

37. The Two-Edged Sword

*“Therefore let us be diligent to enter that rest, **so that no one will fall, through following the same example of disobedience** (of the first Exodus generation). **For the Word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit**, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but **all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.**” (Hebrews 4:11-13 Amplification and emphasis added.)*

*“And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: **The One who has the sharp two-edged sword says this:** ‘I know where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is; and you hold fast My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days of Antipas, My witness, My faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.’” (Revelation 2:12-13 Emphasis added.)*

There is much more to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob than we, who are burdened with fallen flesh, could ever imagine. This is why God’s written Word is so important to us. Without the indispensable Truth it gives, we couldn’t know our God with authentic accuracy and precision, nor could we navigate through life in this fallen world in spiritual safety. That’s why God took great pains to reveal Himself in human terms to which we can relate and understand. He gave us an enormous Treasury of information, but in truth, even after that, we don’t have the range of comprehension that can even come close to gaining a full grasp of His overwhelming vastness and incomprehensible depth! We need God’s living Word and Holy Spirit to abide in us always...to guide, direct and protect us every step of the way!

Thanks to the Torah and the chosen people to whom God has entrusted it, we can also know the Truth about the powers of Darkness and what our share in their state of Sin has done, to make of us a fallen, Sin-corrupted, mortally wounded race. And what God reveals of His changeless Perfect Nature lets us know why He **must** deal with every trace of Sin that exists in Creation!

At Sinai God revealed more of this reality: God’s eternal living Word is like a two-edged Sword that pierces, penetrates, slices, exposes and lays bare everything about us in every direction and on every level. Everything that concerns us He will reveal and lay bare in the Perfect Light of His awesome Presence:

“All the people perceived the thunder and the lightning flashes and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood at a distance. Then they said to Moses, ‘Speak to us yourself and we will listen; but let not God speak to us, or we will die.’”

*“Moses said to the people, ‘Do not be afraid; for **God** (through His living Word) **has come in order to test you, and in order that the fear of Him may remain with you, so that you may not sin.**” (Exodus 20:18-20 Amplification and emphasis added.)*

“Just then there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, saying, ‘What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!’ And Jesus rebuked him, saying, ‘Be quiet, and come out of him!’” (Mark 1:23-25)

*“It happened that as we were going to the place of prayer, a slave-girl having a spirit of divination met us, who was bringing her masters much profit by fortune-telling. Following after Paul and us, she kept crying out, saying, ‘These men are bond-servants of the Most High God, who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation.’ She continued doing this for many days. **But Paul was greatly annoyed, and turned and said to the spirit, ‘I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her!’ And it came out at that very moment!**” (Acts 16:16-18)*

There is only one God, one legitimate Source. Therefore everything about us, and what we do, must come to us from Him. We must acknowledge that he is our only God and Source. That is how we can serve as His image and likeness. And in response, God can freely testify to the authentic Presence of His Word in us as we embody Him, living and working in daily experiences and situations. God can then, through our obedient faith, affirm and acknowledge that we truly are His image and likeness, and that His Word is actually working in us, fulfilling what He has planned from eternity to be and do...to us, in us, and through us.

So obviously the powers of Darkness will stop at nothing in their efforts to ruin our union with God’s Word, and, if possible, prevent it entirely. They work non-stop to keep us ignorant of, and separated from, God’s Life-giving Word. They present their lies in place of His Truth and add to or subtract from God’s Word in order to twist and distort it into something false. And when humans believe them, they too mistrust God and look to other sources, false, demon-manipulated gods, in an attempt to try to meet their own needs by their own devices. Thus the Serpent, by luring them into his own rebellious disobedience, can keep them trapped in his Darkness. And that’s why we must beware of this and realize that God’s Word is a two-edged Sword of Truth that will expose and destroy anything in us that is unreal, untrue and Serpent-originated. Whatever is in us, originating from some alien demonic source, will be exposed as a radically independent, spiritually dead work of our fallen flesh. We’ve said before that in this context, God only wants to know one thing:

**“How much of what you are and do,
come from My living Word and Holy Spirit?
How much of My beloved Son is actually in you?”**

Beloved, we would do well to understand more of what God first revealed to Adam and Eve shortly after the Serpent separated them from His Word and dragged them into the state of Sin. From that time forward, because of His Love and Mercy, but also because of His Justice and Integrity, God expelled and barred them from Eden, to prevent them from having access to the Tree of Life:

“Then the Lord God said, ‘Behold, the man has become like one of Us (in his deluded, Serpent-dominated fallen soul), knowing (personally experiencing) good and evil; and now, he might

stretch out his hand, and take also from the Tree of Life, and eat, and live (separated from Me) forever'. Therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken. So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and The Flaming Sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the Tree of Life." (Genesis 3:22-24 Amplification and emphasis added.)

Light and Darkness

We would also do well to learn as much as we can about the difference between what Abel offered to God, and what Cain offered, because it is the difference between Light and Darkness, Spirit and Flesh, and Eternal Life as opposed to Eternal Death!

*"So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the Lord of the fruit of the ground. Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. **And the Lord had regard for Abel and for his** (pure, Sin-less substitute-life) **offering; but for Cain and for his** (religious self-devised Sin-corrupted) **offering He had no regard.** So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell. Then the Lord said to Cain, 'Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? **If you do well** (as My image and likeness), will not your countenance be lifted up? **And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it** (the way your brother Abel did).' Cain told Abel his brother. And it came about when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and (revealing what was really driving him from within) **killed him.**" (Genesis 4:3-8 Amplification and emphasis added.)*

This is why we emphasize repeatedly that God's Perfect Nature creates and requires Perfect Truth, Integrity and Righteousness at all times, in all things! And His Word requires, protects and maintains Perfect Balance and Equilibrium between His Father's infinite Justice and Judgment and His infinite Grace and Mercy. Thus God's Word is like a Sword with two razor-sharp edges. It reveals that God is infinitely merciful; but it also reveals that God's infinite Wisdom, Truth, Justice and Integrity overlook and forget nothing! Everything must be thoroughly and properly addressed, cared for and tended. This aspect of God's Perfect Standard-Level of Righteousness is something we must always keep in mind. Whenever men are ignorant or unmindful of it, they operate in delusion and become dangerously presumptuous and sloppy and their carelessness becomes deadly. Delusion keeps them disconnected from the Truth that is in God's Word and deprives them of what He desires to provide for them through His Holy Spirit.

Thanks to Adam's fall and the damage Sin did to his human nature, we inherit fallen Sin-corrupted human souls that are the domain and the *'playthings'* of the Serpent and his demonic forces of Darkness. Through those damaged faculties, the dark powers dominate mankind and can easily deceive, afflict, manipulate and destroy them. God will never use or accept what comes from such corrupted soul-generated independent initiatives. He only regards and accepts what first comes to us from His own Word, as transmitted to our regenerated human spirits, by His Holy Spirit! Even if soulish flesh becomes *'religious'* like Cain, and strives to establish *'diplomatic relations'* with God, the true God will see through the façade and He'll have nothing to do with it.

*“Let the godly ones exult in glory; let them sing for joy on their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, **and a two-edged sword in their hand, to execute vengeance on the nations and punishment on the peoples** (decapitated pagan humans)...” (Psalm 145:5-7 Emphasis added.)*

In their fallen state, decapitated (Word-less) people are deprived of the Spirit of God. So they have no choice but to rely solely on their natural urges and fallen Sin-contaminated intellects, wills and imaginations. By default, they bypass God’s Word entirely, or, they take it upon themselves to ‘edit’ and ‘cut and paste’ what God has said, to suit their urges, desires and passions. But how can our Perfect God in His Justice and Truth, allow such a travesty to abide in His Presence? Because flesh is soul-driven and not Spirit-led, when it becomes ‘religious,’ it focuses excessively on certain preferred aspects of God’s revelation and completely ignores others. Thus it blurs and disfigures God’s revelation and ‘blunts’ the effect that the Sword of God’s Word must have on human hearts. Soul-driven people back away from one or the other of the Word’s ‘two edges’ and thus their understanding and teachings remain skewed, distorted, clouded, lopsided, false, and terminally destructive. If they focus only on God’s grace and tender mercies, they soon adopt some form of *universalism*, presenting warm, fuzzy ‘gospels’ that impart ‘salvation for all,’ regardless of what we do, or refuse to do. In that case, God’s Mercy is so over-emphasized that a false god emerges... a god with no standards of Justice and Holiness, a god incapable of judgment or punishment because he does not have it in him to oppose and condemn what is evil, false, and deceptively corrupt.

False gods of that kind resemble benevolent, senile, doting ‘senior citizens’ that are out of touch with what is actually going on and mindlessly overlook Sin and its lethal effects. That viewpoint encourages self-serving predatory humans to try to take advantage of God’s Goodness. They wallow in licentiousness... exonerating and justifying their evil actions, reactions and interactions without any sense of shame or fear of God. But, because that is not what the written Word reveals about the living God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, they’re calling Judgment down upon themselves!

“But the wicked are like the tossing sea, for it cannot be quiet, and its waters toss up refuse and mud. ‘There is no peace,’ says my God, ‘for the wicked.’” (Isaiah 57:20-21)

“For from the least of them even to the greatest of them, everyone is greedy for gain, And from the prophet even to the priest, everyone deals falsely. They have healed the brokenness of My people superficially, saying, ‘peace, peace,’ but there is no Peace. Were they ashamed because of the abomination they have done? They were not even ashamed at all; they did not even know how to blush. Therefore they shall fall among those who fall; at the time that I punish them, they shall be cast down,” says the Lord.” (Jeremiah 6:13-15)

On the other hand, there are people that are driven to assume roles of superiority. They try to control others by creating and maintaining false superior status and authority for themselves. They focus primarily on the other side of God’s nature – His Perfect Righteousness, Holiness and terrible Justice side. So their teachings tend to terrify their followers and they all become slavishly self-centered, manipulative and controlling. Such teachings lure people into a swamp of

self-absorbed religious bondage, pressure and treadmill-like anxiety that offers little or no hope of God's Grace and Mercy. And that overemphasis creates serious spiritual, mental and emotional disorders that lead to tremendous destruction and eventual despair and 'burnout.'

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel around on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves. Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the temple, that is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple is obligated.' You fools and blind men! Which is more important, the gold or the temple that sanctified the gold? And, 'Whoever swears by the altar, that is nothing, but whoever swears by the offering on it, he is obligated.' You blind men, which is more important, the offering, or the altar that sanctifies the offering? Therefore, whoever swears by the altar, swears both by the altar and by everything on it. And whoever swears by the temple, swears both by the temple and by Him who dwells within it. And whoever swears by Heaven, swears both by the Throne of God and by Him who sits upon it!" (Matthew 23:15-22)

The Perfect Balance in God's Perfect Nature

But God's Torah, and the rest of the Scriptures, reveal, protect and maintain the Perfect Equilibrium of God's Nature. This revelation begins in Genesis and is continued throughout Exodus. Genesis revealed God's loving tender Mercy when He sent His living Word to cover and protect and maintain the first parents of the human race as soon as they fell into Sin. But it also revealed God's Judgment and Justice side and the need to restore and protect the Equilibrium and Balance between them. Thus He barred Adam and Eve from the Tree of Life and sent the cleansing Flood that destroyed all unrepentant human flesh, but yet He also covered Adam and Eve and spared the eight believing, obedient members of Noah's family. He destroyed the unrepentant people of Sodom and Gomorrah, but was willing to spare those cities if only ten righteous people could have been found in their midst (Genesis 18). But even as He destroyed those two cities, He spared Lot and those of his family who believed and obeyed His warnings.

And then in Exodus, we saw God's judgment fall upon Egypt at the Passover, while at the same time, His Mercy and Salvation covered those who believed and obeyed His Word. So amid the destruction that follows God's Judgment against disobedience, we see that Mercy is always also extended to those who hear and obey God's Word. The Angel of Death devastated idolatrous Egypt, but spared those who followed and obeyed the Word's specific instructions concerning the Covenant Blood covering. So please take this warning to heart! God's Perfect Nature never changes...the way God was in Genesis and Exodus, is the way His Nature will work in our lives and in the lives of those who will come after us!

At Sinai, God had to prepare Israel with a thorough knowledge of His double-edged Nature and His ways, so that through her, He could warn and instruct the whole human race. We must all understand what God's Perfect changeless Nature requires Him to do in order to save, transform and restore the fallen, Sin-corrupted race that has devolved into the image and likeness of the Serpent! We must know what it will take to set all of Creation right and to realign us and make us compatible once more with His eternally Perfect Nature. Not even a speck of Sin and the Death and Darkness it imparts can exist before God. His Perfect Standards of Righteousness will

always expose and deal appropriately with anything that violates His Perfection. So we must all be adequately (Perfectly) 'covered' by God's Mercy and Grace! And since He never changes, we are the ones who MUST change! And since we have no power in ourselves to 'improve' or 'save' ourselves...we must look to God's living Word and Holy Spirit to do it...on God's terms!

We must be able to see our state of living death for what it really is. And we will see it, when we see the Glory of God's Perfect double-edged Nature and what He has done through His eternal, unilateral Blood Covenant to restore the Equilibrium and Order of His Creation. We must be aware of the Perfect Counterbalance between God's Divine Righteousness and Justice and His Divine Grace and Mercy. Then we'll see what is really in our heart of hearts...and admit our desperate need to look to our awesome, infinitely Perfect majestic God alone...for everything we will ever be or have or do. When we see this, then God's living Word becomes everything to us. We realize that He is our one and only Source, 100% of the time, for 100% of whatever we will ever receive or be or do. And when He truly becomes our sole Source, THEN, we die to being Sin-loving idolaters and radically independent pagans and transform into God's true image and likeness...His True Israel.

God must 'save' our dead, disconnected spirits by regenerating or suffusing them with His own Perfect Spirit. Then our Spirit-governed spirit becomes our living, dominant faculty that remains connected to God and receives His Life and Love-Nature. Then, through it, God can abide, communicate and interact with us. And this is how God restores the children of Adam to His Word's (Son's) Life, Truth and Righteousness. When that intimate personal connection is restored and maintained in us, God's Perfect Order and Equilibrium are also restored and maintained in us. And the Perfection that is in God's Word begins to abide also in us because the Covenant had made us to be one with our Representative, in God's infinitely penetrating sight.

God's Holy Commandments...The Narrow Path

Knowing this helps us appreciate and embrace and abide within the safety zone that God's holy commandments create for His people. They provide the assurance of the '*narrow path*' through which God's Word leads us safely through the 'demonic minefields' of Delusion and Unreality that have infested and infected this passing time and space dimension. By means of our faith and obedience, we remain connected to God. And He can impart the Truth, Glory and Well Being that His Eternal Covenant makes available to us. Then our Master...God's living Word...as He abides within us...can teach, correct, cleanse, train, lead and empower us. And so God's Spirit, abiding in our regenerated spirits, dethrones our fallen souls and begins to govern sovereignly, in their place. But the Spirit also renews, updates and sets us free of the former demonic oppression and abuse under which we formerly suffered. Ponder what God reveals about His living Word whom He sends to be your Salvation:

"I am the Good Shepherd; the Good Shepherd lays down His Life for the sheep. He who is a hired hand, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired hand and is not concerned about the sheep. I am the Good Shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me, even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My Life for the sheep. I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they

will hear My voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd. For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father.” (John 10:11-18)

God’s living Word is our Good Shepherd. He contains within Himself, everything we need or will ever need! Obedience to Him keeps us under God’s management, protection and Spirit-led direction. By this awesome union with the Word, God’s Spirit continually impacts and affects our bodily actions, reactions and interactions. And so we are cleansed, healed, cured, strengthened and transformed progressively...from our original radical independence...to the new, sanctified, eternal embodiment, or image and likeness, of the Perfect Humanity of our Master Yeshua.

Even in the earliest stages of our Exodus, as soon as we truly repent and submit unreservedly to the Authority of God’s Word over us, He is free to breathe His Spirit into us. In other words, as soon as He truly becomes our Lord and Master...He becomes our Redeemer and Savior and Shepherd. Thus, from the very start, He covers our personal bankruptcy and nakedness with His Perfect Eternal Atonement and sacrificial Blood Covering. Since we have no perfection in ourselves, God’s Word becomes our Perfection. We can then receive God’s Mercy and Salvation. But we must never again seek to receive anything from any other alien source. What is alien and God-less in us must, and will be, completely removed, step-by-step. Those unacceptable parts of us will receive God’s Perfect Justice and Judgment. But in exchange for us surrendering them to His Authority, God gives us His Mercy, Love and Righteousness in their place!

So when we align ourselves with the **Perfect Giver** of the Law, and look only to Him for everything, we also become one with the **Perfect Keeper** of the Law. And since He shares His Perfect Righteousness with us, we fulfill our God-given identity, purpose and destiny as New Covenant disciples that are the image and likeness of Almighty God:

*“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. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. 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.” (John 15:4-8)*

We’ve seen that because of ignorance, fear, doubt and mistrust of God, the true ‘heart condition’ of the majority of that first generation of Exodus Israelites was sadly deficient. Outwardly and physically they were ‘redeemed.’ But in their hearts...in the priorities of their affections...their ‘faith’ in God was ‘full of holes’ and it ‘leaked’ continually. The considerations of their souls...their contrary urges, desires and choices, kept separating them from God, or as we like to say, kept them habitually ‘*decapitated*.’ The energy of their lives kept splitting apart and deviating from the direction in which God’s Love-Energy intended to take them. So most of that

generation remained, ‘sons of disobedience’ at heart, living at odds with God’s Word. Thus they were unable to finish the Exodus through which God’s Word was sent to lead them:

*“If Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? For you say that I cast out demons by Beelzebul. And if I by Beelzebul cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? So they will be your judges. But if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the (eternal) Kingdom of God has come upon you. When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own house, his possessions are undisturbed. But when someone stronger than he attacks him and overpowers him, he takes away from him all his armor on which he had relied and distributes his plunder. **He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me, scatters.**”*

“When the unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and not finding any, it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ And when it comes, it finds it swept and put in order. Then it goes and takes along seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they go in and live there; and the last state of that (still-decapitated) man becomes worse than the first.” (Luke 11:18-26 Amplification and emphasis added.)

Any human that is duped by a false understanding of God’s living and written Word, remains self-centered, self-adoring and soul-driven, like Cain. And that is an unmistakable sign of ‘decapitation’ or radical independence. If I still think that I’m a ‘pretty good person’ in my own right, and have a right to do everything ‘my way’ and act as ‘the captain of my soul’...then I still do not know the Reality and Truth that emanate from the true, Living God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. In that case, I’ll continue to follow false gods that the Serpent will keep dangling before my imagination, luring me further and further, toward the abyss of eternal Darkness and Death.

Those who are truly saved are equipped to persevere, as long as they continue to abide in God’s living Word. He contains the Fullness of Almighty God! So He can supply us with whatever we need, moment by moment...and we are thus able to complete the Exodus and arrive at our blessed destination. This is why it is so important that we continually receive more and more personal intimate knowledge and understanding of God’s awesome Word. The more we know Him, the closer to Him we become...and eventually...we can begin to think and act and react and interact as one with Him. When we are one with Him, we are one with God’s Salvation! But this happens progressively...in stages...and requires authentic training and great patience on God’s part, as well as ours.

Notice that when Messiah Yeshua appeared on Earth in the first century CE, certain chosen Israelites had the privilege of knowing and living with Him on very intimate terms. We learn about them in the Gospels and the Book of Acts. No one enjoyed more familiarity and intimacy with the Son of Man than those few disciples that He was training to be His New Covenant apostles. Nevertheless, the one apostle who apparently knew Him better than all others, was almost struck dead when Yeshua appeared to him later, near the end of his life, in His Resurrection Glory. None of us will ever arrive; no one will ever ‘know it all.’ There is always much more to know of our Master than even His apostle John could have ever imagined! He was called, ‘John the Beloved,’ but this is how he tried to describe that latest encounter:

“His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, and His voice

*was like the sound of many waters. In His right hand He held seven stars, and **out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword**; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength. **When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man!** And He placed His right hand on me, saying, **'Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last!'**" (Revelation 1:15-17 Emphasis added.)*

Beloved... isn't that how the people at Sinai reacted to what they saw of God's living Word? They didn't see the Word in the form of the risen Messiah, Yeshua. And those who knew Yeshua didn't see and know God's living Word the way He appeared to the Israelites at Mt. Sinai. But in every instance, despite the differences in form... it is always the same eternal, living Word of God, interacting with His people. So... do any of us REALLY know God's Word as He actually is in all of His Fullness? Ask yourself these questions: Have you REALLY been in His awesome holy electrifyingly devastating Presence? Has your heart really and truly been pierced, penetrated and impregnated by the two-edged Sword of God's Living Word and overwhelmed and plunged into the Fire of God's Holy Spirit? Are you really connected to Him so that you can begin to know Him as He really is... for all of eternity?

If you can truly say 'Yes!'... to those questions... then you've had a taste of what Abraham, Isaac and Jacob encountered. You received a glimpse into what Moses experienced at the burning bush... and what awaited him when he was summoned to climb to the top of Mt. Sinai. In that case, you've been blasted out of your former false, grossly erroneous natural imaginations and arrogant, self-devised assumptions about 'God.' You have been effectively stripped of your deluded wishful thinking, your 'good opinions' of yourself and your presumed personal, radically independent 'decency' and 'self-righteousness.'

"In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple. Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.

And one called out to another and said,

***'Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts,
The whole earth is full of His Glory!'***

"And the foundations of the thresholds trembled at the voice of him who called out, while the temple was filling with smoke. Then I said,

'Woe is me for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I live among a people of unclean lips: For my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.'" (Isaiah 6:1-4 Emphasis added.)

"Now when Solomon had finished praying, Fire came down from Heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the Glory of the Lord filled the house. The priests could not enter into the house of the Lord because the Glory of the Lord filled the Lord's house. All the sons of Israel, seeing the Fire come down and the Glory of the Lord upon the house, bowed down on the pavement with their faces to the ground, and they worshiped and gave praise to the

Lord, saying, “Truly He is Good, truly His Lovingkindness is everlasting!” (2 Chronicles 7:1-3)

“I have come to cast Fire upon the earth; and how I wish it were already kindled! But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is accomplished! Do you suppose that I came to grant peace on earth? I tell you, no, but rather division; for from now on five members in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three. They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.” (Luke 12:49-53)

Becoming One...Face to Face

The Hebrew word for ‘one’, that Scripture uses is, ‘*echad*’. What God conveys in Scripture through that word is another way of expressing the concept of, ‘*image and likeness of God*’. Although, because of Adam’s fall into Sin, we are, initially, totally incompatible with His Holy Nature, God intends to do whatever it takes to be able to become one (*echad*) with us! He does not intend to remain at a great distance from us. He intends to prepare us to behold Him Face to face! And He also doesn’t intend to settle for living in our neighborhood, as in a tent or in a fancy church or synagogue building. He intends to live and operate **IN AND THROUGH US!** We are to be ‘***the House of the Lord!***’ We are to be His living Word’s human embodiment on the earth! We must receive rigorous preparation to fulfill such a destiny! But before that can happen, the Lord must remove all that pertains to our original fallen nature and state... and replace it with what pertains to the Perfect Humanity of His Son, our Messiah... Yeshua. The living Word must become the Life that abides and resides and works within us, so that He can reveal and glorify His Father’s Name through our spirits and souls and flesh!

That will require an awesome level of training and preparation before any of us will be able to interact with God at such a unique and heretofore unprecedented level. None of us has seen or known the Lord the way He intends to reveal Himself to us when our lives in this fallen world are over! So as we ponder the preparation and training we need in order to be ready for what is yet to come, let’s return to our analogy of the human master and his dog as they prepare for their future performances together in crowded arenas. This analogy will help make us aware of what must develop between God’s living Word and the disciples that He calls into His Redemptive service.

Just as dogs must be rigorously trained to perform in an arena, so must disciples become intimately aware of His Perfect Presence as He abides within them. We must know Him as much as is possible for humans to know their Creator, Lord and Shepherd. We must know His ways inside and out, backward and forward so that He can train us to embody Him with Biblical accuracy and precision... thus giving proper testimony to the Reality of the Resurrected Word of the Living God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, living within us. Messiah Yeshua must prepare us to be ready to perform in any arena in any part of the globe at any moment... before audiences filled with unbelieving rabid enemies of God... before billions of angels and men that reject and ignore His living Word... and before billions that worship and serve an array of false gods through which the powers of Darkness continue to deceive them. That is the type of audience

that must see us worshipping and serving God, in Spirit and in Truth! Their eternal Salvation depends on it!

The master of a dog that is 'in training' for future arena performances must treat his dog in a unique, consistent and relentlessly purposeful way. At first the dog doesn't understand. So there will be struggles for mastery between them at first. Their wills will battle for supremacy until the human establishes absolute dominion over his animal. He begins by giving some very specific, unyielding commands to the dog. He imposes very strict *reward/correction* types of discipline upon his beloved pet. Of course the dog can't understand what is going on, or why, so he'll resist what is happening because it goes completely against his natural wild canine instincts and tendencies. So in light of the purpose underlying this type of training, try to imagine this scenario:

A human trainer and his dog are scheduled to perform in a crowded arena. They have been going through the months and years of training and discipline for this moment. The time for them to perform is now at hand...and the master's reputation as a dog trainer is going to be established or destroyed, depending on what happens in the next few minutes. The master can't do the preplanned routine without his pet...and the pet can't do what must be done, without his master. Each must have the cooperation of the other, in order to fulfill the purpose for this event.

So now imagine that they have just been introduced over the public address system and the lights have dimmed and a hush has fallen over the expectant crowd. Now...the background music begins to play... and all eyes are glued on the human and the dog that are in the spotlight...Now, at the proper moment...the master gives the first predetermined hand command...but the dog isn't paying attention. He's looking in other directions at other things. Then he goes to the edge of the arena and sniffs at the ground...and sits down and scratches his ear. And the dog continues to ignore the cues and signals that his master is trying to give him...and therefore...nothing happens.

In this scenario, can it be said that the embarrassed human is truly the 'master' of the dog? And is there any indication that this dog is that human's 'disciple?' If your answer to those questions is 'No,' then ask yourself: '*what is missing in their relationship?*' What tells you that there's something wrong? The master is present...the dog is present...the commands are present and the audience is present and ready to see the show. So...what is missing?

The dog's obedience is missing. Without that, nothing good can happen! And that brings to mind something that the Word of God said to Israel at Mt. Sinai:

*"Now then, **IF** you will indeed obey My Voice (living Word) and keep My covenant (by obeying My commands), **THEN** you shall (actually) be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and (through your obedience to My commands) you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."* (Exodus 19:5-6a Amplification and emphasis added.)

That is very similar to the commands He gave to His New Covenant apostles in Matthew 28:18-20:

“***All authority has been given to Me in Heaven and on Earth.*** Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations (disciple the gentiles), baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ***teaching them to observe all that I commanded you;*** and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age!” (Amplification and emphasis added.)

God's Living Word owns ALL Authority in Heaven and on Earth!

Can you see that the instructions God's Word gave to both groups of Israelites were essentially the same? God's Word was giving His New Covenant disciples the 'marching orders' that would lead to the New Covenant fulfillment of what He had once said to Moses and the nation of Israel at Mt. Sinai! (See Jeremiah 31:31-34 & Ezekiel 36:22-28.) The living Word of Almighty God owns all the Authority there is to be had! And elsewhere, the written Word calls Him, '*King of kings and Lord of lords!*' So this is my point: How could the Israelites at Mt. Sinai, and the Israelite disciples that were about to see Yeshua ascend back into Heaven, demonstrate and prove that God's living Word is their King and Lord, and that they are **His** disciples? Would they demonstrate that by refusing to do what He clearly told them to do? Could they disregard His commands and still claim to be His chosen people? Can you think of any other criterion besides obedience that would justify and back up the claim that Sin-corrupted people make when they become religious and try to make the world believe that they truly love and serve God? Can anyone be a true disciple of God's living Word without taking to heart and doing what He says through His Holy Spirit and His written Word?

If we cavalierly take it upon ourselves to edit and cut and paste His revelation and commands...to suit our personal pet theologies and personal urges, lifestyle patterns and desires, can we presume to claim, with any semblance of integrity, that we are ready and qualified to accompany the Lord into The Arena of Testimony? Will it not become instantly apparent to whoever is watching us...habitually disobeying His commands...that we still have no familiarity whatever with the rigorous discipline of God's '*Blood Covenant Leash?*'

There's a huge difference in nature between a man and a dog. But how much more of a difference do you imagine there is between the Perfect Nature of Almighty God, and our fallen Sin-contaminated nature? It's easy to see that no human dog trainer worth his salt can afford to allow any disobedience to remain in his pet. A true trainer will never back off; he will not change what he intends to teach to his dog. He continually gives the same commands over and over and over, and maintains a tight grip on the very short leash until he succeeds in captivating the dog's entire attention and focus. The leash prevents the dog from being able to consider any other option. And, in due time, this totally invasive treatment trains the animal to see and abide and operate only from within his master's reality. The human master will not change...so the animal must forsake the urges of his own nature. And that enables the master to elevate him to a higher level and teach him to operate in synchronization with his master's nature!

The repetition develops an entirely new set of habits in the dog...new neurological patterns are created and etched deeply into his brain and nervous system and they are also programmed into his mind. In this new world into which he is forced to go, the master is always lord and there's no peace or rest for the animal until he finally understands, accepts, relents, and becomes wholeheartedly willing to follow and obey his master's leadership. How much more must this be

the case with our Almighty, infinitely Pure and Holy and Righteous God...as He deals with the Sin-corrupted, self-adoring, humanistic fallen human race that He originally designed and created to be His eternal image and likeness?

Very few dogs come to experience and make peace with this supernatural level and depth of interaction with a human master! The ones that do experience it are those whose masters care enough to spend that much time and energy and effort to teach them. They will know the eventual ecstasy, joy and liberating glory of dancing with their beloved master in future arenas that will be filled with amazed spectators. So too is it with human beings in general...and chosen disciples in particular. Very few humans will actually know what it is to be as one (*echad*) with God's living Word made flesh:

*“Then the king said to the servants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ **For many are called, but few are chosen.**”* (Matthew 22:13-14 Emphasis added.)

“But there are some of you who do not believe.’ For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who it was that would betray Him. And He was saying, ‘For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father.’

“As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore. (See. Gen. 17:1-5) So Jesus said to the twelve, ‘You do not want to go away also, do you?’” (John 6:64-67)

Repetition generates great familiarity with the commands. It puts the mind and body of the dog directly in touch with the life, nature, mind and will of his master. The animal cannot comprehend that...but he can become one with it! He can't gain this level of knowledge with a long leash. This level of personal knowledge can't be conveyed through words or abstract concepts given from a long distance. It is only conveyed and received through direct personal contact...through the electricity-like energy that is transmitted by direct personal contact between the master and his student. Only when you are in the actual living Presence of your Master... can you experience this awesome level of personal affection, harmony, timing and devoted attention that are shared between master and disciple.

In time, what the master is...begins to live and operate visibly within the animal. And that is how the two individuals learn to be and act as one synchronized, heart-united composite unity (*echad*). This is how the dog makes his personal exodus from former wild radical independence...to being, living and acting with one mind and heart...the mind and heart of his beloved master. The loving personal attention and companionship and purposeful discipline imparted through the master's commands transforms the animal. In that sense, the human becomes the animal's true master; and the animal becomes the human's true, faithful, willingly obedient disciple. Then, after such training, it can be truthfully said that the master lives in and reveals himself and reaches out to others, through his beloved pet.

Therefore, since we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son (living Word) of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the Throne of Grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” (Hebrews 11:12-16)

“As He was going along by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, casting a net in the sea; for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, ‘Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.’ Immediately they left their nets and followed Him.” (Mark 1:16-18)

“But Peter, along with John, fixed his gaze on him and said, ‘Look at us!’ And he began to give them his attention, expecting to receive something from them. But Peter said, ‘I do not possess silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene—walk!’ And seizing him by the right hand, he raised him up; and immediately his feet and his ankles were strengthened. With a leap he stood upright and began to walk; and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God.” (Acts 3:4-8)

When the master and his dog are ready to perform before the packed stands of future arenas, several wonderful things will be clearly evident to the spectators in attendance. The master’s wonderful ability to teach the dog will be evident. And the dog’s wonderful ability to learn and to relate to and work as one with his master, will also be displayed.

We are to be One with Our Master at All Times

But none of that can become actual and real...until the two undergo the needed repetitive training together. The master never expects the dog to do anything alone. He will always be with the animal, going through the exact same things that the dog will have to endure. When they practice alone, and when they perform amid thousands of spectators, they do everything together all the time, regardless of changing circumstances and situations. The master must take the lead in everything he expects his dog to do. And the animal must follow Him, moment by moment, without ceasing. Thus as they learn to do everything together, wonderful personal affection, familiarity, intimacy, trust and confidence develop and bond the two into one. To the master, this dog will be unique and special over and above all other dogs on earth. And to the dog, from among the billions of humans that walk on this planet, his beloved master will be unique and special over them all. And when they’re in the arena, although it will contain many possible distractions, the focus of the master and his dog remain riveted, each one on the other. They only have eyes for each other. Nothing can divert their attention from what they are here to do, right here and right now...together!

Can this be any less true when it comes to your relationship with your beloved Master, God’s living Word? Isn’t this precisely the wonder and power and potential contained in the unique master and disciple relationship to which we have been called? The key that opens the door to this rarified and wonderfully enviable depth of love, intimacy and union, is...the personal living, interactive connection that is transmitted back and forth...between the commandments that our ever-present, risen Master gives to us...and the wholehearted, obedient responses we give in

return. All of this oneness is the product of *'The Commandment Leash'* The commands will limit and correct us and transmit the will of the Master...into our hearts and souls and lives. Commands that are wholeheartedly accepted create a bond between God and man that can't be developed in any other way.

"Speak to the sons of Israel, and tell them that they shall make for themselves tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and that they shall put on the tassel of each corner a cord of blue. It shall be a tassel for you to look at and remember all the commandments of the Lord, so as to do them and not follow after your own heart and your own eyes, after which you played the harlot, so that you may remember to do all My commandments and be holy (set apart and specially reserved) to your God." (Numbers 15:38-40)

*"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 Emphasis added.)

"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 (of obedience to Me) shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works (in the Arena of Testimony), and glorify your Father who is in Heaven.

*"Do not think that I came to abolish the Law (Torah) or the Prophets (Tanach or Old Testament); 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 (Torah) 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 Amplification and emphasis added.)

Ponder what God's Word says to His disciples in the following text. The entire context of His statement is, obedience to His commands. To be His image and likeness, each of His disciples must mirror His Perfect Obedience to His Father:

"And He also spoke a parable to them: 'A blind man cannot guide a blind man, can he? Will they not both fall into a pit? A pupil is not above his teacher; but everyone, after he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher. Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log (of disobedience) that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye,' when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother's eye.

“For there is no good (obedient) tree which produces bad fruit (of disobedience), nor, on the other hand, a bad (disobedient) tree which produces good fruit (of obedience). For each tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they pick grapes from a briar bush. The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart.

“Why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say? Everyone who comes to Me and hears My words and acts on them, I will show you whom he is like: he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid a foundation on the (Torah) rock; and when a flood occurred, the torrent burst against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. But the one who has heard and has not acted accordingly, is like a man who built a house on the ground without any foundation; and the torrent burst against it and immediately it collapsed, and the ruin of that house was great.” (Luke 6:39-49 Amplification and emphasis added.)

Can you see it? The essential foundation of true discipleship is this obedience to the commandments that God’s living Word gives to us. This is the level of relationship that God wanted Israel to develop with His beloved Son. This is what He was proposing to them at Mt. Sinai, in the Torah! Another way of expressing the terms ‘Torah’ or ‘The Law’ is: *‘the revelation of Messiah Yeshua, the living Word of God – through Moses. The Torah reveals Him initially, to be all of Creation’s (and mankind’s) Eternal Lord and Master.’* The meaning and implications of this are unmistakable. Without ‘The Commandment Obedience Leash’ that connects the Master and His disciple...no human can be made ready to render to God, the level of obedience and trust that will be required of any true disciple in ***‘The Arena of Testimony!’***

In future Exodus meditations, we will ponder the underlying realities that God intends to create in His people through His awesome commandments. We’re entering our consideration of the portion of the Torah that is called ‘The Law of Moses’ by many Jewish and non-Jewish people. In Reality, there is much more to the Torah than its ‘Law’ portion. But regardless of what you choose to call it, it is my hope that Jewish and non-Jewish people will begin to see that God is revealing His Son, His Word...Yeshua...in the Torah. When we see that, we will see Yeshua in a brand new light...like we’ve never been able to see Him there before. No matter what we call the first five books of the Bible, sooner or later, we must realize that they are the indispensable, unchanging, universal revelation of the living creative Word of God. Apart from His Word, God cannot be known by fallen Sin-corrupted flesh! So how can anyone do without the Torah?

We must realize that God began to reveal the Word, His beloved Son, in Genesis 1:1! Through His creative Word, God makes Himself known. Through His Word He creates and sustains all things. He sent His Word to appear to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob...and to Moses...and to the entire nation of Israel at Mt. Sinai as ‘The Giver of God’s Law.’ He is the very same living Word of God that later became flesh and appeared as Yeshua, the Messiah of Israel in the first century CE!

So...not only is Yeshua ***‘The Perfect Giver of God’s Law,’*** He is also ***‘The Perfect Keeper of God’s Law’***...They are one and the same Person! Note this well: **Yeshua is the living Word of God, regardless of the form through which His Father chooses to reveal Him!**

And in the Fullness of Time, God will send His Word to Earth once more...in glorified human flesh! Then, according to God's chosen prophets and apostles, He will appear as the 'Son of David,' the risen Lord of Glory. And He will bring God's Eternal Covenant to its Perfect Fulfillment, on our behalf. He will do it through the New Covenant, which is actually the Eternal Covenant in its final, perfectly fulfilled Glory. Yeshua is the Eternal Standard of God-approved Humanity, against which the living and the dead will be judged. So hopefully we can come to understand, and admit, that God's living Word is Preeminent over all of Creation. He is the two-edged Sword of God's Holy Spirit! Hopefully this will help us to grasp more of what God is saying about Himself in Genesis, Exodus and all the other books of the Bible. We must understand more of what God's Word is telling us when He identifies Himself by the terms '*The First and the Last*' or '*Alpha and Omega*' or '*Alef and Tav*' or '*The A and The Z of all things.*' God is always revealing His Word's all-encompassing, eternal Significance in all things and to all things that have been made out of nothingness by God...through Him.

"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is also Head of the Body, the Church; and He is the Beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the Fullness to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on Earth or things in Heaven!" (Colossians 1:15-20)