



THE VOICE of ELIJAH

Restoring the hearts of the fathers to the children

It All Depends on How You Define Faith

It is clear, then, that the truth has been hidden from us; and if that has been already shown by one example, we shall establish it a little after by several more. How entirely worthy of approbation are they who are both willing to learn, and able, according to Solomon, “to know wisdom and instruction, and to perceive the words of wisdom, to receive knotty words, and to perceive true righteousness,” there being another [righteousness as well], not according to the truth, taught by the Greek laws, and by the rest of the philosophers.

“And to direct judgments,” it is said—not those of the bench, but he means that we must preserve sound and free of error the judicial faculty which is within us—“That I may give subtlety to the simple, to the young man sense and understanding.” “For the wise man,” who has been persuaded to obey the commandments, “having heard these things, will become wiser” by knowledge; and “the intelligent man will acquire rule, and will understand a parable and a dark word, the sayings and enigmas of the wise.” [Prov. 1:2–6]

For it is not spurious words which those inspired by God and those who are gained over by them adduce, nor is it snares in which the most of the sophists entangle the young, spending their time on nought true. But those who possess the Holy Spirit “search the deep things of God,” [1 Cor. 2:10]—that is, grasp the secret that is in the prophecies. “To impart of holy things to the dogs” is forbidden, so long as they remain beasts. For never ought those who are envious and perturbed, and still infidel in conduct, shameless in barking at investigation, to dip in the divine and clear stream of the living water.

“Let not the waters of thy fountain overflow, and let thy waters spread over thine own streets.” [Prov. 5:16] For it is not many who understand such things as they fall in with; or know them even after learning them,

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though they think they do, according to the worthy Heraclitus. Does not even he seem to thee to censure those who believe not? "Now my just one shall live by faith," [Hab. 2:4] the prophet said. And another prophet also says, "Except ye believe, neither shall ye understand." [Is. 7:9]

For how eber could the soul admit the transcendental contemplation of such themes, while unbelief respecting what was to be learned struggled within? But faith, which the Greeks disparage, deeming it futile and barbarous, is a voluntary preconception, the assent of piety—"the subject of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," according to the divine apostle. "For hereby," pre-eminently, "the elders obtained a good report. But without faith it is impossible to please God." [Heb. 11:1, 2, 6]

Others have defined faith to be a uniting assent to an unseen object, as certainly the proof of an unknown thing is an evident assent. If then it be choice, being desirous of something, the desire is in this instance intellectual. And since choice is the beginning of action, faith is discovered to be the beginning of action, being the foundation of rational choice in the case of any one who exhibits to himself the previous demonstration through faith. Voluntarily to follow what is useful, is the first principle of understanding.

Answering choice, then, gives considerable momentum in the direction of knowledge. The exercise of faith directly becomes knowledge, reposing on a sure foundation. Knowledge, accordingly, is defined by the sons of the philosophers as a habit, which cannot be overthrown by reason. Is there any other true condition such as this, except piety, of which alone the Word is teacher? I think not.

Clement of Alexandria, "The Stromata, or Miscellanies," Book ii, Chap. ii, in Roberts and Donaldson (Eds.), *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (1885), Vol. 2, pp. 348-349.

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A Note From the Editor

If you stop and think about why people believe lies, it essentially boils down to two reasons. We either believe lies because we have never heard the Truth (that is, we are ignorant of the Truth), or we believe lies because we choose not to believe the Truth when we hear it. Contrary to what you might think, being ignorant of the Truth is not necessarily something to be ashamed of. The fact is, we were all born into this world completely ignorant—lacking knowledge of the Truth—and everyone dies while still ignorant of many things. Over the course of a lifetime, however, most folks manage to overcome ignorance in a number of areas—but only if they actually come to know and understand the Truth in those areas. Unfortunately, those who think they know the Truth when they don't, not only remain ignorant, they end up deluded as well.

The fact that it is impossible for anyone to completely overcome their ignorance during their lifetime should be obvious to everyone (except a know-it-all). There is simply too much knowledge out there for any one person to assimilate. That is why, when a doctor is sued for malpractice he goes to a lawyer, and when a lawyer gets sick he goes a doctor, and when either of them needs his Mercedes worked on he goes to a mechanic, and when the mechanic's diagnostic equipment needs repair he calls a computer geek, and when the computer geek needs his eyes checked he goes to an optometrist, and when the optometrist needs ... well, you get the idea.

The point is, ignorance is something that afflicts all of us to a far greater extent than we care to admit. That is the reason we are forced to trust others who have (or claim to have) the skills and insight we lack. But the Truth is, anyone can overcome their ignorance in regard to just about anything if they have a desire to learn, an aptitude to comprehend what they seek to learn, a willingness (and time) to study, and, last but not least, access to the Truth. Let's examine all of these a little more closely.

The first step toward overcoming ignorance is the desire to learn more about a particular subject. Not surprisingly, the person who finds something interesting (as opposed to boring) is much more likely to have the motivation to learn more about that subject. A good example of this can be seen in the fact that most people don't read a newspaper or magazine from cover to cover. They read those articles or blurbs that interest them and skip over the rest. That's the way human nature works. If you find something interesting or intriguing, you want to learn more about it. But if you find it boring or uninteresting, you don't.

A second component to overcoming ignorance relates to mental aptitude. That is, a person must have the mental capacity to comprehend whatever it is he seeks to learn. For instance, I have always found electronics difficult to grasp mentally because much of it is too abstract for me to get my mind around. I have no idea how a DVD is able to "capture"

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sounds and images on a small, flat disc or how a DVD player is able to “extract” those sounds and images and play them back (with crystal clear clarity) on a television. I simply can’t “see” what those who have understanding apparently can “see.” The point is, it is difficult, if not impossible, to overcome your ignorance when you don’t have the mental acuity to “see” what you need to “see.”

The third thing that is often needed to overcome ignorance is the willingness (and time) to study. Obviously, that isn’t always the case because sometimes the leap from “ignorant” to “enlightened” happens quickly and doesn’t require much time or effort on one’s part to “see the light.” Unfortunately, not everything in life is that simple. Many things are difficult to understand and thus require an extensive amount of time and study to master. The problem is, it’s not always easy to find the extra time we’d like to have to expand our knowledge and understanding in areas that we know little, if anything, about. The fact that we are all limited by time explains why we tend to devote most of our time and mental energy to educating ourselves about things that we deem important and/or find enjoyable.

The final, but certainly not least, important thing one must have to overcome ignorance is knowledge of the Truth. That makes sense, doesn’t it? If an ignorant person does not have opportunity to hear or access factual information concerning a particular subject, he will undoubtedly remain ignorant on that subject because knowledge of the Truth is the only means by which anyone can overcome ignorance. In fact, none of the qualifications I have mentioned can help a person overcome ignorance if they are not also given the opportunity to hear or gain access to the Truth. You can attend the most prestigious institute of “higher learning” on the face of the Earth and receive the highest possible degree, but if you are not educated in the Truth—that is, taught factual information—you will still be ignorant. Even worse, you will also be deluded because you won’t know that you are ignorant.

Now that we have examined the necessary qualifications for overcoming ignorance, we need to

examine a couple of factors that can cause a person to reject the Truth when he hears it. But first let me restate the two basic reasons why people believe lies: They either believe them because they have never heard the Truth (that is, they are ignorant) or they believe them because they chose not to believe the Truth they have heard. In regard to the latter group, there are only two valid reasons (that I can think of) why an honest person might reject the Truth when he hears it. The first reason was actually mentioned earlier. It’s the fact that if a person lacks the mental capacity to comprehend a complex body of knowledge, he may be inclined to reject the Truth he hears because it doesn’t make sense to him. Unfortunately, even if this person accepts what he hears as true (on blind faith), it will be of little or no value to him simply because the mind can’t utilize knowledge it doesn’t understand.

The second valid reason a person might have for rejecting the Truth is if there is no evidence to support the Truth he just heard explained. Think about it. If someone tries to tell you something is true (especially something you haven’t heard before) but he doesn’t provide you with a stitch of evidence to support what he says, do you have good reason to ignore everything he just said? Indeed, you do. That’s why prosecutors try to present as much evidence as possible to a jury. They know that without sufficient evidence to support their case there will be enough “reasonable doubt” to acquit.

In closing, let me tell you where I’m headed with all this. This article is a continuation of the series I have been working on since January 2004. That should be somewhat apparent from the fact that I’m talking about the same subject as in past issues: why people believe lies. In this article, I’m addressing why people believe lies in general as opposed to the specific reasons why people want to believe lies. The difference between why people believe lies in general and the specific reasons they have for not wanting to believe the Truth is something I plan to expand on in the next issue.

Allen Friedman

As a Rule, It's Better to Do What You Know You Should Do

An email came in through *The Voice of Elijah*® website recently, and a copy was passed along to me, as they usually are. For several days after I read the email, I thought about how thoroughly Satan has deceived the smug “pastor” who wrote it. I wouldn’t have wasted any time at all thinking about it except for the fact that I still find it absolutely amazing that Pretenders are completely oblivious to the Truth regarding their miserable condition. After a while, I realized the poor fellow’s pious “exhortation” provided the perfect opportunity for me to lay out the Truth for the benefit of those who are not quite as dimwitted as he is. In his email, he wrote the following. (I have bolded the statements that most clearly disclose the lies that Satan has him—and others like him—believing):

I was reading through the PDF booklets and saving them at the same time for future study. I must say that while I was looking forward to learning from the content, I found the author's tone in many of the books to be unnecessarily condescending and insulting in a somewhat unloving manner towards those who might possibly disagree with him. I could see where a person weighing the revelation might be put off by the author's character even before they thoroughly read the material. I do believe that this approach not only misrepresents the love of God, but also does the material a disservice by unnecessarily drawing attention to the author more so than the revelation. Is it at all possible that the author might consider a warmer, more inviting, Christ-like approach in the sharing of this information so that others who want to receive it and share it might do so without the fear of misrepresenting the love of God to the intended recipients? All who might disagree are

not necessarily stupid or ignorant, nor do I believe the Lord would start any of his teachings by calling them such. I pray the author of this insightful material will prayerfully consider this request. Thank you!

As a matter of fact, I did “prayerfully consider this request”—for about half a second—just long enough to become absolutely astounded by the fellow’s totally incurable “blindness.” I immediately rejected his vacuous admonition, however, because of one thing I learned soon after God called me: God is going to hold me, and me alone, responsible for fulfilling my calling. Consequently, He doesn’t expect me to pay attention to anyone who tries to tell me what *he thinks* God wants me to do—even if it is obvious God called him as well. As a matter of fact, my understanding of my calling is that I should view such unsolicited advice with a considerable amount of suspicion. Here is the passage of Scripture from which I got that novel notion:

Now behold, there came a man of God from Judah to Bethel by the word of the LORD, while Jeroboam was standing by the altar to burn incense. And he cried against the altar by the word of the LORD, and said, “O altar, altar, thus says the LORD, ‘Behold, a son shall be born to the house of David, Josiah by name; and on you he shall sacrifice the priests of the high places who burn incense on you, and human bones shall be burned on you.’” Then he gave a sign the same day, saying, “This is the sign which the LORD has spoken, ‘Behold, the altar shall be split apart and the ashes which are on it shall be poured out.’” Now it came about when the king heard the saying of the man of God, which he cried against the altar in Bethel, that Jeroboam stretched out his hand from the altar, saying, “Seize him.” But his hand which he stretched out against

him dried up, so that he could not draw it back to himself. The altar also was split apart and the ashes were poured out from the altar, according to the sign which the man of God had given by the word of the LORD. And the king answered and said to the man of God, "Please entreat the LORD your God, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored to me." So the man of God entreated the LORD, and the king's hand was restored to him, and it became as it was before. Then the king said to the man of God, "Come home with me and refresh yourself, and I will give you a reward." But the man of God said to the king, "If you were to give me half your house I would not go with you, nor would I eat bread or drink water in this place. For so it was commanded me by the word of the LORD, saying, 'You shall eat no bread, nor drink water, nor return by the way which you came.'" So he went another way, and did not return by the way which he came to Bethel.

Now an old prophet was living in Bethel; and his sons came and told him all the deeds which the man of God had done that day in Bethel; the words which he had spoken to the king, these also they related to their father. And their father said to them, "Which way did he go?" Now his sons had seen the way which the man of God who came from Judah had gone. Then he said to his sons, "Saddle the donkey for me." So they saddled the donkey for him and he rode away on it. So he went after the man of God and found him sitting under an oak; and he said to him, "Are you the man of God who came from Judah?" And he said, "I am." Then he said to him, "Come home with me and eat bread." And he said, "I cannot return with you, nor go with you, nor will I eat bread or drink water with you in this place. For a command {came} to me by the word of the LORD, 'You shall eat no bread, nor drink water there; do not return by going the way which you came.'" And he said to him, "I also am a prophet like you, and an angel spoke to me by the word of the LORD, saying, 'Bring him back with you to your house, that he may eat bread and drink water.'" {But} he lied to him. So he went back with him, and ate bread in his house and drank water.

Now it came about, as they were sitting down at the table, that the word of the LORD came to the prophet who had brought him back; and he cried to the man of God who came from Judah, saying, "Thus says the LORD, 'Because you have disobeyed the command of the LORD, and have not observed the commandment which the LORD your God commanded you, but have returned and eaten bread and drunk water in the place of which He said to you, "Eat no bread and drink no water"; your body shall not come to the

grave of your fathers.'" And it came about after he had eaten bread and after he had drunk, that he saddled the donkey for him, for the prophet whom he had brought back. Now when he had gone, a lion met him on the way and killed him, and his body was thrown on the road, with the donkey standing beside it; the lion also was standing beside the body. And behold, men passed by and saw the body thrown on the road, and the lion standing beside the body; so they came and told {it} in the city where the old prophet lived.

Now when the prophet who brought him back from the way heard {it,} he said, "It is the man of God, who disobeyed the command of the LORD; therefore the LORD has given him to the lion, which has torn him and killed him, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke to him." Then he spoke to his sons, saying, "Saddle the donkey for me." And they saddled {it.} And he went and found his body thrown on the road with the donkey and the lion standing beside the body; the lion had not eaten the body nor torn the donkey. So the prophet took up the body of the man of God and laid it on the donkey, and brought it back and he came to the city of the old prophet to mourn and to bury him. And he laid his body in his own grave, and they mourned over him, {saying,} "Alas, my brother!" And it came about after he had buried him, that he spoke to his sons, saying, "When I die, bury me in the grave in which the man of God is buried; lay my bones beside his bones. For the thing shall surely come to pass which he cried by the word of the LORD against the altar in Bethel and against all the houses of the high places which are in the cities of Samaria."

(1 Kings 13:1-32)

My reluctance to take "Pastor" Smug's completely unsolicited advice is not so much due to my fear of lions; it's just that I don't want to be cooped up in the same grave as the liar who put me there. But that's just me; someone else might have a completely different perspective. Now that you have seen the complete text of his email, let me isolate the essence of how this perfect example of Satan's dupes suggested I should fulfill the calling God has placed on my life:

*I found the author's tone in many of the books to be **unnecessarily condescending and insulting in a somewhat unloving manner towards those who might possibly disagree with him.** ... Is it at all possible that the author might consider **a warmer, more inviting, Christ-like***

approach in the sharing of this information so that others who want to receive it and share it might do so without the fear of misrepresenting the love of God to the intended recipients? All who might disagree are not necessarily stupid or ignorant, nor do I believe the Lord would start any of his teachings by calling them such.

Give credit where credit is due: at least the fellow understood that my “unnecessarily condescending and insulting” attitude is directed straight at him and all other Pretenders like him. That is, it is intended for “those who might possibly disagree.” “*Might possibly*”? How about, “let’s be totally honest and say, ‘*definitely will*’”? Satan has completely deceived this generation. So I know not all that many in the Church will agree with any of the things I teach. Therefore, I could not care less whether someone “*might possibly disagree*,” because I am not arguing, contending, debating, disputing, or engaging in any other form of asinine “theological discussion” that is intended to convince, convert, or persuade others that my beliefs are “right.”

Get this straight: I have not been called to make you believe what I teach; I have only been called to make it available so that those who are seeking Truth will be able to learn what I teach. Modern technology makes it possible for me to do that without holding meetings where I charge people up, shake people down, or even exhort them to live the way *I think* they should live. If a person has committed his life to Christ, he already knows how he should live.

My responsibility is to produce articles, books, and audio/video tapes in which I explain the *meaning* and *significance* of the Hebrew idioms and the *parabolic imagery* the Prophets used to conceal the Truth in the Hebrew Scriptures. Along the way, I will explain various other things—such as the things I am explaining here—to build an absolutely rock-solid faith in those who believe what I teach. But it is certainly not my goal to convince anyone they should believe the Truth. God called me to be a Teacher, not an Evangelist. So the decision to believe what I teach is entirely up to the individual. What a person does with the Truth is between him and God. Likewise, what I do with the Truth is something for which I will have to answer. Consequently, the only thing I really care about is whether or not what I teach is true.

I assume the polecats of “Pastor” Smug’s particular stripe believe their god called them to teach what they are teaching. Like them, I believe my God called

me to do the same. But unlike them, I am absolutely convinced that my God called me to teach *the Truth*. If “Pastor” Smug actually believed it were possible to know the Truth, he would also know that anyone who disagreed with the Truth would be ignorant of the Truth. Therefore, he has already tacitly admitted he is not even convinced it is possible to know the Truth. So I ask you, If this good fellow does not believe his god called him to preach the Truth, what does he *think* he is preaching—lies?

Let’s assume “Pastor” Smug does believe he is preaching the Truth. If that is the case, why does he have such a casual attitude toward the Truth that he is *supposedly* preaching? His approach seems to me to be “unnecessarily condescending and insulting in a somewhat unloving manner” toward the Truth. That is, I do believe the good fellow is not displaying the “love of the Truth” that Paul says will be necessary for those who seek to avoid the delusion of the Antichrist:

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 2:7–12)

The cavalier attitude that “Pastor” Smug displays toward his particular version of “the Truth”—that is, what his god called him to preach—certainly does not square with the attitude the Apostle Paul had toward the Truth he preached:

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

to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed.

(Galatians 1:6–9)

Does that sound anything at all like the easygoing attitude of our smug and self-assured advocate of the warm and fuzzy feeling for all mankind? I don't think so. The Truth is, the agents of Satan who espouse the lie that God holds no hatred for even the vilest of sinners have not so much as a clue to the true nature of the angry God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The Truth is, the angry God of Israel has two sides—one with which He approaches His friends, and another that He reserves for His enemies:

“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)

The LORD tests the righteous and the wicked, And the one who loves violence His soul hates.

(Psalm 11:5)

Our good friend, “Pastor” Smug, not being aware of the white-hot rage of the God Who actually is (Whom he knows nothing about), would never believe the absolutely astounding things the angry God of Israel is already doing in the lives of True Believers through the *restoration of The Apostolic Teaching*—and that is right under his snooty nose. He certainly has no idea that my “unnecessarily condescending and insulting” attitude is just a calculated attempt on my part to keep Pretenders like him at bay as long as is humanly possible. Is he really so stupid as to think I don't know folks like him don't like to be insulted or talked to in a condescending manner? The knee-jerk reaction of most Pretenders on reading what I write is most likely to be: “What could I possibly learn from a know-it-all blowhard like this guy?” Nothing! Let's hope they keep it that way.

For the benefit of those who have an ear to hear, let me begin dissecting the fellow's other erroneous beliefs by taking up his final statement first. He says,

“All who might disagree are not necessarily stupid or ignorant.” *Little does he know*—because, in spite of what he firmly believes about himself, he is totally ignorant of the Truth—but he has flatly contradicted God Himself (and thereby made himself a liar). Listen to what the Lord said to Jeremiah:

*{It is} He who made the earth by His power,
Who established the world by His wisdom;
And by His understanding*

He has stretched out the heavens.

When He utters His voice,

{there is} a tumult of waters in the heavens,

And He causes the clouds to ascend

from the end of the earth;

He makes lightning for the rain,

And brings out the wind from His storehouses.

Every man is stupid, devoid of knowledge;

Every goldsmith is put to shame by his idols;

For his molten images are deceitful,

And there is no breath in them.

They are worthless, a work of mockery;

In the time of their punishment they will perish.

The portion of Jacob is not like these;

For the Maker of all is He,

And Israel is the tribe of His inheritance;

The LORD of hosts is His name.

(Jeremiah 10:12–16)

Did you see what the Lord said to the Prophet Jeremiah? He said, “*Every man is stupid, devoid of knowledge.*” I assume you already know that “devoid of knowledge” means the same thing as “ignorant”? (Surely you aren't *that* “devoid of knowledge”!) My point is, the proud and arrogant among us (like our dopey dimwitted dunce, “Pastor” Smug) can't accept the fact that *everybody*—every last one of us (including him)—is both ignorant and stupid. That is because every human being is born ignorant—that is, “completely devoid of knowledge”; and somewhere along the way we all *choose* to become stupid. Our stupidity begins when we *choose* to believe the lie of Satan that tells us—before we actually hear the Truth—that we already know the Truth. That is, the stupid person arbitrarily *chooses* to believe he is no longer ignorant when *he has no rational reason* to believe he knows the Truth.

Hearing and believing the Truth will eventually alleviate the condition known as ignorance, but the

only cure for stupidity is the humility necessary to admit that one does not always know what one *thinks* he knows. (That's where the conviction of the Holy Spirit gains traction.) So where do you *think* that leaves our ignorant "Pastor" Smug and his stupid assertion that "all who might disagree are not necessarily stupid or ignorant"? It seems self-evident (at least to me) that he says that because he has already mentally included himself in that select group of people—those who dearly do love to disagree—whom the author of the Book of Proverbs describes this way:

*A fool does not delight in understanding,
But only in revealing his own mind.
(Proverbs 18:2)*

How does "Pastor" Smug know that those who disagree with what I teach "are not necessarily stupid or ignorant"? If, by some incredible happenstance, I should happen to be teaching the Truth, the whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth, anyone who disagreed with what I teach would not only be ignorant, they would also—if they were not able to recognize the Truth—be stupid. But my point here is, if "Pastor" Smug has not taken the time necessary to ascertain that what I teach is *not* true—which he readily admits he has not—then he cannot possibly know what he claims to know. Ergo, he must still be ignorant; and in making such a statement in complete ignorance, he has shown himself to be stupid as well.

"Pastor" Smug reveals himself to be even more stupid than ignorant when he makes this ridiculous entreaty:

Is it at all possible that the author might consider a warmer, more inviting, Christ-like approach in the sharing of this information so that others who want to receive it and share it might do so without the fear of misrepresenting the love of God to the intended recipients?

Did you see what the dimwitted dullard did? He arbitrarily *assumed* he already knew who "the intended recipients" of my teaching are. Does he actually know who "the intended recipients" are? Of course not! If he did, he would also know why I am "unnecessarily condescending and insulting in a somewhat unloving manner towards those who might possibly disagree."

But did you notice he also conveniently excluded himself from that group—that is, "the intended recipients" of my teaching—and instead elevated himself to an even more select group of "others who want to receive and share it" with the "intended recipients"? What a moron! He ignorantly *thinks* God called *him* to teach what *I* teach!

Let me explain something for the benefit of those who can "see" what God is doing here at the End of the Age. My God called me to *restore* and teach *The Apostolic Teaching* so that True Believers will be able to recognize and reject the lies of Satan when he appears as the Antichrist. He did not call me to enlist and train other so-called "teachers" to help me accomplish that task. Why would He? Those people could easily misunderstand the Truth and end up distorting it, thereby changing the Truth into a lie. That is a completely unnecessary risk. With the current state of technology, all anyone needs to do to understand (for themselves and nobody else) the things I teach is to read what I write and to listen to the tapes I record. If they do that, they can learn (for themselves and nobody else) all of the Hebrew idioms and *parabolic imagery* they need to know to be able to read and understand the Scriptures (for themselves and nobody else).

So, if True Believers can learn *The (restored) Apostolic Teaching* from the materials that I produce and *The Voice of Elijah*® distributes, why would anyone need someone like our eager volunteer "Pastor" Smug to explain those things to them? Is he somehow more intelligent than all others so that he can break the Truth down into even smaller bites for the less intelligent? I seriously doubt that he is. Instead, I do believe he is planning to do the same thing the Gnostics did to the Early Church. That is, he wants to use the novel things that I teach so that he can "show what he knows" to other Pretenders who are not aware of how he came by them. That is, he is one of those lamebrained Pretenders the Apostle Paul describes this way:

*They eagerly seek you, not commendably, but they wish to shut you out, in order that you may seek them.
(Galatians 4:17)*

If you can "see" from the things I have explained to this point that what I teach is true, you need to consider this: I did not receive authority to teach what I teach from anyone other than Jesus Christ Himself,

and I will NEVER give anyone the authority to teach what I teach. That authority will live and die with me because my calling, *as I understand it*, will be complete when I die.

If someone wants to pass along the things I make available for public distribution and tell others where they can get even more of the same, that's fine. But if he wants to "help" me by doing what the Gnostics did to the Early Church, that is, by mixing what I teach with his own goofy beliefs, that person should probably check to make sure the god he serves is not someone other than the God I serve. My God called me to explain the unified, coherent *meaning* of the Hebrew Scriptures—which any True Believer can easily understand on the basis of specific Hebrew idioms and their attendant *parabolic images*. He did not call me to mix that Truth with the philosophical goofiness that Pretenders used to replace *The Apostolic Teaching*. And He certainly did not call me to train others to do what I am doing.

Having said that, let's now consider "Pastor" Smug's specific recommendation that perhaps I should consider exhibiting "a warmer, more inviting, Christ-like approach in the sharing of this information." That would be nice, wouldn't it? But if I did that, I would never be able to explain how a passage like this one from Isaiah applies to Pretenders like him:

*The righteous man perishes,
and no man takes it to heart;
And devout men are taken away,
while no one understands.
For the righteous man is taken away from evil,
He enters into peace;
They rest in their beds,
{Each one} who walked in his upright way.
"But come here, you sons of a sorceress,
Offspring of an adulterer and a prostitute.
Against whom do you jest?
Against whom do you open wide your mouth
And stick out your tongue?
Are you not children of rebellion,
Offspring of deceit?"
(Isaiah 57:1-4)*

Obviously, our good fellow "Pastor" Smug does not know anything at all about Pretenders, since he is one. But even if he did know how Satan's agents have finally come to dominate all segments of the Church in

our generation, he would most likely be so intent on maintaining his phoney "Christ-like approach" that he would never be able to bring himself to label any of them the "offspring of a prostitute," as Isaiah did. "Pastor" Smug would probably also feel better if Isaiah had toned it down a bit as well. Maybe the Prophet should have taken "a warmer, more inviting, Christ-like approach" in addressing the Pretenders of his day. *What do you think?*

Now that the unplumbed depths of loathing I feel toward the pompous, pious parrots perched in the pulpit who preach a putrid pabulum of portentously pious pretense to pseudo-Christian Pretenders has finally reached room temperature, let me point out how John the Baptist rebuked the smug, self-righteous polecats he had to deal with:

*But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bring forth fruit in keeping with repentance; and do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father'; for I say to you, that God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. And the axe is already laid at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."
(Matthew 3:7-10)*

What do you think? Does that sound like John was taking "a warmer, more inviting, Christ-like approach"? Maybe we should do what "Pastor" Smug has evidently done. That is, we should just cut that text right out of the Scriptures so that we don't have to deal with the fact that the only way to deal with "snakes" when we see them is either to kill them or to warn other folks to avoid them. Since I am clearly speaking *parabolically* concerning the *parabolic* treatment of the *parabolic* offspring of Satan the Serpent, I do believe the latter approach is the only one the Lord allows. God Himself has reserved to Himself the right to accomplish the former; and indeed He will, right after True Believers have accomplished the task they have been assigned.

Now that I have ridiculed the ignorant fellow's smug exhortation that I should take "a warmer, more inviting, Christ-like approach," let me go one better and submit that asinine phrase for even closer inspection. I do believe it doesn't pass the smell test. You see, I do—

on a daily basis—exhibit a “warmer, more inviting, Christ-like approach,” but I reserve that side of my “Christ-like approach” for everyone I meet in person and especially for those who are obviously not Pretenders. Since I know incorrigible Pretenders like our good fellow “Pastor” Smug will occasionally read what I write, I *intentionally* exhibit—for their benefit (or detriment, as the case may be)—the same “Christ-like approach” that Jesus Christ Himself *intentionally* displayed toward the Pretenders of His day:

*Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and His disciples, saying: “The scribes and the Pharisees have taken a seat on the chair of Moses. Therefore, do and pay attention to whatever they have said to you; but don’t do according to their works, for they say and don’t do. And they bind up heavy weights and put them on the shoulders of men; but they themselves are not willing to move them with even their finger. They do all their works in order to be seen by men; for they make their phylacteries large and the tassels long. And they love the place of honor at the banquets, and the seats of honor in the synagogues, and the greetings in the markets, and to be called ‘Rabbi’ by men. But you yourselves should not be called ‘Rabbi.’ For One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers. And don’t call a father yours on the Earth, for One is your heavenly Father. Neither be called ‘leader,’ because your Leader is One—the Anointing—and the greatest of you will be your servant. And whoever exalts himself will be humiliated; and whoever humbles himself will be exalted. **But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees—hypocrites!** Because you shut up the kingdom of heaven before men. For you do not enter yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to enter. [**Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees—hypocrites!** Because you gobble up the houses of the widows and for appearances, make long prayers. For this reason you will receive a greater judgment.] **Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees—hypocrites!** Because you go around the sea and dry land to make one proselyte. And when he becomes {one}, you make him a son of Hell—twice as much as you. **Woe to you, blind guides**—those who say: ‘Whoever swears by the temple, that is nothing. But whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is obligated.’ Morons and blind men! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that made the gold holy? And ‘Whoever swears by the altar, that is nothing. But whoever swears by the offering on it, he is obligated.’ **Blind men!** For which is greater, the offering or the altar which makes the offering holy? Therefore,*

*(1) the one who swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it; (2) the one who swears by the temple swears by it and by the One Who inhabits it; (3) the one who swears by Heaven swears by the throne of the {Living} God and by the One Who sits on it. **Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees—hypocrites!** Because you give a tenth of mint, dill, and cumin, but let go of the important {parts} of the Law—the Judgment, the Mercy, and the Belief. Yet it was necessary to do these and not let go of the others. **Blind guides!** Those who strain off a gnat and gulp down a camel! **Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees—hypocrites!** Because you clean the outside of the cup and the dish. Yet inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. **Blind Pharisee!** Clean first within the cup so that what is without may also become clean. **Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees—hypocrites!** Because you are like whitewashed tombs which—on the outside—look lovely, but—on the inside—are full of bones of dead {people} and all {sorts of} uncleanness. Likewise, you yourselves—on the outside—look right to men, but—on the inside—you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. **Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees—hypocrites!** Because you build the tombs of the Prophets and make the monuments of the innocent beautiful, and you say, ‘If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been their partners in the blood of the Prophets.’ Therefore, you testify against yourselves—that you are sons of those who murdered the Prophets. So fill up the measure {—the cup—} of your fathers. **Snakes! Offspring of vipers!** **How will you escape the Judgment of Hell?”**
(Matthew 23:1–33) —my interim translation*

Well, there you have it! As should be obvious to all but the most *parabolically* “deaf” and “blind” among us, “Pastor” Smug is completely ignorant of the Truth when he says, “nor do I believe the Lord would start any of his teachings by calling them such.” I believe the Lord has quite aptly shown us just how ignorant the fellow is in taking that pathetically indefensible intellectual position *without any rational basis* for his belief. Jesus pointed out the ignorance and stupidity of Pretenders in His day just as I am doing today.

On another occasion, Jesus explained what Isaiah meant when he called Pretenders the “offspring of a prostitute”:

“I know that you are Abraham’s offspring; yet you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. I speak the

things which I have seen with {My} Father; therefore you also do the things which you heard from {your} father." They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you are Abraham's children, do the deeds of Abraham. But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God; this Abraham did not do. You are doing the deeds of your father." They said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father, {even} God." 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. Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me? He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear {them,} because you are not of God."** The Jews answered and said to Him, "Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?" Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me. But I do not seek My glory; there is One who seeks and judges. Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death." The Jews said to Him, "Now we know that You have a demon. Abraham died, and the prophets {also;} and You say, 'If anyone keeps My word, he shall never taste of death.' Surely You are not greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets died too; whom do You make Yourself out {to be?}" Jesus answered, "If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing; it is My Father who glorifies Me, of whom you say, 'He is our God'; and you have not come to know Him, but I know Him; and **if I say that I do not know Him, I shall be a liar like you, but I do know Him, and keep His word.**"

(John 8:37-55)

Did you see what Jesus called those who disagreed with Him? Children of Satan! Then He called them "liars"! If you saw that, I assume you have already figured out that "Pastor" Smug does not believe the same Truth that Jesus believed. If he did, he would feel the same way the Lord felt (and still feels) toward the

children of Satan. I have not yet called any of those folks "liars." That is only because, as anyone but a "blind" man can plainly "see," I haven't yet attained the perfect "Christ-like approach" that Jesus took toward those who insist on believing Satan's lies. I'm working on it, but I keep falling short. That is because I still haven't worked up the chutzpah and temerity that Jesus showed *by doing it to their face*. I am still hiding behind the printed word. Maybe that's because I'm not Jewish like Jesus and John the Baptist. As I understand it, *chutzpah* is a Yiddish term that *means* "call 'em what they are, no matter how 'insulting in a somewhat unloving manner' the folks you are 'insulting in a somewhat unloving manner' consider you to be." But I could be mistaken about that. *What do you think?*

Did you see what else Jesus Christ called the Pretenders He had to face? He said they were all just a bunch of "sarcophaguses." (For the more intellectually minded highbrow, eggheaded Pretenders who might read this, He called them "*sarcophagi*.") I don't think I could ever do that—even if I were hiding behind the printed word. That is absolutely, totally, completely, and downright "*unnecessarily*" rude. Have you ever smelled a rotting corpse? I have, and I can tell you it's not very high on my list of pleasant things to do.

I once spent two weeks in 100-degree temperature trying to gather up and bury all the bits and pieces of a soldier who had the misfortune of sending himself and several of his buddies to Kingdom Come—right next to where I set up my tent as his replacement. Even after I scraped all his scraps off the bushes, the pungent smell of rotting flesh still persisted, so I spent countless hours day after day digging up and turning over every stinking grease spot I could find. But no matter how hard I tried, I simply could not find the source of that horrible stench—until I was on the helicopter out of there two weeks later. That's when I just happened to look down off the side of the mountain and saw an arm sticking out from under a bush.

But, now that I think about it, the grisly task of dealing with decaying human remains on a daily basis would still rank a bit higher on my list of pleasant things than dealing with smug Pretenders who insist on arrogantly and irrationally clinging to their ignorant stupidity. So I guess the Lord's *parabolic* description must be right on the mark after all. *What do you think?*

So far, *I think* my "Christ-like approach" lines up fairly well with that of Isaiah, John the Baptist, and

Jesus Christ. But what about the Apostle Paul? *Do you think* he strived to maintain “a warmer, more inviting”—that is, “warm and fuzzy”—approach when he had to deal with the ignorance of smug Pretenders? I don't think so, but again I could be wrong. I showed you earlier how he laid a curse on those who disagreed with him by preaching “another gospel.” But Luke tells us the Apostle Paul was somewhat less “warm and inviting” in his approach to one such mental midget after the moron proved himself to be not only ignorant but also stupid enough to disagree with Paul:

*So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia and from there they sailed to Cyprus. And when they reached Salamis, they {began} to proclaim the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews; and they also had John as their helper. And when they had gone through the whole island as far as Paphos, they found a certain magician, a Jewish false prophet whose name was Bar-Jesus, who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of intelligence. This man summoned Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. But Elymas the magician (for thus his name is translated) was opposing them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. But Saul, who was also {known as} Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, fixed his gaze upon him, and said, “**You who are full of all deceit and fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease to make crooked the straight ways of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will be blind and not see the sun for a time.**” And immediately a mist and a darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking those who would lead him by the hand.*

(Acts 13:4–11)

Did you see what Paul did? He cursed the man on the spot and used the power of the Holy Spirit to make him blind! There doesn't seem to have been all that much in the way of healing human hurts in his use of the *Living Word* that day! But *what do you think?* I guess Paul must not have gotten the good “Pastor” Smug's memo that we should all exhibit a “warmer, more inviting approach” to those who disagree. I can only imagine the advice he would offer Paul. Perhaps Paul should have held some sort of “ecumenical” conclave to iron out the differences between him and the idiot.

Don't be stupid! Paul's attitude toward Pretenders lines up perfectly with what Isaiah, John the Baptist,

and Jesus Christ Himself displayed. The Apostle Paul surely suffered a good deal more for Christ than our good fellow “Pastor” Smug ever has, so one certainly has no reason to accuse him of being anything less than “Christ-like” just because he struck a stupid man blind or put a curse on all the Pretenders who ignorantly disagreed with the Truth he preached:

Are they servants of Christ? (I speak as if insane) I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine {lashes.} Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. {I have been} on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from {my} countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; {I have been} in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. Apart from {such} external things, there is the daily pressure upon me {of} concern for all the churches.
(2 Corinthians 11:23–28)

Now that I have shown you four *biblical* examples of what seems to have been the normative “Christ-like approach” that *legitimate* men of God took in dealing with Pretenders, let me show you just a couple more examples from the monumental second-century work of the Early Church Father Irenæus titled “Against Heresies.” As you might imagine, Irenæus did not have a very high opinion of the Pretenders in his day who called themselves “Christian” but didn't really have all that high a regard for the Truth. In the quote below, he briefly describes the “Christ-like approach” of two other such men.

The first man Irenæus mentions is the Apostle John, who had to deal with an idiot named Cerinthus, a “Christian” heretic who—like our “Pastor” Smug—did his best to convince True Believers he was one of them. The second is Polycarp, a disciple of the Apostle John who on one occasion was forced to speak directly to the imbecile Marcion, another Pretender who very badly wanted True Believers to accept him as a Christian.

I needn't tell you anything at all about the Apostle John; Jesus' selection of him as a disciple and

the things that John wrote eloquently vouch for him. But before you read what Irenæus wrote about Polycarp, I probably should tell you Early Church Believers considered him to be the most “Christ-like” of his generation, partly because he died a martyr, burned at the stake, but also because of the godly life he lived. (See *The Advent of Christ and AntiChrist*.) So, if our good fellow “Pastor” Smug feels the urge to challenge the validity of Polycarp’s “Christ-like approach” to the “Christian” Pretenders of his day, I suggest he might do better to consider instead that something is sadly lacking in his own “condescending and insulting” attitude toward “the Truth” he *claims* to be preaching.

I have included the following extended quote from Irenæus so that you can easily see how his attitude toward the Truth—and toward the Pretenders who always treat it callously—derived from the fact that he was absolutely convinced he knew the Truth:

Preface—

*Thou hast indeed enjoined upon me, my very dear friend, that I should bring to light the Valentinian doctrines, concealed, as their votaries imagine; that I should exhibit their diversity, and compose a treatise in refutation of them. I therefore have undertaken—showing that they spring from Simon, the father of all heretics—to exhibit both their doctrines and successions, and to set forth arguments against them all. Wherefore, since the conviction of these men and their exposure is in many points but one work, I have sent unto thee [certain] books, of which the first comprises the opinions of all these men, and exhibits their customs, and the character of their behaviour. In the second, again, their perverse teachings are cast down and overthrown, and, such as they really are, laid bare and open to view. But in this, the third book, I shall adduce proofs from the Scriptures, so that I may come behind in nothing of what thou hast enjoined; yea, that over and above what thou didst reckon upon, **thou mayest receive from me the means of combating and vanquishing those who, in whatever manner, are propagating falsehood.** For the love of God, being rich and ungrudging, confers upon the suppliant more than he can ask from it. Call to mind, then, the things which I have stated in the two preceding books, and, taking these in connection with them, thou shalt have from me a very copious refutation of all the heretics; and **faithfully and strenuously shalt thou resist them in defence of the***

only true and life-giving faith, which the Church has received from the apostles and imparted to her sons. For the Lord of all gave to His apostles the power of the Gospel, through whom also we have known the truth, that is, the doctrine of the Son of God; to whom also did the Lord declare: “He that heareth you, heareth Me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me, and Him that sent Me.” [Luke 10:16]

Chapter I—

The Apostles Did Not Commence to Preach the Gospel, or to Place Anything on Record, Until They Were Endowed With the Gifts and Power of the Holy Spirit. They Preached One God Alone, Maker of Heaven and Earth.

1. *We have learned from none others the plan of our salvation, than from those through whom the Gospel has come down to us, which they did at one time proclaim in public, and, at a later period, by the will of God, handed down to us in the Scriptures, to be the ground and pillar of our faith.* For it is unlawful to assert that they preached before they possessed “perfect knowledge,” as some do even venture to say, boasting themselves as improvers of the apostles. For, after our Lord rose from the dead, [the apostles] were invested with power from on high when the Holy Spirit came down [upon them], were filled from all [His gifts], and had perfect knowledge: they departed to the ends of the earth, preaching the glad tidings of the good things [sent] from God to us, and proclaiming the peace of heaven to men, who indeed do all equally and individually possess the Gospel of God. Matthew also issued a written Gospel among the Hebrews in their own dialect, while Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome, and laying the foundations of the Church. After their departure, Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, did also hand down to us in writing what had been preached by Peter. Luke also, the companion of Paul, recorded in a book the Gospel preached by him. Afterwards, John, the disciple of the Lord, who also had leaned upon His breast, did himself publish a Gospel during his residence at Ephesus in Asia.

2. *These have all declared to us that there is one God, Creator of heaven and earth, announced by the law and the prophets; and one Christ, the Son of God. **If any one do not agree to these truths, he despises the companions of the Lord; nay more, he despises Christ Himself the Lord; yea, he despises the Father also,***

and stands self-condemned, resisting and opposing his own salvation, as is the case with all heretics.

Chapter II—

The Heretics Follow Neither Scripture nor Tradition.

1. *When, however, they are confuted from the Scriptures, they turn round and accuse these same Scriptures, as if they were not correct, nor of authority, and [assert] that they are ambiguous, and that the truth cannot be extracted from them by those who are ignorant of tradition.* For [they allege] that the truth was not delivered by means of written documents, but vivâ voce: wherefore also Paul declared, "But we speak wisdom among those that are perfect, but not the wisdom of this world." [1 Cor. 2:6] And this wisdom each one of them alleges to be the fiction of his own inventing, forsooth; so that, according to their idea, the truth properly resides at one time in Valentinus, at another in Marcion, at another in Cerinthus, then afterwards in Basilides, or has even been indifferently in any other opponent, who could speak nothing pertaining to salvation. For every one of these men, being altogether of a perverse disposition, depraving the system of truth, is not ashamed to preach himself.

2. *But, again, when we refer them to that tradition which originates from the apostles, [and] which is preserved by means of the successions of presbyters in the Churches, they object to tradition, saying that they themselves are wiser not merely than the presbyters, but even than the apostles, because they have discovered the unadulterated truth.* For [they maintain] that the apostles intermingled the things of the law with the words of the Saviour; and that not the apostles alone, but even the Lord Himself, spoke as at one time from the Demiurge, at another from the intermediate place, and yet again from the Pleroma, but that they themselves, indubitably, unsulliedly, and purely, have knowledge of the hidden mystery: this is, indeed, to blaspheme their Creator after a most impudent manner! It comes to this, therefore, that these men do now consent neither to Scripture nor to tradition.

3. *Such are the adversaries with whom we have to deal, my very dear friend, endeavouring like slippery serpents to escape at all points.* Wherefore they must be opposed at all points, if perchance, by cutting off their retreat, we may succeed in turning them back to the truth. For, though it is not an easy thing for a soul under

the influence of error to repent, yet, on the other hand, it is not altogether impossible to escape from error when the truth is brought alongside it.

Chapter III—

A Refutation of the Heretics, From the Fact That, in the Various Churches, a Perpetual Succession of Bishops Was Kept Up.

1. *It is within the power of all, therefore, in every Church, who may wish to see the truth, to contemplate clearly the tradition of the apostles manifested throughout the whole world; and we are in a position to reckon up those who were by the apostles instituted bishops in the Churches, and [to demonstrate] the succession of these men to our own times; those who neither taught nor knew of anything like what these [heretics] rave about.* For if the apostles had known hidden mysteries, which they were in the habit of imparting to "the perfect" apart and privily from the rest, they would have delivered them especially to those to whom they were also committing the Churches themselves. For they were desirous that these men should be very perfect and blameless in all things, whom also they were leaving behind as their successors, delivering up their own place of government to these men; which men, if they discharged their functions honestly, would be a great boon [to the Church], but if they should fall away, the direst calamity.

2. *Since, however, it would be very tedious, in such a volume as this, to reckon up the successions of all the Churches, we do put to confusion all those who, in whatever manner, whether by an evil self-pleasing, by vainglory, or by blindness and perverse opinion, assemble in unauthorized meetings; [we do this, I say,] by indicating that tradition derived from the apostles, of the very great, the very ancient, and universally known Church founded and organized at Rome by the two most glorious apostles, Peter and Paul; as also [by pointing out] the faith preached to men, which comes down to our time by means of the successions of the bishops. For it is a matter of necessity that every Church should agree with this Church, on account of its preeminent authority, that is, the faithful everywhere, inasmuch as the apostolical tradition has been preserved continuously by those [faithful men] who exist everywhere.*

3. *The blessed apostles, then, having founded and built up the Church, committed into the hands of Linus the office of the episcopate. Of this Linus, Paul makes mention*

in the Epistles to Timothy. To him succeeded Anacletus; and after him, in the third place from the apostles, Clement was allotted the bishopric. This man, as he had seen the blessed apostles, and had been conversant with them, might be said to have the preaching of the apostles still echoing [in his ears], and their traditions before his eyes. Nor was he alone [in this], for there were many still remaining who had received instructions from the apostles. In the time of this Clement, no small dissension having occurred among the brethren at Corinth, the Church in Rome despatched a most powerful letter to the Corinthians, exhorting them to peace, renewing their faith, and declaring the tradition which it had lately received from the apostles, proclaiming the one God, omnipotent, the Maker of heaven and earth, the Creator of man, who brought on the deluge, and called Abraham, who led the people from the land of Egypt, spake with Moses, set forth the law, sent the prophets, and who has prepared fire for the devil and his angels. From this document, whosoever chooses to do so, may learn that He, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, was preached by the Churches, and may also understand the apostolical tradition of the Church, since this Epistle is of older date than these men who are now propagating falsehood, and who conjure into existence another god beyond the Creator and the Maker of all existing things. To this Clement there succeeded Evaristus. Alexander followed Evaristus; then, sixth from the apostles, Sixtus was appointed; after him, Telephorus, who was gloriously martyred; then Hyginus; after him, Pius; then after him, Anicetus. Soter having succeeded Anicetus, Eleutherius does now, in the twelfth place from the apostles, hold the inheritance of the episcopate. **In this order, and by this succession, the ecclesiastical tradition from the apostles, and the preaching of the truth, have come down to us. And this is most abundant proof that there is one and the same vivifying faith, which has been preserved in the Church from the apostles until now, and handed down in truth.**

4. But Polycarp also was not only instructed by apostles, and conversed with many who had seen Christ, but was also, by apostles in Asia, appointed bishop of the Church in Smyrna, whom I also saw in my early youth, for he tarried [on earth] a very long time, and, when a very old man, gloriously and most nobly suffering martyrdom, departed this life, having always taught the things which he had learned from the apostles, and which the Church has handed down, and which alone are true. To these things all the Asiatic Churches

testify, as do also those men who have succeeded Polycarp down to the present time, —a man who was of much greater weight, and a more steadfast witness of truth, than Valentinus, and Marcion, and the rest of the heretics. He it was who, coming to Rome in the time of Anicetus caused many to turn away from the aforesaid heretics to the Church of God, proclaiming that he had received this one and sole truth from the apostles, —that, namely, which is handed down by the Church. **There are also those who heard from him that John, the disciple of the Lord, going to bathe at Ephesus, and perceiving Cerinthus within, rushed out of the bath-house without bathing, exclaiming, “Let us fly, lest even the bath-house fall down, because Cerinthus, the enemy of the truth, is within.” And Polycarp himself replied to Marcion, who met him on one occasion, and said, “Dost thou know me?” “I do know thee, the first-born of Satan.”** Such was the horror which the apostles and their disciples had against holding even verbal communication with any corrupters of the truth; as Paul also says, “A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.” [Titus 3:10] There is also a very powerful Epistle of Polycarp written to the Philippians, from which those who choose to do so, and are anxious about their salvation, can learn the character of his faith, and the preaching of the truth. **Then, again, the Church in Ephesus, founded by Paul, and having John remaining among them permanently until the times of Trajan, is a true witness of the tradition of the apostles.**

Chapter IV—

The Truth Is to Be Found Nowhere Else but in the Catholic Church, the Sole Depository of Apostolical Doctrine. Heresies Are of Recent Formation, and Cannot Trace Their Origin Up to the Apostles.

1. Since therefore we have such proofs, it is not necessary to seek the truth among others which it is easy to obtain from the Church; since the apostles, like a rich man [depositing his money] in a bank, lodged in her hands most copiously all things pertaining to the truth: so that every man, whosoever will, can draw from her the water of life. [Rev. 22:17] For she is the entrance to life; all others are thieves and robbers. **On this account are we bound to avoid them, but to make choice of the things pertaining to the Church with the utmost diligence, and**

to lay hold of the tradition of the truth. For how stands the case? Suppose there arise a dispute relative to some important question among us, should we not have recourse to the most ancient Churches with which the apostles held constant intercourse, and learn from them what is certain and clear in regard to the present question? For how should it be if the apostles themselves had not left us writings? Would it not be necessary, [in that case,] to follow the course of the tradition which they handed down to those to whom they did commit the Churches?

2. To which course many nations of those barbarians who believe in Christ do assent, having salvation written in their hearts by the Spirit, without paper or ink, and, carefully preserving the ancient tradition, believing in one God, the Creator of heaven and earth, and all things therein, by means of Christ Jesus, the Son of God; who, because of His surpassing love towards His creation, condescended to be born of the virgin, He Himself uniting man through Himself to God, and having suffered under Pontius Pilate, and rising again, and having been received up in splendour, shall come in glory, the Saviour of those who are saved, and **the Judge of those who are judged, and sending into eternal fire those who transform the truth, and despise His Father and His advent.** Those who, in the absence of written documents, have believed this faith, are barbarians, so far as regards our language; but as regards doctrine, manner, and tenor of life, they are, because of faith, very wise indeed; and they do please God, ordering their conversation in all righteousness, chastity, and wisdom. If any one were to preach to these men the inventions of the heretics, speaking to them in their own language, they would at once stop their ears, and flee as far off as possible, not enduring even to listen to the blasphemous address. Thus, by means of that ancient tradition of the apostles, they do not suffer their mind to conceive anything of the [doctrines suggested by the] portentous language of these teachers, among whom neither Church nor doctrine has ever been established.

3. For, prior to Valentinus, those who follow Valentinus had no existence; nor did those from Marcion exist before Marcion; nor, in short, had any of those malignant-minded people, whom I have above enumerated, any being previous to the initiators and inventors of their perversity. For Valentinus came to Rome in the time of Hyginus, flourished under Pius, and remained until Anicetus. Cerdon, too, Marcion's predecessor, himself arrived in the time of Hyginus, who was the ninth bishop. **Coming frequently into the Church, and making public**

confession, he thus remained, one time teaching in secret, and then again making public confession; but at last, having been denounced for corrupt teaching, he was excommunicated from the assembly of the brethren. Marcion, then, succeeding him, flourished under Anicetus, who held the tenth place of the episcopate. But the rest, who are called Gnostics, take rise from Menander, Simon's disciple, as I have shown; and each one of them appeared to be both the father and the high priest of that doctrine into which he has been initiated. But all these (the Marcosians) broke out into their apostasy much later, even during the intermediate period of the Church.

Irenæus, "Against Heresies," Book iii, Chaps. i-iv, in Roberts and Donaldson (Eds.), *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (1867), Vol. 1.

The man who wrote those things—the Early Church Father Irenæus—was to the Early Church what Paul was to the Apostolic Church. One of his more distinguished disciples—Hippolytus—was nearly elected Pope around A.D. 200, but lost out to a man who he insisted did not understand the Truth of *The Apostolic Teaching*. He then quit the Church in protest against the direction he could see it was heading, thereby becoming the first "Protest-ant." So you connect the dots: What happened to the "Christ-like" attitude that Isaiah, John the Baptist, Jesus Christ, the Apostle Paul, the Apostle John, Polycarp, and Irenæus exhibited toward Pretenders? Well, it's like this: After the Church lost *The Apostolic Teaching*, the Pretenders who took control of the Church turned to a "warmer, more inviting, Christ-like approach." That is, they adopted the goofy "warm and fuzzy" approach that our pious Pretender, "Pastor" Smug, advocates.

Pretenders embraced a more lenient "manner towards those who might possibly disagree" in order to entice even more of their fellow-Pretenders into the Church. After all, if nobody knows the Truth, why would anybody try to defend or protect it? And why should anyone have to worry about being excommunicated for believing or teaching lies? Everybody should just feel free to join in and contribute their own two cents' worth of ignorance "so that others who want to receive it and share it might do so without the fear of misrepresenting the love of" a completely fictitious god of unconditional grace "to the intended recipients."

Fortunately, the Church only recently came by the ecstatic "warm and fuzzy" feeling that comes from

believing the ridiculous lie that the angry God of Israel loves sinners so unconditionally that He would never send anyone to Hell. Satan sort of piggy-backed that monstrosity on top of the dispensational nonsense regarding *literal interpretation* that he also foisted off on the Church during the nineteenth century. [See "Wanna Hear the Whopper the Liar Came Up With? (I Doubt You'll Believe It!)" *The Voice of Elijah*®, October 1996.] The Truth is, evangelical Christians knew nothing at all about any goofy god of unconditional grace until lamebrained liberals began strongly advocating that view of God toward the end of the nineteenth century.

As a matter of fact, the conservative wing of the Church vehemently fought against the liberals' lie concerning God as a benign, ever-loving god of grace until Satan enticed a certain Mr. Moody, the *Dispensationalist Pretender*, into sugar-coating the Gospel so that it would attract more well-heeled Pretenders into the Church. That is, that Genuine Goofball appears to have been much more interested in separating wealthy Pretenders from their money than he was in saving their souls. Since that time, which was right around the turn of the twentieth century, the Gospel message has been completely perverted by even more brazen charlatans of his same ilk. The result is, very few who call themselves "Christian" today have heard anything close to the Truth that the evangelical wing of the Church still understood just two hundred years ago.

"Pastor" Smug would probably be quite happy if circumstances in the Church remained the way Satan's agents have set them up. Unfortunately (for him and others like him), True Believers no longer have to accept the status quo. There is now another "way" to look at things. That "way" just so happens to be "The Way of the Lord" that Isaiah mentions in the following passage, where he *parabolically* describes what God intends to do through *The (restored) Apostolic Teaching*:

*A voice is calling in the wilderness:
"Turn to The Way of His Majesty!
Make straight in the desert a highway for our God!"
Every valley will be lifted up,
And every mountain and hill will be made lower!
The steep incline will become level,
And the rough terrain a broad valley!
Then the glory of His Majesty will be revealed,
And all flesh together will see,*

*Because the mouth of His Majesty has spoken.
A voice is saying, "Make a proclamation!"
But I said, "What should I proclaim?"
"All flesh is grass!
And all its lovingkindness is like the flower of the field!
The grass has dried up;
The flower has faded,
Because the Spirit of His Majesty has blown upon it."
The people are definitely grass!
The grass has dried up;
The flower has faded.
But the Word of our God will stand forever!
(Isaiah 40:3-8) —my interim translation*

That's an interesting passage, isn't it? Isaiah uses some very interesting *parabolic imagery* to describe what the Believer's transition from this Age to the next will be LIKE. Peter understood the point of the passage this way:

*Having purified your souls by listening to the Truth, in brotherly love—without hypocrisy—love one another fervently from the heart, having been engendered again—not from perishable "seed," but imperishable—through the Living (and remaining) Word of God.
For "ALL FLESH IS LIKE GRASS,
AND ALL ITS GLORY IS LIKE THE FLOWER OF GRASS,
THE GRASS HAS WITHERED,
AND THE FLOWER HAS FALLEN OFF,
BUT THE PROCLAMATION OF THE LORD
REMAINS INTO THE AGE."
And this is the proclamation of the Gospel that was preached to you.
(1 Peter 1:22-25) —my interim translation*

Peter goes on to explain that only those "babes" who take on the image and likeness of the *Living Word of God* have any hope of attaining the Resurrection of the Righteous. But we can get into that some other time. For now, it is enough to know that it won't be long before Pretenders like "Pastor" Smug will have to face the cold, hard Truth of the *Living Word of God*. He is waiting, just LIKE the lion that killed the poor nincompoop God called to prophesy against Jeroboam. That fellow knew what God wanted him to do but got taken in by a liar. No thanks, *I think I'll pass on that*. But thanks for the advice anyway. Given different circumstances, it might have been welcomed. ■



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

Let me begin by reviewing a few things you need to know to understand the *parabolic image* I am going to explain here. By the time Jesus Christ was baptized by John, He had already become the sole remaining Member of *Corporate Israel*—because everyone in *Israel* except Jesus Christ had been “cut off from” *Corporate Israel*. (See *Not All Israel Is Israel*.) At that point in time, He was not only “*The Remnant*” of *Israel*, He was also “*The Man*” *Corporate Israel*. That is why many—if not most—of the things the Prophets say concerning “*Israel*” are actually *parabolically* speaking concerning Jesus Christ.

A second thing you must always keep in mind regarding Jesus Christ is that when He walked the Earth as a man He was not *literally* (only *biologically*) the “Son of God.” That is because God “gave a seed” to David (and to the man *Israel*, that is, to Jacob) by “building a house,” “raising up a seed,” and “making a name” for both of them through the Virgin Mary. Therefore, God—like Onan—“knew that the seed would not be his”:

Then Judah said to Onan, “Enter your brother’s woman so that you give her progeny and raise up a seed for your brother.” Now Onan knew that the seed would not be his, so when he entered his brother’s woman, he ruined {his seed} on the ground so as not to give a seed to his brother.

(Genesis 38:8–9) —my interim translation

The two things I have just mentioned can easily create confusion in the mind of an unregenerate Pretender, but the True Believer should be able to see why: Although Jesus Christ was *literally* the “Son of David,” He was also *parabolically* (as *Corporate Israel*) the “Firstborn Son of God”:

And the LORD said to Moses, “When you go back to Egypt see that you perform before Pharaoh all the wonders which I have put in your power; but I will harden his heart so that he will not let the people go. Then you shall say to Pharaoh, ‘Thus says the LORD, “Israel is My son, My first-born. So I said to you, ‘Let My son go, that he may serve Me’; but you have refused to let him go. Behold, I will kill your son, your first-born.”’”
(Exodus 4:21–23)

Now we come to the third thing you need to remember if you want to understand the *parabolic imagery* in the Prophets related to the Hebrew idioms “build a house,” “raise up a seed,” and “make a name.” The point of all that *parabolic imagery* has to do with the fact that, when Jesus Christ died, not only were the man *Israel* and the man *David* left without a living son, but since the *parabolic* “Firstborn Son of God” (*Corporate Israel*) had also died, God Himself was left (in *parabolic pantomime*) without a Son. Consequently, when the *Living Word* of God brought Jesus Christ back from the dead, He not only “built a house,” “raised up a seed,” and “made a name” for *Israel* and for *David*, He did the same for Himself as well.

I should probably give you fair warning at this point: Don’t be an idiot and push what I just told you about the *parabolic pantomime* of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ to its *apparently* logical conclusion. If you do, you will ultimately find that God has been on the other side the whole time, pushing back twice as hard as you have been pushing. Besides, you don’t have the faculties to comprehend what you are obviously trying to understand *literally*. (See *The Way, The Truth, The Life*.) That’s why God made the Resurrection of Jesus Christ part of a *parabolic pantomime* in the first place. A parable only describes what something (in this case, something you have no other way of understanding) IS LIKE. So do yourself (and others) a favor and let it go. Everything in its own time.

A fourth thing you should keep in mind is the fact that the Prophets not only speak concerning the

Living Word of God, Jesus Christ, as “The One”—that is, the *parabolic male Corporate Israel*—they also describe Him as “The Many”—that is, the *parabolic female* (that is, the members of) *Corporate Israel*. That is the *parabolic imagery* the Prophet Isaiah has in mind when he says this concerning “The One” Whom the Prophets sometimes *parabolically* call “Jerusalem”:

“Shout for joy, O barren one,
 you who have borne no {child;}
 Break forth into joyful shouting and cry aloud,
 you who have not travailed;
 For the sons of the desolate one {will be} more numerous
 Than the sons of the married woman,” says the LORD.
 “Enlarge the place of your tent;
 Stretch out the curtains of your dwellings, spare not;
 Lengthen your cords,
 And strengthen your pegs.
 For you will spread abroad to the right and to the left.
 And your descendants will possess nations,
 And they will resettle the desolate cities.
 Fear not, for you will not be put to shame;
 Neither feel humiliated, for you will not be disgraced;
 But you will forget the shame of your youth,
 And the reproach of your widowhood
 you will remember no more.
 For your husband is your Maker,
 Whose name is the LORD of hosts;
 And your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel,
 Who is called the God of all the earth.
 For the LORD has called you,
 Like a wife forsaken and grieved in spirit,
 Even like a wife of {one’s} youth when she is rejected,”
 Says your God.
 “For a brief moment I forsook you,
 But with great compassion I will gather you.
 In an outburst of anger
 I hid My face from you for a moment;
 But with everlasting lovingkindness
 I will have compassion on you,”
 Says the LORD your Redeemer.
 (Isaiah 54:1–8)

As you undoubtedly already know from what Paul says in Galatians 3 and 4, that passage explains how you and I become *heirs of the promise in Christ*. I could show you the Hebrew idioms and the associated *parabolic imagery* that the Prophets used to explain

those things (after all Paul did not come up with them on his own), but my point here has to do with what the Prophet Isaiah says immediately after he describes the resurrection of the *female* (members of) *Corporate Israel*:

“For this is like the days of Noah to Me;
 When I swore that the waters of Noah
 Should not flood the earth again,
 So I have sworn that I will not be angry with you,
 Nor will I rebuke you.
 For the mountains may be removed and the hills may shake,
 But My lovingkindness will not be removed from you,
 And My covenant of peace will not be shaken,”
 Says the LORD who has compassion on you.
 (Isaiah 54:9–10)

Jesus explains a bit about how the End of the Age will be “LIKE the days of Noah”:

“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)

Jesus is just pointing out that those numskulls destroyed at the End of the Age will be those who “did not understand until the flood came and took them all away.” But He is also making a tongue-in-cheek play on the *parabolic imagery* the Prophet Isaiah had in mind when he made the original statement. What those ignorant people won’t understand is the Truth. That can easily be seen if one understands what *parabolic* “flood” the Prophets have in mind when they *talk about* the inundation that will “flood” the Earth at that time:

They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain,
 For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD
 As the waters cover the sea.
 (Isaiah 11:9)

“For the earth will be filled
 With the knowledge of the glory of the LORD,
 As the waters cover the sea.”
 (Habakkuk 2:14) ■



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

Editor: *In the April 2005 issue of The Voice of Elijah® (“Questions & Answers,” p. 28), you made disparaging comments about Nehemiah, the central character of the Book of Nehemiah. Since this is the second or third time I have heard you do this, would you please explain more about who Nehemiah was, why the Book of Nehemiah was written, and which Prophet actually wrote the Book of Nehemiah?*

Elijah: I will answer the first and last part of your question now, and reserve the question as to “why the Book of Nehemiah was written” until later, when I explain why the Prophet Ezra included the Book of Nehemiah in the Hebrew Scriptures. In answering the first part, I will merely quote what Nehemiah tells us about himself. He says he was a cupbearer to the king of Persia:

The words of Nehemiah the son of Hacaliah. Now it happened in the month Chislev, {in} the twentieth year, while I was in Susa the capitol, that Hanani, one of my brothers, and some men from Judah came; and I asked them concerning the Jews who had escaped {and} had survived the captivity, and about Jerusalem. And they said to me, “The remnant there in the province who survived the captivity are in great distress and reproach, and the wall of Jerusalem is broken down and its gates are burned with

fire.” Now it came about when I heard these words, I sat down and wept and mourned for days; and I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven. And I said, “I beseech Thee, O LORD God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who preserves the covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments, let Thine ear now be attentive and Thine eyes open to hear the prayer of Thy servant which I am praying before Thee now, day and night, on behalf of the sons of Israel Thy servants, confessing the sins of the sons of Israel which we have sinned against Thee; I and my father’s house have sinned. We have acted very corruptly against Thee and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the ordinances which Thou didst command Thy servant Moses. Remember the word which Thou didst command Thy servant Moses, saying, ‘If you are unfaithful I will scatter you among the peoples; but if you return to Me and keep My commandments and do them, though those of you who have been scattered were in the most remote part of the heavens, I will gather them from there and will bring them to the place where I have chosen to cause My name to dwell.’ And they are Thy servants and Thy people whom Thou didst redeem by Thy great power and by Thy strong hand. O Lord, I beseech Thee, may Thine ear be attentive to the prayer of Thy servant and the prayer of Thy servants who delight to revere Thy name, and make Thy servant successful today, and grant him compassion before this man.” Now I was the cupbearer to the king. (Nehemiah 1:1–11)

Now the last part of your question: As I told you in January 1998, a Prophet did not “write” the Book of Nehemiah; a man named Nehemiah did. Here is what I said:

Let me begin by reminding you of what I stated previously: The Hebrew Scriptures are a combination of both history and prophecy. History explains what God has done. Prophecy explains what God is going to do. I must also remind you why it is important to remember that: It is because Moses hid some incredibly important information in the five books of the Bible that he wrote by intentionally giving his readers the impression they are reading history when they are in fact reading prophecy.

Since the Prophets of Israel took their lead from Moses, we should expect them to use somewhat the same tactics that he used to conceal the Truth. And we will. As a matter of fact, the Prophets did that in the historical

books of the Old Testament as well—at least in the ones they authored. I say “in the ones they authored” because not all of the historical books were authored by Prophets. But that’s just another curve that God has thrown past the proud and arrogant who assume they can easily pierce the veil that conceals the Truth He has hidden in the Hebrew Scriptures.

A good example of a nonprophetic historical work is the Book of Nehemiah. Knowing that Nehemiah was not a Prophet has no impact at all on the meaning of what he said, but it makes an incredible difference in the significance: The reason why Nehemiah said what he said is not the same reason why the Prophet included his statements in the Hebrew Scriptures. And the Apostles and Prophets determine the significance of the statements they recorded, not the person who made them.

If the biblical author did not determine the significance of the things he wrote [sic], one would have—as some conservative theologians have for three-quarters of a century—a difficult time explaining how so many bits and pieces of an ancient Egyptian text titled *The Teaching of Amenemope* came to be embedded in the Book of Proverbs (Prov. 12:22; 15:16, 17; 16:11; 20:23; nearly all of 22:17–23:14; 24:29; 25:21; 26:9; 27:1). Their perplexity concerning how they should treat material from that apparently secular text is only natural. But the one who understands the parabolic image of “The Way” has only to read a translation of the original Egyptian text in order to understand why Solomon included excerpts of it in the Book of Proverbs. But I will explain that another time. If you are interested, you can find a translation of *The Teaching of Amenemope* in J. B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1969), pp. 421–425.

“God Lives in a Three-Story House,” **The Voice of Elijah®**, January 1998)

I should correct a somewhat misleading statement that I made in that passage. When I said, “If the biblical author did not determine the significance of the things he wrote,” I should have just repeated what I said in the previous paragraph and used the word *recorded* instead of *wrote*. That is because the Prophets did not always *write* the things they *recorded* in the Scriptures, but they always determined the *significance* of those things. In the case of the Book of Nehemiah, that correction makes no real difference. The Prophet

Ezra appears to have *written* the Book of Nehemiah, but he did so by taking dictation from a Pretender named Nehemiah. Therein lies the crux of the issue regarding the *meaning* and *significance* of the book.

Since Nehemiah was not a Prophet, the Book of Nehemiah conveys the thoughts and actions of an ordinary man—and a pious Pretender at that. Therefore, the *meaning* of what Ezra recorded depends entirely on what Nehemiah *meant* by what he said. But the Prophet Ezra included the Book of Nehemiah in the Scriptures not because he agreed with what Nehemiah wrote, but because he assumed the knowledgeable reader would understand the *significance* of what Nehemiah said relates to the fact that he had no understanding whatsoever of *The Teaching of Moses*.

In *Not All Israel Is Israel* (1991) and *The Way, The Truth, The Life* (1993), I explained the roles that *meaning* and *significance* play in an understanding of the Scriptures. Then, in October 1995, I said this:

The way you approach the Scriptures determines whether or not you come away with the Truth. I’ve explained why that is in The Way, The Truth, The Life tape series, but let me summarize again. The Scriptures are a historical record of God’s dealings with mankind. But that record contains various types of literature.

There is, first of all, historical narrative on the one hand and Hebrew poetry on the other. You can’t read those two genre of literature in the same way. If you do, you’re an absolute idiot as far as understanding the Truth of God is concerned. Second, you have historical narrative text written in the first and third person. Those two are sitting right alongside prophetic narrative text written in the first and third person. You can’t read any one of those four kinds of texts in the same way. Finally, you find divine discourse and human discourse embedded in not only historical narrative and poetic texts but also in prophetic narrative and poetic texts.

That last eight-way combination snags everybody in one way or another. The trouble is, if you accord the words of an unbeliever the same value as those of a Believer, you are believing a lie of one kind or another. But if you imbue the speech of man with the same authority you accord the direct discourse of God Himself through a Prophet or Apostle, you are an absolute moron. The Book of Job is considered by many to be the most obscure book in the Bible merely because it is a prophetic book containing narrative and poetic text in which you find Job, his wife, his three

friends, Satan, and God speaking. Beyond that, most of the speakers are using Hebrew idioms and speaking in terms of the parabolic imagery of the Prophets. So, if you understand the message of the Book of Job, you undoubtedly understand all seven of the messages hidden in the Hebrew Scriptures.

(“Questions & Answers,” **The Voice of Elijah**®, October 1995)

In January 1996, I gave you a few more general hermeneutical principles you should keep in mind when you are reading the Scriptures. Here is what I said there:

The basic difficulty facing anyone reading the Scriptures is this: How in the world are they meant to be understood? I’ll address that issue here only in a general sense. It would take several weeks to treat it in detail. That is due, in no small part, to the fact that one must have a fairly good understanding of the rituals of the ancient mystery religions before they can understand the parabolic imagery God has used in the Scriptures. I’ve already explained some of that imagery on The Next Step tapes. I plan to eventually explain everything in The Resurrection Theology Series. Eventually. But it’s beginning to look like that may take a lot longer than I expected when I began.

In the last issue I mentioned that when we read the Bible, we are sometimes reading what someone has written, but as often as not we are at the same time reading what someone has said. So, although everything in the Scriptures exists only in written form, we still have to pay close attention to who the author/speaker of a statement is. That becomes extremely important when the author/speaker is an Apostle, Prophet, or Jesus Christ, because those folks were authorized to speak for God Himself.

However, the mere fact that a statement occurs in Scripture carries an importance in its own right. The Scriptures themselves are objective revelation—immediately presenting the divinely inspired words of God for the benefit of anyone who can read them with understanding. Therefore, no matter how mundane a statement may appear to be, we must strive to make sure that we actually understand what the author/speaker is trying to tell us. The reason for that will become apparent when I begin to explain the first of the seven messages in the Hebrew Scriptures. You will then see how God has hidden some of the most important details to be found in all the Hebrew

Scriptures in what appear to be insignificant extraneous comments.

The first thing you need to get firmly fixed in your mind if you ever intend to understand the message of the Scriptures is the fact that meaning resides only in people. Words are nothing more than symbols that carry the meaning they have been assigned by the person who uses them. If that were not so, there could never be more than one language because, if meaning resided in words, any given word could only mean one thing, and could never mean anything other than that one thing. That is an issue over which the ancient Greek philosophers agonized for quite some time, some arguing one way, some arguing the other. Yet it cannot logically be any other way. There are thousands of words/sounds that are the same in hundreds of different languages spoken around the world. Yet those words/sounds convey a variety of different meanings. Therefore, it is obvious that meaning does not reside in the words themselves. It continues to reside only in the person who uses those words as symbols to convey meaning.

The second thing you should remember when you read the Scriptures is something that is closely related to what I just said. Since meaning resides only in people, and words are nothing more than symbols that carry meaning, a statement can never have more than one valid meaning. That one valid meaning is the meaning intended by the one who made the statement. Even when the meaning is a double entendre, that double meaning is, in fact, nothing more than the one valid meaning intended by the author/speaker.

Because of the idiocy first propounded by Origen, a lot of folks in the Church today think the Scriptures have some sort of double meaning. That is, they think the human author meant one thing and God had a “higher meaning” in mind. Those who go for that bit of Satan’s bait believe they can say whatever they want to say and then claim it is the “higher meaning” God intended.

Anyone who believes that nonsense has no hope of ever coming to an accurate understanding of the meaning of the Scriptures. Instead, that person finds himself with no logical way to verify the meaning that God intended. All he has to rely on is a warm fuzzy feeling that God meant this or that. Satan has a field day with folks who follow the leading of warm fuzzy feelings. He is the master of those things. Therefore, it is absolutely essential to understand that the statements made in Scripture have only one valid meaning. That is because, through the

inspiration God gave the authors of Scripture, He has used the words of Scripture to convey the precise meaning He intended us to understand. However, it is just as important to keep in mind the fact that the meaning God intended does not reside in the words we find written in Scripture. Not at all. That meaning continues to reside in God. Therefore, it is our individual responsibility to determine what we believe to be the meaning God intended us to understand when we read the words of Scripture. We can do that only if we pay close attention to what we find written there.

If we accurately understand the statements made by the men who wrote the Scriptures, those statements have the power to evoke the same meaning in us that they have in God. If we don't understand the statements we find in the Scriptures, however, their power completely eludes us, and we may as well be reading Mother Goose for all the good it does us.

Under the conditions I have just outlined, you can easily see that it is possible for a person to say things that others could never understand. If you don't believe that, just ask a cryptographer to explain what he does for a living. Folks like him can hide meaning so deep that it can only be deciphered by someone who has been given the "keys." That brings up the third thing you should keep in mind when reading the Scriptures.

In order to communicate so that one's intended meaning can be readily understood, one must follow the accepted grammatical conventions in whatever language one happens to be using. Simply put, that means one has not said anything intelligible unless one has stated things as others would normally expect such things to be stated. To put that same principle more mildly, one cannot deviate from accepted grammatical norms without creating ambiguity. That is never more important to keep in mind than in connection with the statements made in the Scriptures. God made sure the statements found in the Scriptures would always be ambiguous to anyone who has not been granted insight into their meaning. Yet the Scriptures always adhere to accepted grammatical conventions so that they can be readily understood.

In many cases, the Prophets of Israel made statements that were so ambiguous they were not understood even by the people of their own generation who heard what they said. However, that was not because the Prophets failed to use accepted grammatical conventions when they spoke. Not at all. It was because the people to whom the Prophets spoke did not understand what the Prophets

were talking about! To a certain extent, that accounts for the lack of insight in our own generation.

The message of the Scriptures is not understood today because religious folks today do not understand what the Scriptures are talking about. That's why, on *The Next Step* tapes, I do not usually explain the meaning of specific statements made in the Scriptures; I merely explain what this or that passage is talking about. That is normally enough for a True Believer to grasp the meaning of a text on his own, provided the translation he is reading hasn't put a weird spin on the original meaning of the text.

If the Lord is willing, I'll eventually get around to explaining the meaning of the biblical text in greater detail. Someday. That's when I'll tell you what this or that text is actually saying. But there's no immediate need for that right now. True Believers must first be coaxed into giving up the helter-skelter, hocus-pocus approach to reading the Scriptures that Satan has foisted off on the Church. Then we can talk specifics.

To get back to what I was saying, the Scriptures were meant to be understood in terms of the accepted grammatical conventions of three different languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. Those are the languages in which they were written. A copy of the Scriptures in any other language is just a translation of those three original languages.

That brings us to the fourth thing you should remember when you read the Scriptures: Any translation of the Scriptures is, by definition, an interpretation. In every case, the translator has given us a translation that he believed would best convey what he believed to be the meaning God intended the original text to convey. Anyone who argues otherwise is merely trying to fill up the vacant space between his ears.

It is crucially important to realize that every translation of the Scriptures is, at heart, an interpretation. That is, a translator must always interpret the biblical text before he can translate it. That being the case, a translation can convey the meaning God originally intended only to the extent that the translator actually understood what God meant for the reader to understand in the first place. Obviously, a translator cannot do that unless he has thoroughly mastered the accepted grammatical conventions of the Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek of the original text.

Linguistic skills vary from one translator to the next. Some translators are masters of the original languages of the Bible, others mere apprentices. Yet I can tell

you with absolute confidence that every translation of the Scriptures available today has misrepresented the meaning of the original text to one degree or another. That's not because the translators did not understand the grammatical conventions of the original language, however. It's because they did not understand what the Scriptures are talking about!

That leads me to the fifth principle you should keep in mind as you read the Scriptures: Every statement made in the Scriptures must be understood in terms of the total context in which it was made. That total context includes much more than just the immediate literary context. In other words, it is not enough to understand the author's purpose in writing. The total context of the Scriptures includes such things as the historical/cultural environment in which a statement was made, the social setting in which the author/speaker lived, the immediate purpose of the author/speaker in making the statement, and the type of literature in which the statement occurs.

Most importantly, the total context includes the overall purpose God had in mind when He inspired different people to write the various parts of the Scriptures. That's where a knowledge of the ancient mystery religions becomes paramount. Without an understanding of how God has spoken parabolically in the Scriptures in terms of imagery He appropriated from these religions, one is again left groping for meaning on the basis of little more than a "best guess" or intuition. I don't know about you, but I tend to shy away from folks who put much confidence in those kinds of things.

This is what the principle of interpreting every statement according to its total context means in practical terms: If you want to understand any one part of the Scriptures, you must first understand God's purpose in inspiring the entirety of the Scriptures. In other words, the context of any one passage of Scripture includes its literary context as a part of the cumulative Scriptures. Therefore, to understand any one passage, you must pay especially close attention to what the Scriptures have told you happened prior to the part you want to understand.

To put it bluntly, if you don't fully understand WHAT has been said before, you certainly don't know WHAT is being said now. And to compound that difficulty, if you don't understand WHAT is said later, you have no idea WHY something is being said now. That's nothing more than the same old issue of understanding both the meaning and the significance of a statement. I have already explained all that in Not All Israel Is Israel [Editor: See Not All

Israel Is Israel, pp. 111 ff.] and on The Way, The Truth, The Life tapes.

Now that I've given you five basic hermeneutical principles you should keep in mind when reading the Scriptures, let me tie them all together in one tidy little package. As I said before, the words you find written in the Scriptures are intended to convey but one meaning. That meaning is the Truth. It is the Word of God. However, the Word of God does not reside in the words you find written in the text of Scripture. It resides in God as the Living Word of God. It also resides in Jesus Christ, Who is Himself the Living Word of God—the visible manifestation of God Himself in this realm.

That being the case, if you understand and believe the precise meaning that God intended the words of Scripture to convey to you, those written words can evoke the same meaning in you that they have in God and in Jesus Christ. Thereafter, the same Living Word of God that resides in God will also reside in you. ("Questions & Answers," **The Voice of Elijah**®, January 1996)

All of the hermeneutical principles I explain in that passage come into play when one reads the Book of Nehemiah. But perhaps the most important one to keep in mind is this: One must always pay attention to who the speaker is. As is obvious, Nehemiah is the speaker in the Book of Nehemiah; and Nehemiah was most definitely not a Prophet. He clearly reveals that by his erroneous understanding of what Moses wrote. But one is only able to see that if one actually understands what Moses wrote.

If you can see the logic in not accepting the words of the Liar Satan as Gospel Truth just because they are recorded in the Scriptures, you already know why you should also scrutinize statements made by men other than the author. What they said may or may not be true; the biblical author only confirms that they said it. Therefore, in January 1998, I gave you a concrete example of why it is absolutely essential to pay attention to who is speaking when you read the Scriptures. (See "God Lives in a Three-Story House," **The Voice of Elijah**®, January 1998.) At that time, I showed you that what David says about *the promise* that Nathan gave him in 2 Samuel 7 cannot be trusted. That is because although David understood what Nathan said at the time, he later rationalized the Truth so that he could

believe a lie that would allow him to do what he wanted—that is, have a temple built in Jerusalem.

As I have said before and will undoubtedly say over and over again: The only thing in the Scriptures that you can rely on to be absolutely true in every possible way are the words of an Apostle or Prophet who records either the words of God or his own insight into *The Teaching*. If he is recording what someone else said, what that person said may or may not be true. That is, the Apostle or Prophet does not validate *what* a person says, he only validates *that* the person said it.

In the case of the Book of Nehemiah, the Prophet Ezra wants it understood that Nehemiah was, indeed, stating what he thought, felt, said, and did; but Ezra is not thereby telling us that Nehemiah was acting, speaking, or thinking in accordance with the Truth of *The Teaching of Moses*. It should be obvious to the alert reader that he was not.

Editor: This question is from a subscriber who would like you to expand on something you mentioned in passing in a previous newsletter. In the July 1997 issue of The Voice of Elijah® (“Questions & Answers,” p. 20) you answered a question about Solomon and two harlots who both claimed the same baby as their own and asked Solomon to decide who was the rightful mother (1 Kin. 3:16–28). In your answer you said this account “provides several details that we need to know concerning the women who engaged in the Canaanite zonah ritual,” but you didn’t explain those details because they weren’t relevant to the question. Our subscriber was hoping you would explain those details now. Would you please do that? Also, he would like to know if you have gained any new insight into the zonah ritual from any of the academic literature you study?

Elijah: First of all, I should probably explain a few things about the *zonah* ritual for the benefit of those who have not yet had opportunity to read everything I have written on that subject. Those who attended *The Isaiah Seminar* in 1999 have probably heard more than everyone else about those things, but I am still trying to put the transcript of that seminar into a format suitable for distribution. Hopefully, I will accomplish that over the next few years. Lacking that, this brief explanation will have to suffice.

The *zonah* ritual was an ancient religious ritual in which virgin women prostituted themselves with

strangers for the purpose of bearing a divine/human son of god. Different cultures had different beliefs in regard to sacred prostitution, but all of those beliefs derived from a corruption of *The Teaching* concerning Jesus Christ that Adam and Eve carried with them when they were booted out of the Garden of Eden. Moses documents the corruption of *The Teaching* that God confirmed to Noah when he tells us all of mankind set out to *fulfill the promise* by “making a name” for themselves at the Tower of Babel. That is, he uses that idiom to tell us the people conducted some sort of *zonah* ritual at the Tower of Babel by which a virgin got pregnant and bore a son. The people then made that male child their king, declaring him to be the divine Son of God Who God had *promised* would rule the world. God quickly responded by showing them such was not the case:

All the Earth was one speech and the same words. And while they were journeying from the east, they found a broad valley in the land of Shinar and settled there. Then each one said to his neighbor: “Come on! Let’s form bricks and burn {them} ‘til burnt.” So the brick became stone to them, and the bitumen became mortar to them. Then they said: “Come on! Let’s build for ourselves a city and a tower—its top will be in the Sea of Waters—and let’s make a name for ourselves lest we be scattered over the surface of all the Earth.” Then His Majesty came down to see the city and the tower (which the sons of the man had {already} built). And His Majesty said: “Look! All of them are one people and have one speech. But doing this has profaned them, and now nothing that they plan to do will be withheld from them. Come on! Let’s go down and make their speech senseless there so that each one cannot listen to the speech of his neighbor.” So His Majesty scattered them from there over the surface of all the Earth, and they stopped building the city. Therefore, He called its name Babel because there His Majesty mixed up the speech of all the Earth and from there His Majesty scattered them over the surface of all the Earth.

(Genesis 11:1–9) —my interim translation

As I told you before, the Blessed and the Cursed became “one people” in the king produced by the *zonah* ritual at the Tower of Babel. (See “Questions & Answers,” *The Voice of Elijah*®, January 1997; and “So Why Would a Nomad ‘Build a House’ and

Settle Down?" *The Voice of Elijah*®, October 1997.) But my point is, they did that because *The Teaching* that Adam and Eve carried with them contained *the promise* that God would one day *fulfill the promise* by becoming "one people" with both the Blessed and the Cursed of the man Adam in the divine/human Son of a "virgin" who would "build a house," "raise up a seed," and "make a name" for God.

That is precisely what the Canaanite *zonah* did. She "engendered a son" through whom a man could become "one people" with the Canaanite god Baal. Moses and the Prophets of Israel used the three Hebrew idioms I mentioned above (and others) to ridicule the ancient Canaanite *zonah* ritual by using it as *parabolic imagery* to describe what the birth, death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ are LIKE. That is what Paul has in mind when he says this:

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

There is a whole lot more detail to the why's and wherefore's of the Canaanite *zonah* ritual than I have time to get into here. I have already explained some of those details in The Next Step program. I have only surveyed a few things here so that it will be obvious to the newcomer how fundamental the *parabolic image* of the "virgin" "harlot" who bears the Son of God is in *The Teaching*. The fool will read that and ignorantly assume I called the Virgin Mary a "harlot." Little does he know the Virgin Birth of Christ is a *parabolic pantomime* that God orchestrated to prevent lamebrains from clearly seeing the Truth of *The Teaching*. Mary did not "build *The House*" of God; she "built *The House*" of David and Israel. God got involved only because He was "giving a seed" to those two men. Anyone who understands *The Teaching* already knows that.

Unfortunately, unless one has insight into this particular facet of *The Teaching*, one has absolutely no way of understanding the Book of Isaiah. What Hosea says won't make much sense either. As for the question you asked, here is the text you mentioned:

Then two women who were harlots came to the king and stood before him. And the one woman said, "Oh, my lord, this woman and I live in the same house; and I gave birth to a child while she {was} in the house. And it happened on the third day after I gave birth, that this woman also gave birth to a child, and we were together. There was no stranger with us in the house, only the two of us in the house. And this woman's son died in the night, because she lay on it. So she arose in the middle of the night and took my son from beside me while your maidservant slept, and laid him in her bosom, and laid her dead son in my bosom. And when I rose in the morning to nurse my son, behold, he was dead; but when I looked at him carefully in the morning, behold, he was not my son, whom I had borne." Then the other woman said, "No! For the living one is my son, and the dead one is your son." But the first woman said, "No! For the dead one is your son, and the living one is my son." Thus they spoke before the king.

Then the king said, "The one says, 'This is my son who is living, and your son is the dead one'; and the other says, 'No! For your son is the dead one, and my son is the living one.'" And the king said, "Get me a sword." So they brought a sword before the king. And the king said, "Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one and half to the other." Then the woman whose child

{was} the living one spoke to the king, for she was deeply stirred over her son and said, "Oh, my lord, give her the living child, and by no means kill him." But the other said, "He shall be neither mine nor yours; divide {him!}" Then the king answered and said, "Give the first woman the living child, and by no means kill him. She is his mother." When all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had handed down, they feared the king; for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him to administer justice. (1 Kings 3:16–28)

Two of the most obvious details the Prophet Jeremiah provides are found in this one statement:

"There was no stranger with us in the house, only the two of us in the house."
(1 Kings 3:18b)

In using the word *stranger*, the *zonah* is referring to a "client" for whom she and others like her would routinely bear children as a primitive sort of surrogate mother. What she says appears to indicate that a man would normally live with a *zonah*—as the Prophet Hosea evidently did on two occasions (Hos. 1:2; 3:3)—probably to ensure that any children born to the *zonah* were actually his. In this case, the woman is eliminating any other possible suspects in the death of her son by stating that no such *stranger* was living with them at the time.

The woman's statement also implies that neither she nor the other *zonah* had borne her child for a *stranger*, that is, for a man with whom she had an agreement to bear a son. That explains why both women felt so strongly about losing their sons. They were not going to have to surrender them to a *stranger* and most likely never see them again.

A third detail resides in the fact that Solomon willingly heard a case brought by a woman who—by her use of the term *stranger*—publicly admitted she was a *zonah*. That tells us Solomon accepted the private use of a *zonah* to acquire an heir, which means he most likely had not outlawed the public practice of the sacred *zonah* ritual as Moses required (Lev. 19:29; 20:1–8; Deut. 21:13–21). Jeremiah may be hinting at the defect in Solomon's character that would eventually lead to his downfall. I say that because all of the gods mentioned in the following passage are associated with the *zonah* ritual:

For it came about when Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away after other gods; and his heart was not wholly devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father {had been.} For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians and after Milcom the detestable idol of the Ammonites. And Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not follow the LORD fully, as David his father {had done.} Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable idol of Moab, on the mountain which is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the detestable idol of the sons of Ammon. Thus also he did for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.
(1 Kings 11:4–8)

As far as learning anything about the *zonah* ritual from academic literature is concerned, I have almost given up on that. Until some scholar realizes the Canaanite Baal myths are using the west semitic idiom "build a house" to speak euphemistically concerning sacred prostitution, there isn't much hope of finding all that much of interest there. I still go to the original text of the Baal myths from time to time just to verify some detail. But those things are related mainly to the Prophets' use of technical terms to speak concerning the birth, death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Editor: This question is from a subscriber who would like to know what Isaiah 4:4 is talking about. Specifically, he would like to know if two phrases—"the spirit of judgment" and "the spirit of burning"—are references to the Holy Spirit cleansing the Church in the Last Days, or whether they refer to something else? Would you please put Isaiah 4:4 in its proper context and tell us what it's talking about?

Elijah: I'll try. As I explained in *The Isaiah Seminar*, the first chapter of Isaiah is an overview of his entire collection of prophecies. In that chapter, Isaiah indicts "Judah and Jerusalem" because the people of Israel have completely abandoned *The Teaching of Moses* but are still clinging tenaciously to the observance of what have become *meaningless* religious rituals. Consequently, "Jerusalem" has *parabolically* become LIKE a *zonah*. That is, she will produce a Son Who will *inherit the promise*, but she will not participate in *the promise* herself.

In the second chapter, Isaiah begins to describe what it will be LIKE "in that day," that is, when God

finally restores *The Teaching* at the End of the Age. His most telling statement concerns the abhorrent conditions that exist in *Corporate Israel* at that time:

*My people!
Those who treat Him harshly are children,
And women rule over Him.
My people!
Your guides are leading {You} astray,
And they have confused "The Way" of Your paths.
(Isaiah 3:12) —my interim translation*

Isaiah's point is, the loss of *The Teaching* (what the Prophets call "*The Way*") has finally gotten to the point where *Corporate Israel* (the Body of Christ) is accepting instruction from women and children—neither of which God would ever call to a position of leadership, as the Apostle Paul knew full well:

*But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet.
(1 Timothy 2:12)*

"In that day"—that is, when the members of *Corporate Israel* are willingly listening to people who obviously have no authority to teach—God will once again restore *The Teaching*. This is what it will be LIKE when He does that:

*In that day, The Branch of His Majesty will become adornment and glory, and the Fruit of the Earth {will become} exaltation and beauty for those of Israel who escape. Then the One Who remains in Zion and the One Who is left in Jerusalem will be called Holy—all of the One recorded for life in Jerusalem. When my Master has washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, He will rinse the bloodstains of Jerusalem from Her midst, by the Spirit of judgment and the Spirit of burning. Then His Majesty will create over the whole foundation of Mount Zion and over her assemblage a cloud by day and smoke, and brightness of fire {and} flame by night, because over all glory is a covering. And a booth will become shade from the heat by day, and a shelter and a hiding place from the downpour and rain.
(Isaiah 4:2–6) —my interim translation*

The first sentence (verse 2) *parabolically* describes the restoration of *The Teaching*. "The Branch of His

Majesty" is Jesus Christ, the *Living Word* of God. The last two sentences (verses 5 and 6) contain references to the *parabolic imagery* inherent in the *parabolic pantomimes* of the Passover and the Feast of Booths respectively. Those two *parabolic pantomimes* describe "the Exodus" by which one passes from this life, through death, and into the afterlife. Consequently, the two sentences between the first sentence and the last two sentences (verses 3 and 4) describe what happens during the interval between the time when God begins to restore *The Teaching* and the Resurrection of the Righteous at the End of the Age.

The first of those two sentences (verse 3) refers to "*The Remnant*" of Israel that will respond to *The Teaching* that is depicted as having been restored in the first sentence. The second (verse 4) says that after God "has washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion" (that is, "The Many"), He will then "rinse the bloodstains of Jerusalem." Therefore, the two phrases you mentioned are not "references to the Holy Spirit cleansing the Church in the Last Days." They are instead referring to the wrath of God avenging "the blood of saints and prophets" that created those bloodstains:

*And I heard a loud voice from the temple, saying to the seven angels, "Go and pour out the seven bowls of the wrath of God into the earth." And the first {angel} went and poured out his bowl into the earth; and it became a loathsome and malignant sore upon the men who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his image. And the second {angel} poured out his bowl into the sea, and it became blood like {that} of a dead man; and every living thing in the sea died. And the third {angel} poured out his bowl into the rivers and the springs of waters; and they became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters saying, "Righteous art Thou, who art and who wast, O Holy One, because Thou didst judge these things; for they poured out the blood of saints and prophets, and Thou hast given them blood to drink. They deserve it."
(Revelation 16:1–6)*

Editor: The final question is one I have heard bandied about for years (and just recently heard bandied about again) so I want to ask you about it. Did the Garden of Eden that Adam and Eve "tended" prior to their fall exist here on Earth or somewhere else? If on Earth, do you have any insight as to where the Garden of Eden might have been located?

Elijah: You are asking me to explain the *meaning* and *significance* of one of the most cleverly concealed parts of all that Moses hid in what he wrote, and I'm not yet up to the task. So I'll just explain the basics of what I have been able to "see" to this point. That will give those who have no concern for the Truth plenty of room to do themselves in by speculating about things God never *meant* for them to understand.

The first thing you need to know is this: Moses' primary purpose in writing the five "books" he contributed to the Hebrew Scriptures was to conceal the Truth of *The Teaching* God *delivered* to him at Mt. Sinai. That way, those True Believers alive at the End of the Age would be able to compare his sealed *written* version (after it is opened) with the unsealed *oral* version they have opportunity to hear. They would thereby have all the evidence they need to validate the Truth in their own minds.

Moses uses some extremely creative techniques in concealing the Truth, but he always leaves tremendously HUGE clues to the *meaning* and *significance* of what he writes. He does that to mock the ignorant *traditionalist* while at the same time alerting the informed reader to the fact that he has hidden some insight that will explain things stated later on in the Scriptures. It is certainly no different in this case. So let me point out the first obvious clue: Moses plainly tells us that, wherever the Garden of Eden (and the Tree of Life) is, it must still be right where God left it:

Then His Majesty—God—said: "Look! The man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil. But now, lest he stretch forth his hand and take also from the Tree of Life and eat and live forever." Then His Majesty—God—sent him out of the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. Then He drove the man out and—from antiquity—caused the cherubim and the flame of the constantly turning Sword to dwell before the Garden of Eden to guard "The Way" of the Tree of Life.

(Genesis 3:22–24) —my interim translation

Now that we know the Garden of Eden still exists, let me ask you this, If Moses intended his reader to understand the Garden of Eden is still somewhere on Earth, would not any *sensible* person conclude that satellite imagery would have been able to detect it by now? That would be the *logical* conclusion of any

rational person; but *irrational traditionalists* being what they are, I have no doubt some can easily come up with an alternate explanation that will satisfy *them*. That particular species of intellectual sloth will believe anything that allows them to cling to their beloved tradition. For that reason Moses provides yet another obvious clue concerning the location of the Garden.

If you pay close attention to what Moses says about "the ground" (Hebrew: *Ha'adamah*) from which God formed the man Adam (Hebrew: *Ha'adam*), you should be able to see he uses a rather deft sleight of hand to partially obscure the Truth related to the Garden of Eden. He begins defining what he *means* when he says "the ground" by first distinguishing between Heaven and Earth:

Then God said, "Let the waters beneath the Sea of Waters be gathered to one place and let the dry land appear!" And it was so. Then God called the dry land "Earth," and He called the gathering of the waters "Seas." And God saw—that it was good.

(Genesis 1:9–10) —my interim translation

In that passage, Moses uses the term translated "dry land" to solidly link the term *Earth* to the soil that appeared out of the "Seas" that covered "the Earth" on the third "day" of Creation. But he is just playing coy. That is the last time he mentions "dry land." In every other instance, he calls the soil of "the Earth" "the ground." He begins doing that in verse 25:

Then God said, "Let the Earth send forth a living soul according to her kind—beast and crawling thing and wildlife of Earth according to her kind." And it was so. So God made the wildlife of the Earth according to her kind, and the domesticated animal according to her kind, and all that crawls {on} the ground according to his kind. And God saw—that it was good.

(Genesis 1:24–25) —my interim translation

Moses provides additional clues in the following passage just to make sure the alert reader understands "the ground" is "the dry land" that appeared on "the Earth" on the third "day" of Creation:

Now before any shrub of the field was in the Earth and before any green plant of the field had sprouted, when His Majesty—God—had not caused rain to fall on the Earth

and there was no man to work **the ground**, but a mist went up from **the Earth** and watered all the surface of **the ground**, then His Majesty—God—formed the man of dirt from **the ground** and breathed a breath of life in his nostrils and the man became a living soul. Then His Majesty—God—planted a garden in Eden—from antiquity—and there he placed the man that He had formed. Then His Majesty—God—caused to sprout from **the ground** every tree pleasant to the sight and good for food. (Now the Tree of Life was in the middle of the Garden and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.) (Genesis 2:5–9) —my interim translation

Next, the Master Prophet clinches the link between “the ground” and “the Earth.” At the same time, he substitutes “the field” for “the Earth,” thereby defining the term *field* as the *parabolic equivalent* of “the Earth” so that those who come after him—including Jesus Christ Himself—could use it to speak *parabolically*:

*Then God said: “It is not good for the man to be by himself. I will make for him a helper equal to him.” Then His Majesty—God—formed out of **the ground** all of the wildlife of **the field** and every bird of the Sea of Waters and He brought {them} to the man to see what he would name them. And whatever the man named a living soul, that was its name. Then the man gave names to all the domesticated animals and to the birds of the Sea of Waters and to all the wildlife of **the field**. But He did not find a helper for the man equal to him.* (Genesis 2:18–20) —my interim translation

Having done all that, Moses is now ready to deliver the coup de grâce to the inattentive reader:

*But to the man He said: “Because you listened to the voice of your woman and you ate from the tree that I commanded you, saying, ‘Don’t eat from it!’ **the ground** is cursed on account of you. In pain you must eat from it all the days of your life. It will sprout thornbushes and thistles for you; nevertheless, you must eat the green plants of **the field**. You must eat bread {obtained} by the sweat of your brow until you return to **the ground** because you were taken from it, because you are dirt and to dirt you will return.” Then the man named his woman “Eve” because she was the mother of all living. Then His Majesty—God—made tunics of skin for the man and his woman and He clothed them. Then His Majesty—God—said: “Look! The man*

*has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil. But now, lest he stretch forth his hand and take also from the Tree of Life and eat and live forever.” Then His Majesty—God—sent him out of the Garden of Eden to work **the ground** from which he had been taken. Then He drove the man out and—from antiquity—caused the cherubim and the flame of the constantly turning Sword to dwell before the Garden of Eden to guard “The Way” of the Tree of Life.* (Genesis 3:17–24) —my interim translation

It should not need to be explained—to anyone but a moron—that one cannot be “sent out” “to work the ground” if one is already standing on “the ground.” Furthermore, if the soil in the Garden of Eden was part of “the ground” from which Adam had been taken, it would have also been cursed when God cursed “the ground.” Since God “planted” the Tree of Life in the Garden, that would not strike me as a very *rational* act on His part. Consequently, it is beginning to appear fairly certain that Moses did not intend his reader to understand that the Garden of Eden (in which God “planted” the Tree of Life) is located here on Earth. That conclusion is confirmed by the grammatical construction he uses in this passage:

*Now before any shrub of the field was in the Earth and before any green plant of the field had sprouted, **when** His Majesty—God—had not caused rain to fall on the Earth and there was no man to work the ground, but a mist went up from the Earth and watered all the surface of the ground, **then** His Majesty—God—formed the man of dirt from the ground and breathed a breath of life in his nostrils and the man became a living soul. **Then** His Majesty—God—planted a garden in Eden—from antiquity—and there he placed the man that He had formed. **Then** His Majesty—God—caused to sprout from the ground every tree pleasant to the sight and good for food. (Now the Tree of Life was in the middle of the Garden and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.)* (Genesis 2:5–9) —my interim translation

Did you see I translated the text “*Now before ..., when ..., then Then Then ...*”? I did that because Moses uses a specific form of the Hebrew verb to indicate he is describing a temporal sequence of events. That is, *before* any vegetation had sprouted, *when* God had not yet caused rain to fall, *then* (at that time) He

created Adam. *Then* (after that) He “planted” the Garden of Eden and put Adam there. *Then* (after that) He caused “the ground” on “the Earth” to sprout vegetation. (Pay attention now: Moses is emphasizing his point by telling the alert reader that God “planted” the Garden of Eden, but He “caused to sprout” the Earth. You will need to know that to understand how the Prophets use those terms a little later.)

I am absolutely certain that some *traditionalists* who read the Bible in translation will reject my reading of this particular biblical text on the basis of *what they want to believe*, but nobody can argue against it on the basis of Hebrew syntax. It says what it says. But let’s see what some of the other Prophets tell us about the Garden of Eden. Here are three passages that shed a little more light on the subject. Tell me what *you think* is the *significance* of what they say:

*Indeed, the LORD will comfort Zion;
He will comfort all her waste places.
And her wilderness He will make like Eden,
And her desert like the garden of the LORD;
Joy and gladness will be found in her,
Thanksgiving and sound of a melody.
(Isaiah 51:3)*

*“And they will say, ‘This desolate land has become like the garden of Eden; and the waste, desolate, and ruined cities are fortified {and} inhabited.’”
(Ezekiel 36:35)*

*A fire consumes before them,
And behind them a flame burns.
The land is like the garden of Eden before them,
But a desolate wilderness behind them,
And nothing at all escapes them.
(Joel 2:3)*

What did you learn from the contrast the Prophets drew between the desolate wilderness of “the Earth” and beauty of the Garden of Eden? How about this: *The soil of the Garden of Eden has not been cursed*. The contrast alone should tell *any rational person* the Garden of Eden must not be anywhere on “the ground” that God cursed. That being the case, perhaps we should begin looking for some other clue that Moses might have left as to its location. When we do, we will find that one of Moses’ most absolutely unmistakable clues

is his description of the river that flows through the Garden of Eden:

*Then His Majesty—God—planted a garden in Eden—from antiquity—and there he placed the man that He had formed. Then His Majesty—God—caused to sprout from the ground every tree pleasant to the sight and good for food. (Now the Tree of Life was in the middle of the Garden and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, and a river was going out of Eden to water the Garden and from there it split and became four head(water)s. The name of the first is Pishon. It is the one surrounding all the land of Havilah, where there is gold. The gold of that land is good. The bdellium and the stone of onyx are there. The name of the second river is Gihon. It is the one surrounding all the land of Cush. The name of the third river is the Tigris. It is the one going east of Assyria. The fourth river is the Euphrates.)
(Genesis 2:8–14) —my interim translation*

Can you show me a river—any river—here on Earth that splits into four different rivers? No? I didn’t think so. That’s because—gravity being what it is—it doesn’t happen that way, at least here on Earth. Furthermore, it is not geographically possible for the four rivers that Moses mentions to come from the one river he mentions—if the four countries he mentions are understood as being the countries with those same names here on Earth. So I’ll let you decide where *you think* the Garden of Eden must be. Just in case you need a little help understanding the *parabolic imagery* that Moses uses, I should probably point out what the Apostle John said about the river and the Tree of Life when he *parabolically* described the “New Jerusalem” he saw *come down from Heaven*:

*And He showed me a river of the water of life (crystal-clear!) coming from the throne of God and the Lamb. In the middle of Her street and on both sides of the river was a tree of life bearing twelve fruits, yielding His fruit each month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the Gentiles. There will no longer be any curse. The throne of God and the Lamb will be in Her, and His slaves will serve Him.
(Revelation 22:1–3) —my interim translation*

It seems to me the “Tree of Life” must still be in the Garden of Eden—exactly where God “planted” Him. But again, I could be mistaken. ■