

## **END-TIMES CHRISTIAN PROPHETS**

**(The Coming Return of Elijah)**

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### **Part – 1: What Does Elijah Mean to Us?**

#### **Introduction.**

One morning in early July, 2005, I awoke thinking about Elijah. He’s the Old Testament prophet who Jesus said was to make a second return [Mat. 17:10-13]. This return is important for every Christian in these very end times. As I took my morning walk, the Lord impressed me to write this down. Tracing Elijah through the Bible led me to Moses, with whom Elijah shared some common experiences. That led me into the New Testament to Jesus, Luke, John, and Paul. Finally, it became clear what the significance of Elijah is to today’s Christian.

In June of 2009, I had pretty well forgotten about the existence of this earlier paper. I was thinking about a lot of things that had been revealed to me in the past year. And, Elijah’s ‘Cave Episode’ came to mind. I determined to write it up in the

context of our very end-times and the signs of our times. As I got into the Bible, to get reacquainted with Elijah, I came across something that I needed further enlightening upon. So, I got on Google to look up any connections between the rhema word and the voice of Jesus. And Google took me to this present paper. So, my write-up of the cave episode turns out to be an update of the present paper. So be it.

This paper is written in three parts. Part-1 is to set down what it was that Elijah originally did and what he prophetically had in common with Moses. Part-2 then biblically details how modern-day Christian prophecy works. Finally, Part-3 identifies the very end-times Elijah and his duties and what they mean to us. It is in Part-3 that we deal with the Cave Episode.

It turns out that the very end-times Elijah is corporate, and he may be us.

### **What is the Meaning of Elijah Returning?**

The importance of Elijah to our times stems from the last two verses of the Old Testament. In [Mal. 4:5-6], that prophet set down God's word for our end-times. He said Elijah would be sent just before the coming of that great and dreadful Day of the Lord. (That's Jesus' second coming, the day "... *that shall burn as an oven*" [Mal. 4:1]. The issue of his return is the very end-times relation between fathers and sons among God's people. Malachi applies to Church 'fathers' and their relations with those who are 'young in the Lord.' In Malachi, verse 6, God says that these are 'heart' problems that Elijah is to work on. So, we can think of Elijah as a spiritual heart doctor.

Jesus said that Elijah did return in the form of John the Baptist, just before Jesus started His ministry [Mat. 17:10-13]. The Archangel Gabriel had appeared to Zechariah, the Baptist's father, telling him that the Baptist would go before Jesus in the spirit and power of Elijah [Luke 1:11-19]. The angel confirmed [Mal. 4:5-6] and added that the Baptist's task was to prepare internally and externally a people for the Lord.

The way Malachi phrased it, Elijah would return just before the coming of the great and dreadful Day of the Lord. Malachi said it's dreadful because it's the day that shall burn as an oven, incinerating the wicked and proud. Peter confirmed that description in [2 Pet. 3:10-12]. In [Mat. 17:11-12], Jesus confirmed that 'Elias' shall return yet again in the very end-times. And, this time Elijah's job is to restore all things.

The purpose of Elijah's return this time is the same as it was in Jesus' first Day. And, that is to prepare the way for Jesus' appearance. 'Elijah's' end-times task is a general restoration (*apokathistemi*). That word means to restore something ... in the sense of organization or health. Linguistically, the Greek is a combination of three words, which together mean to raise up something that was previously set down or established.

When we put together what Jesus and the angel both said, we can conclude that 'Elijah's' very end-times' return is to restore a Christian people. And, one of the senses of this restoration is the health of the organization.

### **A Note About Language.**

In searching for meaning in the Bible, language is very important. We read the Bible in English. Although Shakespeare and Churchill could do a lot with spoken

English, written English is not a very precise or structured language. German is better for precisely conveying ideas. Greek is even better than German. I think that's why God chose Greek as the language of the New Testament. I also think that's why God chose Alexander the Great to have the Old Testament translated into Greek in about 200 B.C. God has a record of using heads of empire as His servants, even when they were not believers [2 Chr. 36:22]. Having both Testaments in the same highly structured language is invaluable in finding Christian meaning common to both. That is why I resort to the Greek, so often.

### **A Conjecture About 'Elijah's' Very End-Times Appearance.**

There is a biblical teaching, first put forth by the Houston pastor, Meeks, in his 1994 book, The Last Great Revival<sup>1</sup>, that Jesus shall spiritually 'appear' before His physical second coming. This shall be a spiritual appearance in His corporate physical body, known as the Body of Christ, which is an alternate biblical name for the corporate Church [1 Cor. 12:27]. The biblical key to this interpretation is that Jesus appears (*phaneroo*), before His second coming (*parousia*) [1 John 2:28]. Elijah's task is to restore the Body of Christ in which Jesus shall spiritually appear. The question is, are we talking about one individual prophet or a corporate manifestation of 'Elijah' in the Church? This was the extent of understanding I had about this in 2005.

### **What's Been Revealed to Me Since I Wrote This Paper in 2005.**

In 2008, I completed interpreting some scriptures given to a small home-group, and later to this writer, back in 1997-2001. Those latter scriptures led to the writing of the second volume on God's Earthly Plan for the Very End-Times. What they revealed is that the restoration of the earthly physical Church shall be to return it to essentially its First Century form. And, that return shall be performed just like the setting up of the original Church. This will restore prophecy, first, and the apostolic, second. And, many of the prophets shall become end-times apostles. The biblical type for this end-times activity is the original New Testament prophets and apostles, which were corporate bodies. But, an Old Testament type exists, which is the individual Elijah and Elisha.

So, the updating of the present paper is to incorporate this later understanding into it.

### **What the Old-Testament Elijah Did.**

The original Elijah's task was to fight idol worship and false prophecy in the Church (ancient Israel was the first 'Church' – [Acts 7:38]). The false prophets maintained an entire system of idol worship among God's people. After Elijah's initial attack on the false prophets, their sponsor, Jezebel, who manipulated the Church governance, threatened his life. So, he fled all the way to a cave on God's mountain, biblically referred to as both Mt. Sinai and Mt. Horeb (two names for the same mountain [1 Kings 19]).

At the mountain, Elijah had a set of puzzling experiences. First, the *rhema* word of God came to Elijah, asking him what he was doing there. Elijah gave a one-sentence explanation of his predicament. Then God instructed him to go out of the cave, and

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<sup>1</sup> The Last Great Revival, by Steve Meeks, Calvary Publ., Houston, TX, ISBN 0-9630425-1-3, <http://www.calvaryhouston.com/BookStore.htm>

observe as the Lord passed by him. There was a strong wind, an earthquake, and a fire, but the Lord was not in them. Then a still small phonetic voice came to Elijah.

In this phonetic voice, God then asked Elijah the exact same question. Again, Elijah gave the exact same one-sentence answer. Immediately, God gave Elijah a three-fold commission to go back through Syria to Israel and to anoint two kings and another prophet, Elisha. God's last word in this episode was that Elijah should not be alone in this endeavor, as there should remain 7,000 men who had not participated in the idol worship. In other words, this should be a corporate enterprise.

An attention-getter is the shift in God's manner of communication with Elijah during this cave episode. First, occurred the *rhema* word (individual utterance), then the *phonetic* voice. And, the shift followed a demonstration of God's power. The question and answer were repeated, exactly the same. It would seem that God wants to call attention to this shift or transition in manner of communicating with his servant, the prophet.

## **Part-2: What Does a New-Testament Prophet Do?**

### **The Parallel Between Moses and Elijah.**

Much earlier, Moses also communicated with God at Mount Horeb. And it was done, 'face-to-face,' either up on the mountain (the Ten Commandments) or down in the Tabernacle of Moses. There was also a private 'passing by in glory,' of God, while Moses was sheltered in a cleft of the rock. This was during the period following the 'golden calf' episode, when God's people entered into idolatry. The Ten Commandments were engraved by God, broken by Moses in anger over the idolatry, and re-engraved by God. This was the time when God commanded the Church to depart Mount Sinai (Horeb), and commence the attack to take the Promised Land from the idolatrous unbelievers who held it [Ex. 32-34].

Moses would commission Joshua to carry the attack into the Promised Land. Moses, himself, would die without seeing the job finished.

Similarly, Elijah would commission Elisha to carry on the attack on idolatry and the manipulator of Church governance. Elijah, himself, would be taken up to heaven without seeing the job finished.

### **The Associations Common to Moses, Elijah, and Jesus.**

When one looks at the sets of events which Moses and Elijah have in common, a third association shows up. And, that is Jesus, meeting with Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration. Again, there is a mountain, God's presence, and conversation. In fact, for all three, there are explicit common references involving "name", "face," "God's presence," "conversation," and "mountain." And, for all three associations, the common context is "God's covenant," and "idolatry." Like Moses and Elijah, Jesus went to heaven without seeing idolatry defeated amongst God's people.

There is yet another commonality between the three. This is that each was a part of a 'one-two' succession, to implement God's specific tactical commands. There was the Moses-Joshua sequence in taking the Promised Land away from the idolatrous enemy that occupied it. There was the Elijah-Elisha sequence to fight idolatry in the ancient Israelite 'Church.'

Moses and Elijah each was the first in a 'one-two' succession. Jesus was both first and last, in three successions. He played the Elisha role to John the Baptist's Elijah. Jesus then started the Christian Church, and handed over the fight against idolatry to it, which was His corporate Body. And, finally, in the very end-times it will be Jesus, appearing in His corporate Body of Christ, following the return of 'Elijah.'

Jesus, in His corporate appearance, shall play the role of Elisha, who was an Old-Testament type for Jesus. That is, the corporate Body of Christ of the very end-times shall destroy that element, typed by Jezebel, that manipulates the governance of the Church. This will be the final fight against idolatry. We have only to look into the Book of Revelation to see that this ultimately becomes the fight against the Antichrist and his False Prophet, who have made religious idolatry and false worship a matter of life and death [Rev. 13].

As for God's people being raptured before idolatry is defeated, it only takes three scriptures to dismiss that idea. (The word, "*rapture*," doesn't occur in scripture. Jesus called it a "*gathering together*.") In [Rev. 8:6-12], John shows that the major destruction of the Great Tribulation occurs before the darkening of Sun and Moon (Fourth Trumpet). In [Mat. 24:29-31], Jesus said the same, that the darkening of Sun and Moon is immediately after the tribulation and before the trumpet signaling the Rapture. And, in [1 Cor. 15:52], Paul said that the Rapture is at the final Trumpet. We count seven Trumpet Judgments in Revelation. It is at the seventh that the mystery of God is concluded, in just the way He has previously declared to His servants the prophets [Rev. 10:7].

### **It's All About Communication.**

With this set of factual details from the Bible, we now formulate the basic question, to which we seek the answer.

*What does it mean to us that Elijah shall appear corporately in the very end-times Body of Christ, ?*

To answer this question requires what the Germans call a *gestalt*, which is seeing from its parts a pattern or structure for the whole. The biblical Greek word is *syneidesis*, which literally means "*seeing things together*." It's like what a Flight Controller does, sitting at his radar scope. He puts together the whole picture. And, when he comes on shift it takes him twenty minutes of 'seeing' before he can get the picture and relieve his predecessor at the scope.

The word, "*syn*" means "*together*," while "*eido*" is the verb, "*to see*." This is one of several Greek Bible words translated as *know* or *understand*, or *consider*. Those English words just don't carry the full meaning of "*syneidesis*," so I will use it, instead of the English.

Paul used this word in [1 Cor. 4:4], when he said, "*For I know nothing by myself, ...*" What he meant was that he got his *syneidesis* from Jesus. That is, Jesus was Paul's source of 'seeing things together.' Another name for that is revelation. That's why Paul also said that he got his entire gospel by revelation from Jesus [Gal. 1:12].

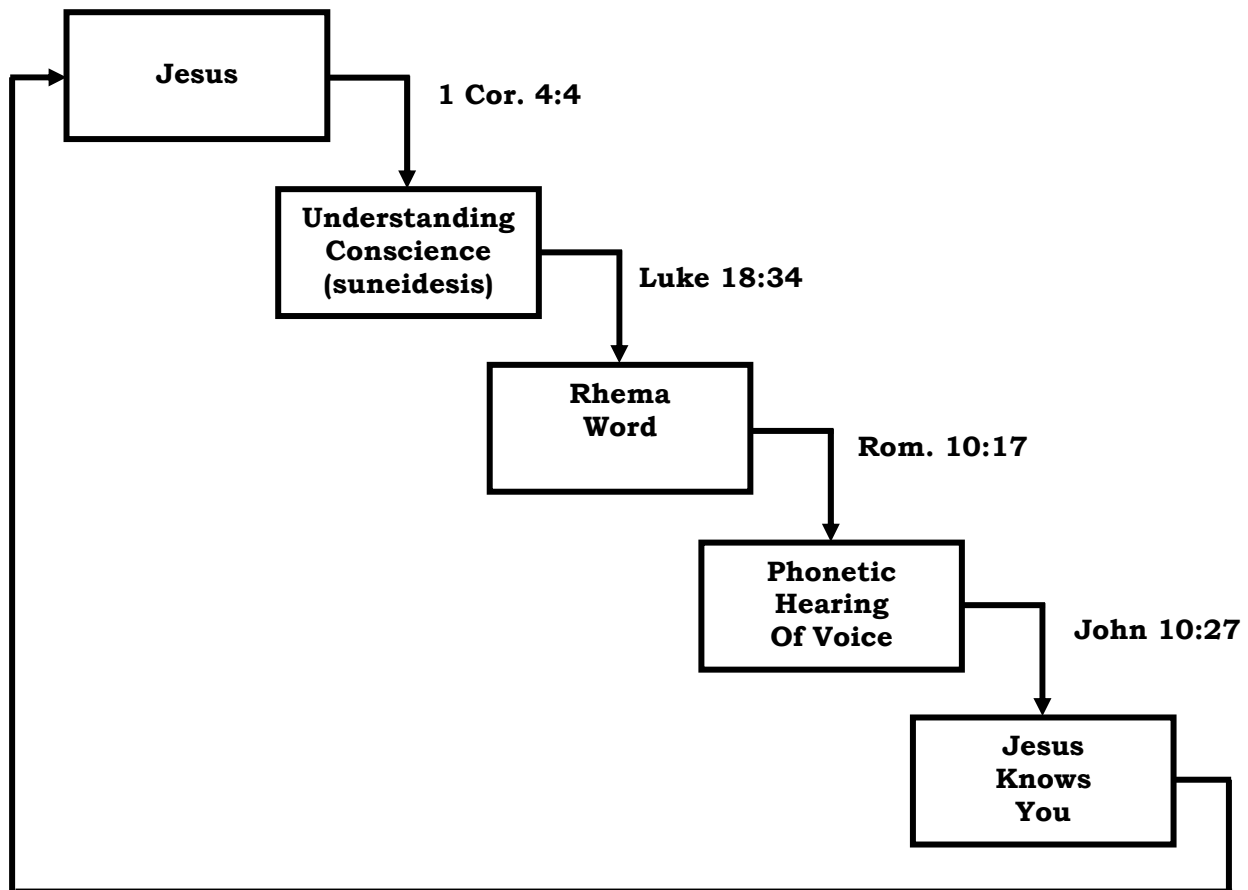
A common feature of both Moses and Elijah at Mt. Horeb was the manner in which God communicated with them. God talked to Moses as to a friend, telling him "*I know you by name*" [Ex. 33:17]. And, in [1 Ki. 19], God spoke to Elijah by name, first

by *rhema* word and then by a *phonetic* voice. Jesus communicates with individual Christians the same way, as recorded in the New Testament, which we now examine.

Luke says that without *syneidesis* understanding, the *rhema* word is kept secret from the hearer [Luke 18:34]. [Rom. 10:17] is a famous verse, relating *rhema* word and hearing. In the King James Version it is, "*Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God.*" The literal translation from the Greek is "*Faith is from hearing and the hearing by way of a rhema word of God.*" What this says is that faith comes from hearing, and the hearing comes by way of a *rhema* word of God. That means that *rhema* comes first, then hearing. And, that's exactly what we see in Elijah's cave episode. Add this to [Luke 18:34] and you get that *syneidesis* enables the *rhema* word to be revealed via phonetic hearing.

We started out talking about Christian prophets. But, in [John 10:27], for all His sheep, Jesus combined hearing and being known by Him in the same sentence, saying, "*My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.*" The "*hear*" is "*akous*," from which we get the English "*acoustic*," while the "*voice*" is "*phone*," from which we get "*phonetic*." Jesus, too, knows those to whom He speaks in a phonetic voice. So, are all of Jesus' sheep prophets? I think it's a matter of [Rom. 12:6-8] gifting. But, that's another story, too long to work in, here.

We can now put together the scriptural process relating a Christian prophet's hearing the *rhema* word and its revelation via the phonetic voice. In engineering fashion, I've made this into a diagram, as Figure 1. This process flow is the same as with Elijah in the cave. The process is closed, in that it commences and ends with Jesus, who describes Himself as "First and Last" [Rev. 22:13]. How it starts is a mystery, at least to me.



**Figure 1. Relating the Rhema Word and Phonetic Hearing.**

What we have is Jesus providing the *syneidesis* understanding through the conscience (same Greek word - *syneidesis*). Then, the rhema word is not hidden from the recipient. It follows that the rhema word generates the hearing needed for the phonetic voice. Those who then hear Him are known by Jesus. And the logical flow re-enters at the first step. What I found in the Bible about this is given at the end of this letter in a more detailed Appendix.

### **Part-3: The Very-End-Times Prophet**

#### **The End-Times Cave Episode.**

What occurred to me early on the morning I decided to write this (the first time) is the following. If Jesus' very end-times spiritual appearance in the Church is corporate, can it be that His predecessor who plays the role of Elijah may also be corporate. And, I sought events that are now happening that might confirm that conjecture. What came to mind was the 'cave episode.'

In [Mat. 24:15-16] Jesus warned the very end-times Church to flee when they " ... see the abomination that causes desolation operating in the sanctuary." See also

[Dan. 12:11]. That abomination is idolatry. The seeing' can be either literal or figurative, in my understanding.

There are now many mature Christians who have fled the physical churches, having seen the idolatry therein. These believers are figuratively having a 'cave episode,' if you will. They are isolated from the organized churches, and they have a feeling that they are all alone in their isolation. What if God has a figurative '7,000' of the same? What if they are the makings of a corporate Elijah, yet to be manifested? What has God instructed them to do, when they depart from the cave? This was the state of my understanding in 2005.

### **Characterizing the 'Cave People' – A 2009 Update.**

A book came out in 2005 that attempts to characterize the event I referred to above, of so many Americans leaving the churches. It's by George Barna<sup>1</sup>, the premier statistician of American Christianity. A synopsis of his book is available upon request in one of my associated writings<sup>2</sup>. Barna states that these people are not losing their faith, but their churches. They are seeking a more fulfilling Christian experience. They are seeking to be the Church, rather than just going to church. Barna equates this Christian move with the first two Great Awakenings of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries. He predicts that by 2025, these people will be one third of the American population and one one-hundredth of the world population. That, of course, is a remnant of a remnant, the size biblically prophesied for the very end-times restorational move.

A question now occurs to me about whether this 'revolutionary' group will be the source of the activity whereby the corporate 'Elijah' restores the Church for the corporate appearance of Jesus in the Body of Christ for very end-times ministry. And, that would be the restored ministry that carries the Church into and through most of the Great Tribulation. I suspect that the answer may be, "Yes".

### **The Duties of the Very-End-Times Corporate 'Elijah.'**

Before the cave, Elijah had already done spiritual battle with the false prophets, supporting the idolatry. But, then he went into hiding, in response to the Jezebel element of the Church that manipulated its leadership (governance). Only after the private showing of God's power to Elijah, and the change in communication method, did the prophet come out of the cave, with his commission to anoint new governance and his follow-on prophet, the second in the 'one-two' sequence.

Elijah met Hazael, but it's not clear that he anointed him as king, since Hazael killed the king and took his place immediately after meeting Elijah. What actually happened was that Elijah anointed Elisha first, and Elisha eventually had another prophet anoint Jehu as king. Elisha was the one who would actually do away with the Jezebel element in the Church. Elijah would be taken up to heaven before that happened.

What is today's symbolism of Elijah's anointing new governance? This is not the same as anointing for healing. In the Old Testament it was a way to make an appointment, or set one in a seat of authority, at God's direction, using anointing oil. It was only done by prophets. Today, there is a similar, secular use of the word, "anoint," which means to promote. Christian 'anointing' is placing someone into a seat of authority. Paul said that he was anointed that way, by God [2 Cor. 1:21].



It appears that after the very end-times cave episode a corporate Elijah's immediate task is to 'anoint' his follow-on corporate prophet. In the very end-times, that follow-on will be a corporate 'Elisha.' Because Elisha is a type for Jesus, the follow-on prophet will be the corporate Jesus, appearing in His mature, overcoming Church. That is, the corporate prophet who will remove the Jezebel element will be the mature, overcoming Body of Christ, the follow-on to 'Elijah,' the forerunner.

### **Conclusion.**

So, why has the Lord had me write this down?

I suppose it's because it's soon to become important in the Church. I'm convinced that the Lord is like one dealing out playing cards. He deals them one at a time, face down. Then, one by one, He turns them up. Only at the end, does one see the full hand. I think this writing is like another card, being turned up, on the way to revealing the full hand.

The full hand will be revealed before the rapture. That is, the mystery of God will be concluded at the Seventh Trumpet, which is the Rapture. According to Jesus, there is no 'easy out' for Christians. There is no evading the Church's full and complete duty before the Rapture. The return of Elijah must be accomplished. It's in The Bible.

Elijah's return is to prepare the very end-time overcoming mature Church, the Body of Christ in the Day of the Lord. This preparational task is second in importance only to the manifestation of that prepared Body. So, we Christians who are waiting for it and hope to see it, must know how to recognize 'Elijah.' Because, 'Elijah' may be us. I suppose that's why the Lord had me write this down.

And, in the 2009 Update, I'm now more sure this is the case.

## APPENDIX

### The Rhema (ρημά) Word.

In [1 Ki. 19:9], the cave episode starts when "... *the word of the Lord came to him ..*" Then, we have the first question and answer session between the Lord and Elijah. Next comes the 'passing by' of the Lord, followed by the phonetic voice. Then, the exact same question and answer session is repeated. So, the transition we are looking at is in the method of communication, from "word of the Lord" to phonetic voice. The "*word*" that first came to Elijah is the Greek "*rhema*" or Hebrew "*dabar*." What we want to know is how that differs from a phonetic voice. That is, we've got to find out what rhema means. Strong's dictionary says it's an utterance.

The Hebrew word for "*Lord*" is "*Yahweh*," which is the way God described himself to the Israelites [Ex. 20:2]. That is not His name, but his title. He said His name is "*I AM*," [Ex. 3:14]. It's "*hayah*" in Hebrew and "*On* (ὄν) in Greek. "*Hayah*" means "*exist*," while "*On*" means "*Being*."

In the Old Testament the "*word*" in "*word of the Lord*" is the Greek rhema (ρημά), which is one of two different Greek words for "*word*." The other is "*logos*." Hebrew also has two words for "*word*," being "*dabar*" and "*imrah*," but they do not consistently correspond to the two Greek words, one-to-one.

In the New Testament, the Greek "*logos*" always describes the written Word of God. Strong's dictionary says it means something said, including the thought. The Bible, being a record of what has been said, including the thoughts, is logos. [John 10:35] actually refers to the logos word of God as scripture.

What we want to do, now, is discover what rhema describes. [Luke 3:2] says that the rhema word of God came to John the Baptist, who was a prophet. And we know from the New Testament some of the things rhema does. [Mat. 4:4] says that Christians are to live by it. [Luke 1:37] says no rhema word shall be impossible. [John 3:34] says that speaking such words requires the Holy Spirit. [John 6:63] says that the rhema words Jesus speaks are spirit. [John 15:7] says that Jesus' rhema words remaining in the Christian are the key to effective prayer. [Eph. 5:26] says that the Church gets sanctified (cleansed) by the washing of the water (Holy Spirit) that's in the rhema word. But, none of these scriptures describe how one gets the rhema word of the Lord. Apparently in New Testament times, it was well known to the Hebrews and needed no description.

So, let's go to the Greek Old Testament, the Septuagint. There, we can look up rhema and see if we can find a description of what it is. In particular, let's look up the first time in the Bible that rhema is recorded.

The first recorded use of the phrase was when the rhema word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, in [Gen. 15:1]. [2 Sam. 7:4,17] shows that the rhema word of the Lord came in a vision at night to the prophet, Nathan. The first rhema word of the Lord to Abram was instruction. The second, to Nathan, was an instructional prophecy, to be passed on to King David in the form of a "*Thus sayeth the Lord ...*" [Zec. 1:1] and [Mal. 1:1] show that these rhema words of the Lord carry something, described there as "burden." That is, they are weighty with whatever they are carrying.

Many of the Old Testament prophets spoke the rhema word of the Lord as they got it. That is, they didn't write it down and carry it off to be given. They spoke it just as it came to them. This is what charismatics mean by "speaking in the Spirit." It's what I describe as being a "bent pipe."

Everyone in the Old Testament who got a rhema word of the Lord was a prophet. Therefore, we can turn that fact around and say that rhema words of the Lord are what prophets get. And much of the time these are to be passed on to individuals or to the Church. This was true with both the Israelites and with the Christians.

[1 Sam. 3:7-15, 21] relates Samuel's call to be a prophet. It says that " ... *Samuel did not yet know the Lord, neither was the word of the Lord yet revealed unto him.*" " ... *And the Lord appeared again in Shiloh: for the Lord revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the Lord.*"

What these verses tell us is that Samuel did not yet know the Lord, before the rhema word of the Lord was revealed to him. And, the word, "revealed" is "*apokalupto*," which literally means "*taking the lid off*." That's the same word Paul used, describing how he got his whole gospel from Jesus by revelation, after Jesus had gone to heaven [Gal. 1:12].

So, getting the rhema word of the Lord is revelational, and may be associated with a vision or with speaking the rhema word as it comes. It is not the same as a verbal conversation between friends.

## REFERENCES

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<sup>1</sup> Revolution, by George Barna, Tyndale House Publishers, 2005, hardback, ISBN-13: 978-1-4143-0758-9, 144 pp.

<sup>2</sup> Interpreting The Signs of Our Times – Version 1, by John Painter, June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2009, 16 pp.