

rected, regardless of who had offered the interpretation. Loyalty to God and to his inspired Word was the issue here to be met. So, as an illustration of the loyalty required, even if a fleshly son should offer a wrong interpretation of divine prophecy and should persist in it, like a false prophet, then his own fleshly parents in their loyalty to God would have nothing further to do with him on a religious basis. Christian parents could not do as under the Mosaic Law covenant, namely, have him put to death; but they could pronounce him spiritually dead to themselves in spite of their parenthood of him physically. In this way, figuratively speaking, they "must pierce him through because of his prophesying." (Zechariah 13:3; compare Deuteronomy 13:1-5.) With their full consent, such a false prophet would be expelled, disfellowshipped, from the Christian congregation. By such loyalty on the part of all members of the restored remnant, the "prophet" of falsehood would be made to pass out of their "land."

<sup>21</sup> Yes, too, the "spirit of uncleanness" would thus be made to pass out of their spiritual "land." If that spirit were an inspired expression of uncleanness by a would-be prophet or was any tendency, trend, or inclination to uncleanness, it would be disapproved and resisted by the loyal ones. As a consequence any uncleanness as to religious teaching or as to moral behavior would be forced to pass out, under the driving force of God's holy spirit. The God-given spiritual estate must be maintained as a "land" where clean, Scriptural living is carried on. Persons spiritually and morally unclean must be disfellowshipped therefrom.—2 Corinthians 6:14 to 7:1; compare Deuteronomy 13:6-18.

### RELIGIOUS HYPOCRISY EXPOSED

<sup>22</sup> Jehovah, the God of the true prophets, will put all false prophets to shame either by not fulfilling the false prediction of such self-assuming prophets or by having

21. How, too, was the "spirit of uncleanness" made to pass out of their spiritual "land"?

22, 23. (a) How does Jehovah put the false prophets to shame? (b) How does Jehovah describe the false prophets trying to hide their reason for feeling shame?

His own prophecies fulfilled in a way opposite to that predicted by the false prophets. False prophets will try to hide their reason for feeling shame by denying who they really are. They will try to avoid being killed or being pronounced spiritually dead by Jehovah's loyal worshippers. He foretold this by having his true prophet Zechariah continue on to say:

<sup>23</sup> "And it must occur in that day that the prophets will become ashamed, each one of his vision when he prophesies; and they will not wear an official garment of hair for the purpose of deceiving. And he will certainly say, 'I am no prophet. I am a man cultivating the soil, because an earthling man himself acquired me from my youth on.' And one must say to him, 'What are these wounds on your person between your hands?' And he will have to say, 'Those with which I was struck in the house of my intense lovers.'"—Zechariah 13:4-6, NW; JB; NE; NAB; contrast Amos 7:14-17.

<sup>24</sup> Thus Jehovah foretold that his people, in their "land" of restoration, would be so well instructed with his Word and would be so loyal to Him and His true prophecies that they would refuse to be friends and intense lovers of any false prophet. If they did not kill him, then they would discipline him and strike him so hard in their indignation that visible wounds and scars would result. Such marks on his person, yes, on his breast which would be partly exposed, would betray his identity in spite of the fact that he had discarded official garments that he had assumed to wear as a *bona fide* prophet of Jehovah God. From whom had he got such scar-producing wounds? From his intense lovers, whether these were his own fleshly parents or his intimate associates. However, their intense loyalty to Jehovah as the God of true prophecy would be stronger than their till-then intense love for a deceptive prophet. They would place love of God and his inspired Word above personal friendships with fleshly relatives or associates. Such a course would cause "the prophets

24. The scar-producing wounds on the deceptive prophet were admitted by him to be inflicted by whom, and what would this indicate as to loyalty to God in comparison with attachment to fleshly loved ones?