, by which Adam was fashioned, and we too have been formed; and since there is one and the same Father, whose voice from the beginning even to the end is present with His handiwork, and the substance from which we were formed is plainly declared through the Gospel, we should therefore not seek after another Father besides Him, nor [look for] another substance from which we have been formed, besides what was mentioned beforehand, and shown forth by the Lord; nor another hand of God besides that which, from the beginning even to the end, forms us and prepares us for life, and is present with His handiwork, and perfects it after the image and likeness of God.

2. And then, again, this Word was manifested when the Word of God was made man, assimilating Himself to man, and man to Himself, so that by means of his resemblance to the Son, man might become precious to the Father. For in times long past, it was said that man was created after the image of God, but it was not [actually] shown; for the Word was as yet invisible, after whose image man was created. Wherefore also he did easily lose the similitude. When, however, the Word of God became flesh, He confirmed both these: for He both showed forth the image truly, since He became Himself what was His image; and He re-established the similitude after a sure manner, by assimilating man to the invisible Father through means of the visible Word.

Roberts, Alexander and Donaldson, James: The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume I: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325. Eerdmans reprint, 1973, p. 544.

ago. So the seven days of Creation cannot be *literal* 24-hour days if Christ is the “second Adam.” That is, the process of Creation must still be going on, and God has not yet rested on the seventh “day.”³⁵ That is what Jesus *meant* when He said He and God were still working instead of resting on the Sabbath. John tells us this:

And a certain man was there, who had been thirty-eight years in his sickness. When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he had already been a long time {in that condition}, He said to him, “Do you wish to get well?” The sick man answered Him, “Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, but while I am coming, another steps down before me.” Jesus said to him, “Arise, take up your pallet, and walk.” And immediately the man became well, and took up his pallet and {began} to walk. Now it was the Sabbath on that day. Therefore the Jews were saying to him who was cured, “It is the Sabbath, and it is not permissible for you to carry your pallet.” But he answered them, “He who made me well was the one who said to me, ‘Take up your pallet and walk.’” They asked him, “Who is the man who said to you, ‘Take up {your pallet}, and walk?’” But he who was healed did not know who it was; for Jesus had slipped away while there was a crowd in {that} place. Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, “Behold, you have become well; do not sin anymore, so that nothing worse may befall you.” The man went away, and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well. And for this reason the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because He was doing these things on the Sabbath. But He answered them, **“My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working.”**
(John 5:5–17)

³⁵To understand the *meaning* and *significance* of the Mosaic laws regarding the observance of a Sabbath day of rest, one first needs to understand Moses established laws to govern the observance of *parabolic pantomimes* that were intended to constantly remind the people of things that are in *The Teaching of Moses*. When the sons of Israel lost *The Teaching of Moses* in the same way that the leaders of the Church lost *The Apostolic Teaching*, all that remained was the long list of “do this” and “don’t do that” that the Jews still observe. In the case of the Sabbath, the observance of a day of rest every seven days was intended to remind the people that they were to be focused on the seventh “day” of Creation rather than the sixth “day” in which we now live.

In that passage, Jesus is referring to the fact that He was healing people on the Sabbath because God was still working to create Him in His Own image and likeness. The point is, the real Sabbath—that is, the seventh “day” of Creation—has not yet begun. We are still living in the sixth “day” of Creation, and God is still working to create “male and female” Believers in His Own image and likeness.

But that is not the only evidence that what I am telling you is true. The Apostle Paul knew full well that the “Adam” mentioned in Genesis 1 is Jesus Christ. He also knew God is still working to create “male and female” Believers in His Own image and likeness. He *talks about* it in 1 Corinthians 15, where he describes the nature of the resurrected body. He says this:

But someone will say, “How are the dead raised? And with what kind of body do they come?” You fool! That which you sow does not come to life unless it dies; and that which you sow, you do not sow the body which is to be, but a bare grain, perhaps of wheat or of something else. But God gives it a body just as He wished, and to each of the seeds a body of its own. All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one {flesh} of men, and another flesh of beasts, and another flesh of birds, and another of fish. There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one, and the {glory} of the earthly is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable {body}, it is raised an imperishable {body}; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual {body}. So also it is written, “The first MAN, Adam, BECAME A LIVING SOUL.” The last Adam {became} a life-giving spirit. However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual. The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven. As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly. And just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

(1 Corinthians 15:35–49)

In that passage, Paul refers to Christ as the “last Adam” and the “second man” because he knows Moses was describing the

creation of two completely different “Adams” in the first and second chapters of Genesis. He also knows that just as True Believers have borne the image and likeness of the first “Adam”—the one who is our forefather—they will also bear the image and likeness of the “second Adam,” Jesus Christ, the One Who was resurrected in the image and likeness of God.³⁶ But resurrection in the image and likeness of God is only possible if one has first been born again in the image and likeness of God. Only then can he be resurrected in the image and likeness of God at the End of the Age.

You see, Satan has lied to us by convincing everyone that mankind was created in the image and likeness of God. That is not true.³⁷ Paul knew it wasn't true, and the Early Church

³⁶A fact that has been completely overlooked by the leaders of the Church is the Apostle Paul's use of a present form of the verb to tell us Jesus Christ *is* the image of God:

*And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of **Christ, who is the image of God**. For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, “Light shall shine out of darkness,” is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.*

(2 Corinthians 4:3–6)

³⁷There is only one place in the biblical text from which anyone could possibly derive this doctrine:

This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day when God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. He created them male and female, and He blessed them and named them Man in the day when they were created.

(Genesis 5:1–2)

The Truth is, in those two verses, Moses is referring to “the scroll” that he wrote; and he is giving an introduction to his account of how God is working to “engender” “The Man” Jesus Christ in His Own image and likeness. Here is my translation of those two verses:

This {is} the scroll of the engenderings of an Adam. In the day when God creates an Adam, He will make Him in the likeness of God. Male and female, He will create them, and He will bless them, and He will call the name they have “Adam” in the day He creates them.

(Genesis 5:1–2)—my translation

Fathers knew it wasn't true. But Satan has once again distorted the Truth, and the leaders of the Church have believed him.

The Truth is, we are still in the middle of the process whereby God is creating "male and female" Believers in His Own image and likeness. That is why Satan is fighting so hard to keep everyone believing his lies. In an effort to deceive the whole world in our generation, Satan is using precisely the same tactic that he used on Eve. That is, he is insisting we take the Scriptures literally when he knows the Truth quite often resides in idiomatic expressions.

The Truth is, God has not yet finished the process of Creation. We are still living in the sixth "day" of Creation, and you still have an opportunity to participate in God's greatest act of Creation—the creation of "male and female" Believers in His Own image and likeness. But those who participate in that process can only do so voluntarily; and they can only do so individually.

Nobody can force you to believe the Truth; and nobody can make the decision for you. You alone must make the decision as to whether or not you want to be born again. That is, only you can decide whether or not you want to be created in the image and likeness of God so that you can rest with Him forever on the seventh "day" of Creation. That is precisely what God is doing through the new-birth process. He is creating those who believe the Truth in His Own image and likeness so that they can rest with Him on the seventh "day" of Creation. The author of the Book of Hebrews puts it this way:

Therefore, let us fear lest, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you should seem to have come short of it. For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard. For we who have believed enter that rest, just as He has said, "AS I SWORE IN MY WRATH, THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST," although His works were finished from the foundation of the world. For He has thus said somewhere concerning the seventh {day}, "AND GOD RESTED ON THE SEVENTH DAY FROM ALL HIS WORKS"; and again in this {passage}, "THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST." Since

therefore it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly had good news preached to them failed to enter because of disobedience, He again fixes a certain day, "Today," saying through David after so long a time just as has been said before, "TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS." For if Joshua had given them rest, He would not have spoken of another day after that. There remains therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God.

(Hebrews 4:1-9)

THE GOSPEL IS A PROMISE

So, now that you know God is still in the process of creating “male and female” Believers in His Own image and likeness, I am going to explain something else that Satan does not want you to know. I am going to explain the basic message of the Scriptures. You can believe it if you care to; disbelieve it if you dare to. It makes absolutely no difference to me one way or the other because I am not trying to convince anyone that what I am telling you is true. You will be held responsible for what you believe; and I will be held responsible for what I believe. The Judgment Seat of God will determine which one of us has called God a liar.

The Scriptures are an historical account of how the Truth of the Gospel has been *handed down* through history. That is what the Bible is all about. It is explaining where *the promise* of God came from, how it was *fulfilled*, and where it went after Christ died.³⁸

You see, God made a *promise* to Adam and Eve when they left the Garden of Eden; and the Bible tells us how that *promise* has now come down to us so that we have an opportunity to participate in God’s *fulfillment of the promise*. But the Bible is also a written record of what men have done with *the promise* when they had opportunity to participate in *what God prom-*

³⁸I have already provided a much more comprehensive explanation of the things I summarize here. You can find it in *The Inheritance of the Believer, Volume 1*. That publication, and other things I have published, is available on *The Voice of Elijah* web site: www.voiceofelijah.org.

ised. That is, it provides testimony concerning the stupidity of men by describing just how devious we are in denying the Truth so that we can go on believing the things that are not true.

The unique thing about the way God has created all things is this: He merely speaks, and whatever He wants to create comes into being as a result of His spoken word. In this instance, God has spoken a *promise*. His *promise* is, if a person actually believes *the promise*, that person will be created in the image and likeness of God Himself—which is what God has *promised*.

So if you *honestly* apologize to God after hearing and believing His *promise*, a new creation will suddenly come into being within you. That experience is commonly called the “new birth.” But it is impossible for you to be born again if you do not really believe *the promise*. That is, you will not be born again if all you do is say, “Oh yeah, I’m just going to say God’s *promise* is true.” That never has, and never will, result in the new birth.

To be born again, you have to *honestly* believe *the promise* is true, and you have to *honestly* apologize to God for what you have done. To be born again is to become a child of God—to become a new baby formed in the basic image and likeness of God. And after you are born again, you can then go on to grow in the Truth that God has revealed in the Scriptures until you are finally resurrected in the image and likeness of God. After you are resurrected, you will have eternal life. You will live forever in the Kingdom of God, and Jesus Christ will reign as King over all Creation. That is *what is promised* in the Bible.

The unique thing about *the promise* of God is this: To be born again, you have to *honestly* believe that God will do precisely what He said He will do. God has spoken a *promise*, and if you are willing to believe that He will do *what He has promised*, you can be born again in the image and likeness of God so that you can live forever. That is what we are *talking about*.

But your creation in the image and likeness of God comes about as a result of exactly the same method that God has used from the very beginning. He uses the spoken word. But the

spoken word that you believe cannot be just any word. It has to be the Truth that God spoke.

Therefore, to believe *the promise*, you first have to hear it from someone who actually knows the Truth and can transfer it to you. That's why Satan is constantly working to distort the Truth. But it is also one of the reasons why you find all the begats and the begots in the Scriptures. For example, the Bible says Adam begat Seth, and Seth begat Enosh, and so on.

The purpose of some of those genealogies is to show how *the promise* of God was transferred from one person to another down through history. They tell us that *promise* has been *handed down orally* from the time of Adam. But it has also been *handed down* as an *inheritance*.

God simply said to Adam, "Adam, I make you this *promise*, and I want you to *hand this promise down* to your son as his *inheritance*. When you explain *the promise* to your son as part of his *inheritance*, he will *inherit the promise* from you and be able to *hand it down* to his son as part of his *inheritance*."

So if you track the genealogies in the Book of Genesis, you will find *the promise* was *handed down* from Adam to Noah. Noah carried *the promise* with him across the Flood. After the Flood, *the promise* was *handed down* through the lineage of Shem until it came to Abraham.

Abraham was planning to give *the promise* to his son Ishmael when he died, but God said He wanted Abraham to *hand it down* to Isaac. Abraham did that. So Isaac held title to *the promise* during his lifetime. And Isaac planned to give *the promise* to his firstborn son Esau when he died, but again God said no, and so Moses tells us how *the promise* went to Jacob.

But just before he died, Jacob split *the promise* up and *handed down* various parts of it to his sons. So at the time of the Exodus, God made a covenant with all the descendants of Jacob to unify *the promise*. You can find that covenant described in the last half of the Book of Exodus.

Under the terms of that covenant, all the descendants of Jacob—that is, what the Bible calls "all Israel"—became a virtual person. That is, they became members of the virtual Person that

I call “*Corporate Israel*.” From that point on, the virtual Person *Corporate Israel* held title to *the promise*.

Under the terms of the covenant, *the promise* could never again be fragmented simply because “all Israel”—that is, *Corporate Israel*—held title to *the promise*. So when you find the phrase “all Israel” in the Old Testament, that is what it is referring to—the *Corporation* of Israel. Do you know what a corporation is? It is a virtual person.

A corporation is legally treated as a person, not just here in the United States, but all around the world. Under the terms of the covenant that God made with Israel, all of the descendants of Jacob became a corporation—what I call “*Corporate Israel*”—in order to tie *the promise* back together. So, title to *the promise* was held by *Corporate Israel* all the way down to the time of Christ.

But there is a catch to the covenant that God made with the descendants of Jacob. Under the terms of that covenant, God specifically stated that if someone did something that He did not approve of, He would “cut” that person “off from” *Corporate Israel*. That is, they would no longer be a member of *Corporate Israel*—as far as He was concerned.³⁹

At the time of Christ, God did precisely what He said He would do. He “cut off” all the members of *Corporate Israel* except Jesus Christ. So who held title to *the promise* then? Jesus Christ did. Do you know what Christ did with *the promise*? He made an *oral testament*, and He said that anybody who was willing to do the will of God could *inherit the promise* from Him after He died.⁴⁰

Matthew gives us an account of Jesus making His *Last Will and Testament*. He says this:

While He was still speaking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and brothers were standing outside, seeking to speak to Him. And someone said to Him, “Behold, Your mother and

³⁹I have explained the *meaning* and *significance* of the Hebrew idiom “cut off from” in the book *Not All Israel Is Israel*.

⁴⁰See the article, “Did Jesus Leave a Will?” *The Voice of Elijah*, July 1991.

Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You.” But He answered the one who was telling Him and said, “Who is My mother and who are My brothers?” And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, “Behold, My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother.”

(Matthew 12:46–50)

The will of God is that you *honestly* believe the Truth, apologize to God, and live forever. If you believe the Truth, you can *inherit the promise* under the terms of the *oral testament* that Jesus Christ made. That is, you can be born again in the image and likeness of God, so that, when it comes time for the resurrection, you can be resurrected in the image and likeness of God, just as Jesus Christ was. It is that simple.

But you first have to *honestly* believe what God has *promised*. He has *promised* that those who believe the Truth and apologize will be allowed to live forever. That’s the Gospel in a nutshell. But if you really want to believe the Truth, you are going to have to give up your belief in a whole bunch of Satan’s lies.

YOU MUST BELIEVE THE TRUTH

I have already told you some of the ways that Satan has lied to us. Now I am going to tackle one of his biggest lies.⁴¹ Today, the leaders of the Church are all saying exactly the same

⁴¹What I explain here is not some new belief. It has been part of Christian doctrine from the inception of the Church. It is also essential to the new birth, as the Protestant Reformer John Calvin knew full well:

7. The second part of our definition is, that repentance proceeds from a sincere fear of God. Before the mind of the sinner can be inclined to repentance, he must be aroused by the thought of divine judgment; but when once the thought that God will one day ascend his tribunal to take an account of all words and actions has taken possession of his mind, it will not allow him to rest, or have one moment's peace, but will perpetually urge him to adopt a different plan of life, that he may be able to stand securely at that judgment-seat. Hence the Scripture, when exhorting to repentance, often introduces the subject of judgment as in Jeremiah, "Lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings," (Jer. 4:4). Paul, in his discourse to the Athenians, says, "The times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness" (Acts 17:30, 31). The same thing is repeated in several other passages. Sometimes God is declared to be a judge, from the punishments already inflicted, thus leading sinners to reflect that worse awaits them if they do not quickly repent. There is an example of this in the 29th chapter of Deuteronomy. As repentance begins with dread and hatred of sin, the Apostle sets down godly sorrow as one of its causes (2 Cor. 7:10). By godly sorrow he means when we not only tremble at the punishment, but hate and abhor the sin, because we know it is displeasing to God.

Calvin, J., trans. Henry Beveridge, Institutes of the Christian Religion, Book iii, Chapter iii, Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, reprint 1993, p. 514.

thing.⁴² They are telling you that God loves everybody; but the

⁴²I emphasize again: What I am telling you about the wrath of God has always been a fundamental doctrine of the Church. The fact that the leaders of the Church in our generation have chosen not to believe it does not invalidate the Truth. Jonathan Edwards, a man who is still widely accepted as a legitimate Evangelist, clearly states the Truth that past generations of the Church knew to be true:

2. *They deserve to be cast into hell; so that divine justice never stands in the way, it makes no objection against God's using his power at any moment to destroy them. Yea, on the contrary, justice calls aloud for an infinite punishment of their sins. Divine justice says of the tree that brings forth such grapes of Sodom, "Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?" Luke 13:7. The sword of divine justice is every moment brandished over their heads, and it is nothing but the hand of arbitrary mercy, and God's mere will, that holds it back.*

3. *They are already under a sentence of condemnation to hell. They do not only justly deserve to be cast down thither, but the sentence of the law of God, that eternal and immutable rule of righteousness that God has fixed between him and mankind, is gone out against them, and stands against them; so that they are bound over already to hell. John 3:18. "He that believeth not is condemned already." So that every unconverted man properly belongs to hell: that is his place; from thence he is, John 8:23. "Ye are from beneath," and thither he is bound; it is the place that justice, and God's word, and the sentence of his unchangeable law, assign to him.*

4. *They are now the objects of that very same anger and wrath of God, that is expressed in the torments of hell. And the reason why they do not go down to hell at each moment, is not because God, in whose power they are, is not then very angry with them; as he is with many miserable creatures now tormented in hell, and there feel and bear the fierceness of his wrath. Yea, God is a great deal more angry with great numbers that are now on earth; yea, doubtless with many that are now in this congregation, who it may be are at ease, than he is with many of those who are now in the flames of hell.—So that it is not because God is unmindful of their wickedness, and does not resent it, that he does not let loose his hand and cut them off. God is not altogether such a one as themselves, though they imagine him to be so. The wrath of God burns against them, their damnation does not slumber; the pit is prepared, the fire is made ready, the furnace is now hot, ready to receive them; the flames do now rage and glow. The glittering sword is whet, and held over them, and the pit hath opened its mouth under them.*

Edwards, J., *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 2* (8). Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., (2008).

Truth is, the leaders of the Church have lost the Truth once again.⁴³

⁴³The loss of some important Truth can always be traced back to the influence of just one man. In this case, the loss of the Truth concerning the wrath of God can be attributed to a man who was erroneously accepted as a legitimate Evangelist by the leaders of evangelical churches during the late 1800s. The Truth is, he was nothing more than a “tare” that Satan “planted” in the Church to lead others away from the Truth. The man’s name was Dwight L. Moody (1837–1899). As you read what an authority in the field of religion wrote about him, keep in mind the fact that earlier generations of Church leaders—including John Calvin, Jonathan Edwards, and Charles Finney—believed a healthy fear of the wrath of God was essential to salvation:

Although Moody was not a frankly pragmatic analyst of the techniques of successful evangelism in the way Charles Finney had been, he often tested doctrines for their suitability to evangelism. “His system of theology,” explained an early interpreter, “is bounded by his work as an evangelist.” Moody judged his sermons, said the interpreter, by whether they were “fit to convert sinners with.” “By this rule of fitness he tests all the ideas which present themselves to his mind.”

*This test kept Moody’s message simple and positive. The “Three R’s” adequately summarized his central doctrines: “Ruin by sin, Redemption by Christ, and Regeneration by the Holy Ghost.” Moody presented these themes in an attractively informal fashion, primarily through illustrations and anecdotes, often from Scripture. Although most of the Biblical and evangelistic aspects of his message were not new to revival audiences, **the one feature that almost everyone noticed was that Moody emphasized the love of God. Moreover—a striking omission—he did not preach Hellfire and God’s wrath.** Although he never repudiated the doctrine of eternal punishment, his uneasiness with the subject was not far from that of the evangelical liberalism of Henry Ward Beecher. In Moody’s case, it appears that he avoided distressing subjects largely because he sensed that because of the mood of the modern age they did not meet his pragmatic test. As he himself explained, “Terror never brought a man in yet.”*

Marsden, George A., Fundamentalism and American Culture, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980, p. 35.

Moody quite obviously felt no great concern about whether or not something he preached was true; his only concern was whether it was “effective.” Yet his false “gospel” has now become the accepted mantra of Church leaders of every stripe. The Truth is, Moody’s “gospel” was only “effective” for “planting” more “tares” in the Church.

God loves only one Person. He loves His Son, Jesus Christ. He also loves those who have been born again by believing the Gospel; but that is only because they have been united with Jesus Christ, the Son of God. That is, God sees them as members of *Corporate* Israel—the Son that He loves. John the Baptist put it this way:

“The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand. He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”
(John 3:35–36)

If I were you, I would be a little bit concerned about what John the Baptist said regarding the wrath of God that abides on those who have not been born again. It certainly doesn't sound like those folks have nothing to worry about. Jesus described their situation this way:

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”
(John 3:16–18)

That is John 3:16, 17, and 18. But most people who quote John 3:16 conveniently forget to quote verses 17 and 18. That's because they believe Satan's lies. They think God loves everybody, so they have nothing to worry about.

The Truth is, those who have not been born again have already been judged.⁴⁴ They are just waiting to be sentenced to an eternal punishment in the fires of Hell. Jesus plainly says we

⁴⁴This is not a new doctrine. It has always been a fundamental part of Christian theology. But the “tares” who are the leaders of the Church in our generation have conveniently “forgotten” to teach it. Instead they are telling everyone that “God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life.” The Truth is, everyone has already been convicted and is awaiting sentencing.

already stand under the wrath of God. And the only way to avoid eternal punishment is to *honestly* apologize to God so that we can be forgiven.

In Psalm 11, the Psalmist specifically says that if you are not one of those who have been declared “righteous,” God hates you. Listen to what he says:

The LORD tests the righteous and the wicked,
And the one who loves violence His soul hates.
Upon the wicked He will rain snares;
Fire and brimstone and burning wind will be the portion of their
cup.
(Psalm 11:5–6)

Now, everybody wants to believe the “wicked” person is somebody else. The Truth is, if you have not been born again, *you* are one of the “wicked.” And in Deuteronomy, Moses makes it clear that if you don’t love the God Who is—that is, if you don’t love the Truth that God wants you to believe about Him—He is going to take vengeance on you. Here is what Moses says:

“Know therefore that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments; but repays those who hate Him to their faces, to destroy them; He will not delay with him who hates Him, He will repay him to his face.”
(Deuteronomy 7:9–10)

That’s what the Bible says about the wrath of God. But the leaders of the Church today don’t teach anything at all about the wrath of God. The reason why they don’t is easy to understand. They want nothing at all to do with an angry, vengeful God. That is, they hate the very thought of an angry, vengeful God—the God Who is. So they have replaced that God with an *imaginary* “god” who is more to their liking.

The Truth is, the leaders of the Church have once again lost the Truth. They have chosen to believe one of Satan’s most pernicious lies instead. So it is obvious that Satan is doing a really good job of spreading his lies, which *means* the End of the Age

cannot be far off. But the result of this particular lie is, nobody has any reason to fear the wrath of God today.

In fact, the leaders of the Church are telling us we should not be afraid of God. Consequently, very few today are even aware of the fact that the wrath of God has *always* been a fundamental doctrine of the Church. So if you fear the wrath of God, you are one of the fortunate few.

Most people do not actually believe they are going to Hell. They think that all anyone has to do to be born again is say they are a Christian. But that is because the leaders of the Church have told them everybody is a child of God. Logic alone should tell you that's not true.

Jesus would not have said what He said to Nicodemus about the need to be born again if everybody was already a child of God. The Truth is, the leaders of the Church have once again lost the Truth. The new birth is only granted to those who actually come to God on the basis of the Truth and ask for His forgiveness.

It is not hard to see why Satan would want you to believe the lie that tells you God loves you no matter what you have done. That lie implies God has already forgiven you; but the Truth is, until you *honestly* apologize and ask for His forgiveness, God hates you and the wrath of God abides on you just like Moses, the Psalmist, John the Baptist, and Jesus said.

But Satan wants you to believe his lie because, if you are not afraid of going to Hell, there is no reason why you would ever apologize to God. That is, you would feel no need to apologize because there would be no penalty if you didn't.

The Truth is, God is going to send you to Hell if you don't apologize. But the good news is, all you have to do to avoid that fate is believe the Truth and apologize. That's all God demands. And He knows that if you *honestly* believe the Truth, you will *honestly* apologize, and you will be born again.

But He also knows that you cannot *honestly* apologize if you are not willing to admit just how desperate your situation is. That's why I am going to explain what Christ has already done for you.

JESUS CHRIST SUFFERED FOR YOUR SIN

When Jesus Christ was crucified, He suffered the most horrible agony one could ever imagine. His hands and feet were nailed to a cross, where He hung for hours in excruciating pain. But the Bible plainly tells us Christ suffered for our sins so that we don't have to. You are undoubtedly already familiar with that concept.

But the Truth is, the crucifixion of Jesus Christ is a graphic depiction of the eternal punishment that awaits you if you refuse to believe *the promise* and apologize to God. That is, if you choose to remain under the wrath of God, you are going to suffer for your own sin. You are going to suffer the most excruciating agony for all eternity. I say that because the Scriptures tell us that when Christ died on the cross, He experienced the full force of the wrath of God that awaits those who refuse to believe. So I am going to explain what you need to know about that.

Under the terms of the covenant that God made with *Corporate* Israel, He promised to bless the members of *Corporate* Israel if *Corporate* Israel adhered to the terms of that covenant. But He also promised to curse the members of *Corporate* Israel if *Corporate* Israel failed to adhere to the terms of that covenant.⁴⁵

The Old Testament plainly tells us *Corporate* Israel failed to adhere to the terms of the covenant the people made with God. Therefore, after Jesus Christ became the sole remaining mem-

⁴⁵See Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28–29.

ber of *Corporate* Israel, God invoked the curses of the covenant on Him, and Christ was crucified as a result of those curses. At that point in time, *Corporate* Israel died for the sins of all who had been, or would ever be, members of *Corporate* Israel.⁴⁶ That explains how it is possible for you to be saved.⁴⁷

When you are born again, you become a member of *Corporate* Israel—a part of the Body of Christ. What that *means* for you is this: When Jesus Christ died, He experienced the full force of the wrath of God so that you would not have to. This is the way the Apostle Paul explains all that:

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, “CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE”—in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.
(Galatians 3:13–14)

Paul’s point is, the only thing you have to do to be born again is believe *the promise*. You can’t be good enough to be forgiven. You can’t do enough to be forgiven. Jesus Christ endured the full force of the wrath of God for you so that you could be forgiven simply on the basis of your belief in *the promise* of God.

But if you turn down God’s offer of salvation, you will suffer in excruciating agony for your own sin—for all eternity. It’s that simple. God demands that somebody has to suffer for your sins. So Jesus Christ paid the price for your sins so that you could accept God’s free offer of salvation.

You don’t have to do anything. You don’t have to bring anything. Jesus Christ has already done that for you. But you

⁴⁶This only applies to those who remain “in” *Corporate* Israel until they die. Moses tells us those who are “cut off from” *Corporate* Israel “bear their own sin” (Lev. 20:20; 22:9; 24:15).

⁴⁷This fundamental doctrine of the Church is normally called “substitutionary atonement.” I am merely explaining the *parabolic imagery* that describes the mechanism whereby Jesus Christ became responsible for the sins of any and all who *choose* to accept God’s free offer of salvation.

do have to believe *the promise* of God and *honestly* apologize. I said "*honestly*." God knows what you are thinking. So don't fool yourself into thinking He will accept an apology that is not heart-felt and sincere. He won't. And you will not be able to give God the apology that He demands if you do not appreciate what Jesus Christ did for you.

Christ suffered excruciating pain and died on a cross so that you could be forgiven. You know what you have done wrong. Nobody has to tell you. And when the reality of what Christ did for you finally gets through to you, you will be able to *honestly* apologize for what you have done. Until then, you are wasting your time.

GIVE GOD WHAT GOD REQUIRES

Now, a lot of people are going to tell you that you have to give up smoking; you have to give up drinking; you have to give up bad language; you have to give up this, that, or the other. The reason why they are telling you those things is because they don't know the Truth. They believe a lie of Satan that tells them they have to do certain things to qualify for salvation.⁴⁸

The Truth is, you do not have to do anything to be born again, because there is nothing you can do to be worthy of salvation. As a matter of fact, if you believe you have done or can do anything to be worthy of salvation, that only makes God angrier. The reason for that is, you don't believe that all God demands is an *honest* apology. So, you do not have to do anything to be born again. But you do have to voluntarily submit to the authority of Jesus Christ. That is, you have to accept the fact that after you have been forgiven, Jesus Christ will have authority over you. And as your King, He is going to demand that you always do the right thing.

If you are not willing to submit to the authority of Jesus Christ and always do what you know to be the right thing, then you will not be born again. That's because when you ask for forgiveness and submit to Christ, Christ is going to put His

⁴⁸The Apostle Paul refutes this notion in the Book of Galatians. He insists that anyone who tries to "work" for salvation is obligated to do everything required by the Mosaic law. His point is based on the fact that it is impossible for anyone but God Himself to do that.

Spirit within you. You then have a responsibility to protect the Spirit of Jesus Christ by always doing what you know to be the right thing. So you need to consider the implications of your decision in light of that fact.

Now, if you are feeling really distressed right now because of what I have told you, what you are feeling may be the Spirit of God convicting you on the basis of what I have said. If the Spirit of God is making you feel bad about the fact that Jesus Christ had to suffer and die for your sins, He is trying to convince you that you should apologize to God and submit to the lordship of Jesus Christ. But it may well be that Satan is making you feel really bad by condemning you so that you will have a false conversion and just pretend to be born again.

This is a simple way to tell the difference: If you are focused on yourself and how badly you feel, that's condemnation. You are just feeling sorry for yourself. That won't get you anywhere with God. If you are focused on how badly you have treated God and that your sins caused Christ to suffer and die for your sins, that's conviction. And that's good. Without the conviction of the Holy Spirit, it is impossible for you to *honestly* apologize. So if the Holy Spirit is convicting you, He is trying to convince you that you should apologize to God for what you have done. If you are ready to do that, here is an example of what God wants to hear from you. He wants to hear:

That you know the things you have heard from me are true.

That you know you have sinned.

That you know God has already judged you and found you guilty.

That you know you are on your way to Hell.

That you know you deserve to be punished for your sin.

That you know you are not worthy of the promise God made.

That you know you cannot do anything to save yourself.

That you are sorry that your sins caused Jesus Christ to suffer and die.

That you want to be forgiven.

That you submit to the authority of Jesus Christ as the King of all Creation.

That you accept all that Jesus Christ has done by suffering and dying for you so that you don't have to.

And—that you are willing to always follow the leading of the Spirit and do the right thing.

CONCLUSION

Now, if you apologized and sincerely meant it, the issue is settled. It's settled because you know that you *honestly* meant what you said, and you know that God has forgiven you. If that is the case, I have been called to teach you what you need to know to grow in the Truth. You will find all the information you need to get started at www.voiceofelijah.org. Those folks are looking forward to hearing from you.

But if you do not feel the issue is settled after apologizing and asking for forgiveness, that merely means you were not honest. You were holding back, not willing to believe what I told you, or not willing to *honestly* apologize and submit to the authority of Jesus Christ. If that is the case, you still have an opportunity to do that before it is too late, but nobody has any guarantee they will still be alive tomorrow. Nobody can make the decision for you. But you might want to consider the consequences if you don't.