

Follow Me Ministries The Arena of Testimony <http://follow-me-ministries.org/archives/2012>

3. The Arena of Testimony

Imagine what would go through your mind if an officer of the law served you with a summons ordering you to appear as a witness in a widely-publicized, high stakes, court trial. Suddenly your life would be invaded by a hard legal reality that you would not be able to escape. No matter how you reacted, your life would be deeply affected. If you obey the summons and appear in court, there will be important consequences. If you disobey the summons, the law will come after you and punish you; and that too will bring important consequences for your life.

After you read the summons you may begin to worry about the grueling cross-examination to which the lawyers for the opposition will subject you. They'll tax their legal minds and draw from a vast treasury of court experience and use the impressive array of resources they have at their disposal, against you and do everything they can to undermine your reputation, credibility and testimony – to win their case. It is a fearful prospect. Nevertheless, you cannot escape it.

If you know that the risen Lord has said to you, "*Follow Me*", and you obey Him, you will face similar pressures. If you obey, the Lord will lead you into the biggest courtroom of all – the world-wide court venue we might call: '*The Arena of Testimony*' (See Matthew 10). And if you refuse to obey, there will be consequences for that too (Matthew 7:24-27).

So who is on trial in this case? And what are the charges? Who is the plaintiff; and who is on the prosecution's team? Who will be on the defense team facing and opposing the prosecution?

A View of God You May Have Never Seen...

Strange as it may seem, the living God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Israel) is the one that is on trial. And stranger still, it is His idea and desire for this to happen! God initiated this court trial scenario! And He sent His living Word to summon you into His service. If you follow His Word, then, the Word, on His Father's orders, will take you with Him into this battle and call you to be a witness for the defense!

God knows that the sooner this trial is finished, the sooner everything will be brought into the glaring spotlight of Truth. Then Satan and his lies will be fully exposed and discredited in the minds and hearts of His entire Creation. The more the Truth is known, the more those who labor under the bondage of Satan's lies can be set free. Therefore, no one wants His Truth and Satan's lies to square off in The Arena more than God does. He is the Creator and Protector of all Reality and Truth and as far as He is concerned, this battle can't be fought soon enough!

God's living and written Word and Holy Spirit will be His 'Defense Team.' If you allow God to separate you from the world system that Satan dominates and you obey the call to serve His beloved Son as a disciple, Satan will cross-examine you.

There is no escape from this. You will face consequences no matter what you choose to do. If you refuse to be the Lord's disciple, by that fact, you will be choosing to serve as a witness for

Satan's prosecution! For as Yeshua, the Word of God has said, *"He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me scatters."* (Matthew 12:30)

The reason why the disciples must face this ordeal is because all of Creation is caught up in the deadly war that never ceases to rage between the Kingdom of Heaven and the Powers of Darkness. The combat of this war puts disciples to the test. The enemy attacks us and we are forced to endure the pressures he exerts simply because we chose to serve God, obey His Word and live as citizens of His Heavenly Kingdom.

God intends to speak through the disciples of His living Word

God, through His living Word and His Holy Spirit, will speak on His own behalf. But since His Word and Spirit live and operate within disciples, your life and daily experiences will become a testimony to the relationship you claim to have with God. As God's Word and Spirit live and work within you, God will speak through the way you allow His Word to operate within your heart amid the issues, situations, relationships and experiences of your daily life! The question is: will you allow God to live, operate and speak for Himself from within your flesh? Or, like God's enemies, will you reject His Word and live an independent life of your own to serve your own self-serving desires and purposes?

"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I, who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me." (Galatians 2:20)

"So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure." (Philippians 2:12-13)

Your Master Yeshua, the Word of God, intends to train and equip you to be living human proof that His Father's claims and promises are true. That automatically makes you a target for the prosecution. But remember: God Himself assigned them to do what they can to accuse His Word and discredit His disciples in The Arena of Testimony. And when they do, God intends to deal with them through you. It is His battle, not yours (2 Chronicles 20:1-30).

After Satan and his Powers of Darkness first rebelled against their Creator, God made the physical universe. And He began to use Satan's rebellion to fulfill His own perfect plan and purposes. Since they were in rebellion anyway, He gave them the task of doing whatever they can to attack His integrity and discredit and destroy His credibility and authority over Creation. Through the faithful obedience of His people, God can expose and discredit their lies and validate His eternal Word and glorify His Name. In so doing, God is turning their rebellion and attacks back against them.

That's why Satan's forces will attack you and your testimony. Many people in every generation choose to side with Satan against God. You live in a world filled with such people. But regardless of which side you choose to stand with, the stakes are eternal Life or eternal Death. The entire universe is the courtroom. So no matter where on Earth you are, every activity you engage in becomes, in one way or another, part of the trial proceedings.

It's not your fight...it is the Lord's.

God promised to fill each of us with the indwelling presence of His Holy Spirit so we can be equipped to fulfill our responsibilities to our God (2 Kings 6:8-17; Mark 16:9-20; Acts 1:6-8; 2-5). The Holy Spirit is given to abide and interact with you and give you everything you need in order to give testimony worthy of God. He transmits the eternal Life, nature, character, disposition and perfect humanity of Yeshua into you. So we need to be trained to embrace our indwelling Master and defer to His Resurrection Life which abides and operates from within us. When we do, He can obey His Father's commands and be to us everything we need.

“Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves. But beware of men, for they will hand you over to the courts and scourge you in their synagogues; and you will even be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. But when they hand you over, do not worry about how or what you are to say; for it will be given you in that hour what you are to say. For it is not you who speak; but it is the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you. (Matthew 10:16-22)

“Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved... Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.”” (Matthew 10:32-33)

So we must learn to abide and interact with our Master. We must defer to Him at all times and allow Him to be our Life. God sends Him to be like a Vine to us and we must serve as His fully connected, living, fruit bearing branches. When we abide, His Life flows into us and does its work through us. This is why He says to His disciples:

“I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see. Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me. He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.” (Revelation 3:18-21)

God warns those who refuse to abide in His Truth and side with Satan, that they will share the eternal desolation that awaits all of God's enemies. He warns that His demonic accusers have no chance of winning (Revelation 20-21). So since Satan is the Father of Lies, the trial will bring out the Truth and Satan will be exposed and confounded. And God will hold anyone who rejects His Word and embraces Satan's cause, accountable and liable for all the damage that their cooperation with Satan will do to His Name and His Creation.

“He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son. But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and

sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.” (Revelation 21:7-8)

Beware of false gods and false gospels

Humans who ignore or reject what God reveals about Himself understand human life and its purpose in various false, man-devised ways (Psalm 14:1-3; Matthew 15:1-3; Romans 1:18-23). So God warns us that our fate will depend on who we choose to believe and obey. If God is telling the Truth through His Scriptures and we ignore or reject Him, we will share the fate of His rebellious demonic enemies:

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son (living Word) of God. This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.” (John 3:16-21)

People who believe Satan’s accusations and false promises oppose God and live independently of Him, just as Satan does. They believe Satan’s false claims that men can be independent of God, do as they please, and get away with it:

Now the serpent...said to the woman, “Indeed, has God said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden’?” The woman said to the serpent, “From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat from it or touch it or you will die.’”

The serpent said to the woman, “You surely will not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil!” (Genesis 3:1-5)

So as this court trial proceeds, it progressively reveals who is telling the Truth and who is lying and what is real and what is false. This tension underlies everything that is in the Bible. Every portion of Scripture involves this deadly conflict between God’s Light and the satanic Darkness that contend with each other beneath the surface of everything that is happening (Genesis 1:1-3).

Most humans choose to remain ignorant of this conflict. But disciples must not allow Satan to deceive and lull them to sleep. This war will not go away. Even if you don’t want to be bothered with it...you are part of it and you serve the purpose of one side or the other.

God always separates what is His from what is not His.

Whatever we do in our lives is part of our testimony. Our actions, reactions and interactions either proclaim that God is our God and His Word is our Lord, or they testify that Satan tells the truth and his anti-God accusations are our ultimate source of truth and direction. That is why

God is always separating what belongs to Him, from what does not (Genesis 4:2-5; 12:1-3; Exodus 3:7-10) He then teaches and trains His own, so that through them He can testify to and rescue and save those humans that continue to be deceived and dominated by Satan:

“Now the LORD said to Abram, ‘Go forth from your country, and from your relatives and from your father’s house, to the land which I will show you; and I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing; and I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.’” (Genesis 12:1-3)

The Book of Job is an example of the court battle that is always taking place. You might compare it to an opera, made up of various acts and scenes. The book uses one man – Job – to represent all the rest of us. It opens with Act 1, Scene 1: God and His angels (including Satan) are interacting in the heavens. And Job is on Earth minding his own business. He does not know that God and Satan are disputing the nature and validity of Job’s relationship with God.

“Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. The LORD said to Satan, ‘From where do you come?’ Then Satan answered the LORD and said, ‘From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it.’ The LORD said to Satan, ‘Have you considered (cross examined) My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil.’

“Then Satan answered the LORD, ‘Does Job fear God for nothing (for free)? Have You not made a hedge about him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But put forth Your hand now and touch all that he has; he will surely curse You to Your face.’ Then the LORD said to Satan, ‘Behold, all that he has is in your power, only do not put forth your hand on him.’ So Satan departed from the presence of the LORD.” (Job 1:6-12)

Satan is implying many things. He infers that God lies to humans and places unfair expectations upon them. He denies God’s infinite goodness and eternally perfect nature and standards. He denies that God selflessly loves humans and that His provision and protection for them is all-sufficient to meet their needs. And he accuses Job of being a play-for-pay lackey that is incapable of a true love of God. He denies Job’s claim to believe obey and trust God just because He is God. He insists that Job, like all the rest of us, operates the way prostitutes and swindlers do. We interact with God for what we can get out of Him. He denies that we are capable of living, trusting and obeying God for His own sake, just because He is God. He says we only ‘love’ and ‘serve’ Him when He pays us to do it and that as long as we get what we want out of God, we ‘love’ Him. But if He stops giving us what we’re after, he asserts that we will turn against God and curse Him to His face! And despite Job’s ignorance of what is happening, God places so much trust in him, that He names him as one of His defense witnesses and allows Satan to summon him to testify and undergo a brutal cross-examination.

As the next scene opens, Job’s fiery cross-examination begins. Although he knows nothing of what happened between God and Satan, the Lord is entrusting His reputation to the care of His

friend, Job. So Satan begins to cross-examine him. He does his utmost to find ‘holes’ and imperfections in Job’s service to God’s eternal Word. He attacks his trust in God and tries to destroy his obedience and resolve to remain faithful. He does as much as God allows. But through it all, just like countless numbers of martyrs have done throughout the ages, Job remains steadfast and true to God and proves His endless faithfulness to God. Thus Job gave his testimony to his Covenant Lord:

“Why should I take my flesh in my teeth and put my life in my hands? Though He slay me, I will hope in Him. Nevertheless I will argue my ways before Him. This also will be my salvation, for a godless man may not come before His presence.” (Job 13:14-16)

The more you realize that this court drama is always in session and that everyone and everything is involved, the better you’ll understand what the Apostle Paul wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit:

“To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things; so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the (satanic) rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him.” (Ephesians 3:8-12)

Do you see what the Holy Spirit is revealing? God created the entire physical universe to reveal His perfect wisdom to His demonic accusers and to expose and confound them before all of Creation. He will defend and ultimately vindicate His Perfect Nature and absolute Truth and Authoritative Word through His human image and likeness, the faithful believers and disciples of His Word!

Why Train Disciples?

Disciples need to be trained to remain focused and rooted in God and to know Him so well that they can maintain airtight faith in Him and obey Him even while they undergo demonic cross-examinations. If we consent to this, the Holy Spirit will equip us to embody the trust, faith, love and obedience that our Lord Yeshua gives to His Father. From within us, Yeshua will testify to the honor and praise of His Father. And He will be our endurance, faithfulness, love and obedience to God throughout every second of our lives. That’s why He leads us into ‘*The Arena of Testimony*’. The testimony He will give through us is not primarily for the benefit of men. It will benefit them, but it goes far beyond that. He testifies to our Heavenly Father Himself. And by God’s Authority and Mercy, we can be included in the Lord’s acknowledgement of His Father’s eternal Glory – before His demonic enemies.

Other men may be watching, or they may be absent. But it doesn’t matter. What matters is that God’s faithful angelic hosts as well as the wicked powers of Darkness are always watching. God testifies before them on His own behalf...through us.

Yeshua is the Chief Witness for the defense

Yeshua, God's eternal Word, is the chief Witness for His Father's defense. As already noted, He has been testifying since the dawn of Creation, when His Father sent Him to be Light for the physical universe He was sent to create and to separate that Light from the demon-induced Darkness. He was testifying when He revealed Himself to Adam, Eve, Cain, Abel, Noah, Abraham and Abraham's descendants, Israel as He communicated His Father's Truth and Reality to them. He did the same thing when He took on human nature and appeared on Earth as Rabbi Yeshua (Jesus) of Nazareth. God always speaks for Himself through His living Word and His Spirit. But now, the living Word that was made flesh in Rabbi Yeshua continues to be made flesh through the Holy Spirit in each one of His true disciples. So He continually testifies for His Father in the presence of Heaven...in full view of God's demonic enemies.

Each moment Yeshua lived on Earth He gave perfect, unassailable testimony (Isaiah 55:6-11; Matthew 4:1-11; 26:38-40; John 5:19, 30). He endured the most intense demonic scrutiny and violent cross-examination possible. He did it as our Representative and Substitute. Because He so identified with us, He can serve as our Covenant Representative. Whatever He did, it was done in our name. That means that when He did what He did, even though it took place before our birth, we did it too; not in ourselves, but in Him. And as long as we remain His disciples, God imputes the credit and reward for what His Son is and does as our Representative, to us.

But God must do more than *impute* His Son's Righteousness to us; He must also *impart* it into us, through His Holy Spirit. That supernatural Righteousness must be seen operating from within us, in our practical, everyday choices, experiences and interactions with other people. Only that will give conclusive proof that God really did raise His Son from the dead, and that He is present and active within us as our King...and that proves that we truly are, His Kingdom.

Now, Yeshua testifies in and through us.

The perfect humanity, presence, love and obedient faithfulness of God's Son can appear from within our innermost being. He can reveal Himself through our circumstances and transform the world around us. He will uphold His Father's reputation and perfect standards of righteousness through His crucified, Spirit-filled disciples.

As the Lord testifies through us, the demons are forced to watch Him expose, disprove and discredit their lies. Our indwelling Lord's strength, endurance, obedience and perseverance are seen operating within us. Thanks to the Vine of God, to whom we remain attached, we are equipped to pass these tests with flying colors.

“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing...This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you. You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and

that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you.” (John 15:4-5; 12-16)

The Living Word

Yeshua is the Word through whom God creates and sustains all things. He is the Word that unleashed The Flood and saved Noah. He is the Word through which God revealed Himself to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. He is the Word that appeared to Moses from within a burning bush. He is the Word that awed and overwhelmed the entire nation of Israel from atop Mt. Sinai...and He is the Word that appeared to Joshua as the Captain of the Lord’s Host...He is the Word that saw David through all his trials. And He is the Word that became flesh and appeared as Rabbi Yeshua of Nazareth. He is the Word that atoned for all the Sin of the human race on the Cross. He is the living Word of God who is the Messiah-King of the Jews and the risen Lord of all Creation. And His Life will be transmitted by the Holy Spirit into our regenerated spirits as we follow Him into The Arena of Testimony...as the trial proceedings grind on to their inevitable conclusion.

So, despite being in total rebellion against God, Satan and his Powers of Darkness serve and fulfill God’s perfect plan and eternal purpose. The more they strive to disprove God’s claims and nullify His Word and disgrace His disciples, the more God’s Truth, Reality and Validity expose and destroy their works. So naturally the powers of Darkness resent and hate the disciples. We are a threat and an endless source of frustration to them. Our obedience reminds them of the punishment that awaits them. And as their accusations continue to frustrate and contradict them, they attack us with increasing rage, desperately trying to crack our resolve and get us to betray our God.

For centuries, Christendom’s focus has been largely limited to the external testimony believers give to their fellow humans on Earth. Of course that sort of testimony is important and necessary. But it’s not enough; it doesn’t penetrate to the heart of the matter. The disciple testimony is not primarily to men or demons. It is to our Creator God Himself.

“Now when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, ‘I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be blameless. I will establish My covenant between Me and you, and I will multiply you exceedingly.’ Abram fell on his face; and God talked with him...” (Genesis 17:1-3a)

The Living Word of God interacted with Abram and Abram responded to Him with all of his heart, soul and strength. He prostrated himself before the Lord who spoke His Word to him. That is the lifestyle that is required of us all. And it can only be lived by true disciples and Blood Covenant friends of our Lord and Master, Yeshua.

How do disciples learn to give such exceptional testimony?

How can we give testimony that is worthy of God? What would such loving friendship and faithfulness and obedient devotion to God look like? Consider Joseph... Consider Yeshua...

“The patriarchs became jealous of Joseph and sold him into Egypt. Yet God was with him, and rescued him from all his afflictions, and granted him favor and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and he made him governor over Egypt and all his household.” (Acts 7:9-10)

“...you yourselves know the thing which took place throughout all Judea, starting from Galilee, after the baptism which John proclaimed. You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.” (Acts 10:37-38)

Dance With Me

Well, have you ever seen videos of trained dogs that literally ‘dance’ with their masters in public arenas? (You can see many examples of this on the internet; for instance you can view this example on YouTube.com: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HqbVbPvIDoM>)



Carolyn Scott & Rookie

Carolyn & Rookie - Grease Routine ... musical dog sport ... mdsa Canine Freestyle Dog Puppy training Obedience music musical dance festival sport ...

by musicaldogsport | 5 years ago | 6,951,151 views

When you see the master and the dog perform in the arena, you see the fruit of the ongoing love relationship they developed with each other over the years. Notice that the human master has died to living a life that does not include this dog. And the dog has died to a life that does not include his master. Both died to their former lives that excluded the other. From now on, they live a new resurrection life, living and acting as one.

Their love and devotion for each other are evident as they perform in the arena. Their interactions reveal the fruit of the months and years of disciplined focus, drill, practice, rehearsal and ongoing training they partook of together, when no one else was watching.

The master of the dog gives a public testimony to the loving relationship he or she has with the dog. Their flawless performance before so many people lets you see into their past private lives together. You know what they were doing long before this event was scheduled. The master and the dog have spent hours, weeks and months dancing with each other – alone. The master cared for the dog with tender, loving attention from the time it was a puppy. In the beginning, the puppy could only do what was natural. But with great patience the master began to teach the puppy one commandment or ‘*dance step*’ at a time. And as the dog learned to obey the word of the master, he began to grow and mature and learn what ‘disciple life’ is. He learned to focus only on his master.

And this is how Yeshua trains His disciples as well. *“With many such parables He was speaking the word to them, so far as they were able to hear it; and He did not speak to them without a parable; but He was explaining everything privately to His own disciples.” (Mark 4:33-34)*

The master gave commands and the dog disciple learned to obey. The master repeated one commandment after another, until the dog learned to obey them all. As the dog learned to obey, he began to do what his master was doing. And now the master and the dog can obey the

commands together, beautifully and effortlessly. Their dance is a testimony to the love and devotion they have for each other.

This is what disciples learn to do with their Master Yeshua. He is the Word of God and the Word does only what His Father sends Him to do. And He invites the disciple to learn to do it with Him...to the Father's Glory.

“Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner...I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.” (John 5:19; 30

Our Master lives in us to teach us to ‘dance’ with Him, even as He dances with the Spirit of His Father.

“By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. The one who says, ‘I have come to know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.” (1 John 2:3-6)

The master teaches the dog to do one step, over and over...and then another step and then another...until the entire dance is in place. To an observer it may seem like tedious work. But to the master and the dog, it is love, joy, freedom and fun. The master gives full attention to the dog and the dog glories in the master's love and is happy to respond and do whatever it takes to please his master. So can it be with us and our Master Yeshua.

The spectators in the arena can see that the master of the dog repeated this routine, over and over to give the dog time to learn and incorporate and absorb the master's mind, heart and will into his makeup. And even while they are in the arena performing before a multitude, they still seem to be alone with each other. Neither one notices or pays attention to the spectators in attendance. The master only has eyes for the dog and the dog only has eyes for the master. Their eyes and hearts remain woven together, from start to finish. As the music begins, the master gives a signal command to the dog and the dog obeys. It is a fluid series of one command and obedience, another command and obedience, another command and obedience, and so on.

Without the obedience of faith, it is impossible to please God (Romans 1:5; 16:26; Hebrews 11:6)

The performance in the arena is the fruit and culmination of what they've been doing continually over the years when no one else was watching. Now they can give a most beautiful and compelling ‘testimony’ to the love and devotion they always have for each other. The master testifies to his love for the animal, and the animal testifies to his love for and submission to, his master (Jaames 2: 14-26).

It is obvious from the dog's body language, that he is blissfully happy. He loves to be with his master and to have his master's full attention. He loves the opportunity to please and gratify his master. The master is all that matters to this dog. And the dog's obedience makes the entire performance possible. Without that obedience, there would be no way to prove to the world that the human is the dog's master and that the dog is the willing property of the master. So is it with us and our Master Yeshua. He is our Lord and King if we do what He says; and if we do what He says, we are His Kingdom (Luke 6:46). But if we do not obey His commands, how can we claim to be His servants and how can we call Him, 'Lord'?

As long as we're obeying the Lord who defeated Satan, Satan is bound.

Disciples also need to train and prepare to give convincing testimony when the times of their cross-examinations in The Arena of Testimony are at hand. When it's time to undergo satanic temptations and tribulations, we do not show off or perform before the people who may be watching. Nor do we perform for the angelic beings that are always watching. We are there to glory in the fact that our Master is one with us and we are one with Him. As long as we are one with Him and do everything together with Him as one unit, there is nothing Satan can do or say against us. Our lives will prove that we have the full attention of our Master and that it is in Him, from Him and for Him that we live and move and have our being. Our lives must prove that we glory in the awareness of being in His Perfect Presence and that we delight in drawing everything we need from Him. Yeshua is our endless Daily Bread and Living Water. We soak ourselves in His eternal perfection and closeness and in the love and concern He shows to us. We rejoice in pleasing and testifying to Him as He vindicates His Father's Holy Name and validates His Father's claims by the power of the Holy Spirit...with us and through us. And in the midst of this, Satan is silenced and rendered powerless.

"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full." (John 15:7-11)

By obeying our Master we testify that He is Lord of all Creation. Our obedience reflects back to Him the love that first came to us from Him. We are the image and likeness of God's Word. We are His property and possession; He is our Life, Agenda, Motive and Destiny and enjoys absolute authority over us (Matthew 28:18)

Nothing else matters but that we acknowledge, exalt and respond to Him. We perform for Him because He deserves our full attention, devotion, love and obedience at all times.

This is how we can and will persevere to the end

This interaction with our Lord and Master in The Arena is the secret of the martyrs. It is how Stephen proved to be worthy of the name, 'disciple':

“...Now when they heard this, they were cut to the quick, and they began gnashing their teeth at him. But being full of the Holy Spirit, he gazed intently into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; and he said, ‘Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.’ But they cried out with a loud voice, and covered their ears and rushed at him with one impulse. When they had driven him out of the city, they began stoning him; and the witnesses laid aside their robes at the feet of a young man named Saul. They went on stoning Stephen as he called on the Lord and said, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!’ Then falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, ‘Lord, do not hold this sin against them!’ Having said this, he fell asleep.” (Acts 7:54-60)

Notice where Stephen’s attention was fixed even while the people around him were killing him! His mind, heart and soul were fixed at that critical moment, where they had always been fixed during the years leading up to this critical moment -- on the overwhelming Glory and Presence and Perfection of Yeshua, His Master who lived within him. Not even the fury of Hell and the venomous hatred of his human enemies could pry his attention away from His Lord. And because He was with His risen Master in The Arena, his risen Lord who holds the highest place in Heaven allowed Stephen to join Him there, even while he was still on Earth. The Lord was everything that Stephen needed. He empowered Stephen with the very same faith, obedience, love and devotion that He Himself had rendered to His Father on the Cross. He was Stephen’s secret power and ability to remain faithful. Yeshua took His friend all the way across the finish line. Stephen allowed His Lord to live in him and obey His Father from within his flesh, even as it was being pelted, bruised, lacerated and bloodied by the stones. And filled with the joy of His Lord’s Presence, Stephen completed the race and entered into His Master’s eternal Triumph.

“And He said to him, ‘‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.” (Matthew 22:37-40)

Stephen was not intimidated or deterred. Even though the demonic spirits were manipulating the strings of his enemies as if they were puppets, Stephen was too busy to notice. He was totally free, dancing with his beloved Master in the Arena of Testimony. And just as Yeshua once interceded for His enemies from the Cross, so did He intercede for them through Stephen’s obedient lips (Luke 23:33-34a; Acts 7:60). And there was nothing that the Prince of Darkness or his forces could do to deny, question, or stop Stephen’s loving obedience. God’s enemies were exposed, confounded and silenced. No one remembers the names of Stephen’s accusers and murderers. But the world will never be able to forget the risen Lord and Master on whose behalf and for whose sake that faithful disciple testified, to his dying breath!

“He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. He, who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” (Revelation 3:21-22)

Such testimony pierces and penetrates hearts like nothing else can.

One of the witnesses for the opposition was Saul of Tarsus. Stephen’s testimony gored him to the quick. It affected him so much that he too became what Stephen was – a true disciple of the risen

Lord. And at the end of his life, he followed Stephen's example. The Cross had cut the demonic strings off of him and he too was free to give the ultimate testimony to the presence and glory of His beloved Master who was also with him in The Arena. After he saw Stephen 'dance' with his Master, Saul of Tarsus was never the same. He was compelled to learn and perform the same dance.

Disciple-level testimony must be airtight and true. It must not leave openings for the powers of Darkness. Such a testimony comes as a result of the disciple's continual loving interaction and obedient cooperation with the Lord, regardless of what may be happening. We must realize that we are never alone. Yeshua is always with us. That's why we learn to interact with and respond to Him, in private, when no one is around. We learn to 'dance' with Him all the time. It doesn't matter what we may be doing, we must learn to allow Him to do it through us. Once that is a habit, it won't matter whether we're comfortable and at peace, or whether we are being summoned into The Arena. In any event, we will be ready if we learn to dance with Him continually. Then the powers of Darkness will have no opportunity to re-attach their deadly strings to us and recapture us for their purposes.

"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

"Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:14-20)

This is the kind of testimony God always desired to receive from His Chosen People Israel. He desired it when He led them out of Egypt, through the parted waters of the sea, and during all their time in the wilderness. And it is the testimony He wanted Israel to teach to all the other families of the earth. And it is for the sake of this testimony that He wants all men and women to be 'grafted into' Israel and her God-given spiritual, New Covenant Commonwealth. God wants us all to learn to dance with His beloved Son, our Messiah and Master.

"But you are a chosen Race, a royal Priesthood, a Holy Nation, a People for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were not a people, but now you are The People of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy." (1 Peter 2:9-10)

The majority of people in the world ignore God's call to this level of loving, obedient priestly service. But there are always a few – that Remnant of God's servants – who believe and wholeheartedly trust and allow the Lord to live and work from within their hearts at this Spirit-

empowered level of love and trust. The disciple lifestyle to which our Heavenly Father calls us all is expressed perfectly with these words:

“Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.” (Deuteronomy 6:4-9)

Obedience to God’s precious Word is our armor and fortress. Yeshua’s Righteousness covers us as we give our testimony to God. We could never do this in our own strength. In ourselves, we have no strength! Our poor fallen, Sin-corrupted flesh can do nothing pure and righteous unless our Master supplies it! God will accept nothing from Sin-contaminated sources! If we fall into the trap of trying to act as independent agents, we prove that we are still puppets with strings that are being manipulated by invisible Powers of Darkness. That is why Yeshua’s Cross must be applied to us, just as it was applied to Him. The Cross cuts the living death and bondage of those demonic strings away from us. And it sets us free to love God and willingly submit ourselves to His Precious Word and Holy Spirit. But if we are not Word-obedient and Spirit-filled, it does not matter how religious or spiritual we may try to appear before men. We will be exposed as frauds:

“But also some of the Jewish exorcists, who went from place to place, attempted to name over those who had the evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, ‘I adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches.’ Seven sons of one Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. And the evil spirit answered and said to them, ‘I recognize Jesus, and I know about Paul, but who are you?’

“And the man, in whom was the evil spirit, leaped on them and subdued all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. This became known to all, both Jews and Greeks, who lived in Ephesus; and fear fell upon them all and the name of the Lord Jesus was being magnified. Many also of those who had believed kept coming, confessing and disclosing their practices. And many of those who practiced magic brought their books together and began burning them in the sight of everyone; and they counted up the price of them and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. So the Word of the Lord was growing mightily and prevailing.” (Acts 19:13-20)

Scripture is filled with examples of such human ignorance and carelessness in relation to the Powers of Darkness that always wait for us to let our guard down and provide an opening that they can exploit. For example, read the stories of Aachen in Joshua 7, and Samson in Judges 14-16, and David in 2 Samuel 11.

The Cross cuts the strings away from us that the Powers of Darkness used to manipulate and dominate us in the past. The testimony God can now give is that we are free of Satan. We no longer belong to his army of deceived puppets (Galatians 3:23-29; 4:1-7; 5:13-26). Now the Holy Spirit empowers us to embody Yeshua, our Master. His Presence can be recognized by anyone who watches us ‘dance’ with Him in The Arena of Testimony.

Humans are not the real enemy.

Paul warned us that demon-controlled humans are not our real enemies. They are deceived victims of the Powers of Darkness! We must not make the mistake of obsessing over people and what they do or fail to do. Rather, we should see them as a visible army of puppets. Your natural eyes can see the puppets...but only spiritual eyes can see the spiritual ‘strings’ by which the puppets are being manipulated and controlled. Only spiritual eyes can see the demonic beings continually pulling those strings and manipulating this ‘army’ to do whatever they want.

“...be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.” (Ephesians 6:10-12)

If you are deceived into assuming that the puppets you see are the enemy, but remain unaware of the invisible strings and demonic manipulators that pull their strings, you will be easily outmaneuvered. You will miss the point and be at a tremendous disadvantage until you realize that the puppets are merely victims and dupes of those invisible controlling demonic manipulators. Don’t fear them; pity them and intercede for them (Luke 6:27-49). They are where we used to be! Ask the Lord to set them free just as He did for you.

We must be utterly convinced that everything about our Heavenly Father is perfect and all-sufficient and that He is present to us through His Spirit. He is always with us to lead us safely through any and all demonic traps, mine fields and deceptions we encounter. Even when our body is dying, God is with us to be our total, absolute and eternal Victory! (Cf. Psalm 91)

“Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. No one who is born of God practices (habitual) sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot (habitually) sin, because he is born of God.” (1 John 3:7-9)

“But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, “God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.” (James 4:6-8)

“For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His. Therefore let us be diligent to enter that Rest, so that no one will fall, through following the same example of disobedience.” (Hebrews 4:10-11)

The living Word of God became flesh to serve as our perfect, impeccable, unassailable Blood Covenant Representative and utterly Sinless Sacrificial Offering and eternal High Priest. Everything God promised for our Salvation and Sanctification and eternal Inheritance is already in place, completely paid for and freely given to us...forever! Pay close attention to what His Word reveals to us:

“Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their hosts. By the seventh day God completed His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.” (Genesis 1:1-3)

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace which He lavished on us.

“In all wisdom and insight He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory. In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God’s own possession, to the praise of His glory.” (Ephesians 1:3-14)

God has made us to be one with His Son, the risen King and Messiah of Israel. Therefore you can expect to enjoy and experience and benefit from everything Yeshua is and has. As long as you abide in Him, Satan can’t touch you or reattach his demonic strings to your spirit, soul and body.

“Therefore if (since) you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.” (Colossians 3:1-4)

Is God really the one and only Source? Is He really Perfect? Is He really our All-Sufficient Father and Lord? Have we really been created to enjoy Him and His Blessing and Provision and inherit the fullness of His Finished Work? Did His living Word really and truly create and provide everything we will ever need and pay for it with His infinitely precious Life-Blood? If the answer is ‘yes’, then that must be our testimony at all times.

*“A jar full of sour wine was standing there; so they put a sponge full of the sour wine upon a branch of hyssop and brought it up to His mouth. Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, **“It is finished!”** And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.” (John 19:29-30)*

Is the living Word of God enough? Do God’s Scriptures tell the Truth? Are you really saved and filled with the Holy Spirit? Are you really free from the demonic strings by which Satan and his

forces used to manipulate you for their purposes? These are the basic issues being fought over during the ongoing courtroom drama that is at the heart of human life. And this is why God's Word serves every human being He has created, with a summons to appear in court as a witness.

You can choose to serve as a witness for the satanic prosecution, or you can testify as a witness for God's defense. There is no other choice. We will either be disciples of God's living and written Word, or we will remain 'offspring of the Serpent'. So choose for yourself, whom you will serve. It is impossible for any of us to remain neutral:

"Now large crowds were going along with Him; and He turned and said to them, 'If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and consider whether he is strong enough with ten thousand men to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.

"Therefore, salt is good; but if even salt has become tasteless, with what will it be seasoned? It is useless either for the soil or for the manure pile; it is thrown out. He, who has ears to hear, let him hear." (Luke 14:25-35)

"And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.

"Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away; but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory; the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; but just as it is written,

"Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him." (1 Corinthians 2:1-9)