

21. Yeshua Visits Abraham

Many religious people accept the Tanach (Old Testament) as God's written Word, but they reject the apostolic writings (New Testament) that proclaim Yeshua (Jesus) of Nazareth as being God incarnate and Messiah of Israel. Their preconceived ideas concerning monotheism and God's totally transcendent nature force them to view the notion that God could appear to men in human form, as blasphemous.

Nevertheless, the original Hebrew Torah (Pentateuch) and other books in the Tanach say that God actually did appear in human form to Abraham and several others. So if Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were already familiar and comfortable with this idea, why should those who revere them have a problem with it? There is no valid Biblical reason to do so. The precedent was already established in Genesis, long before Yeshua's coming. His claims and the testimonies of the multiple thousands of His believing Jewish contemporaries should not be dismissed merely because of the naysayers and their inherited biases and traditional mindsets that have become like hardened concrete in the minds of many, over the centuries.

[Note: An excellent exposition of this issue is now available. It removes objections to Yeshua's claims by showing that the Torah does not contradict what the apostolic writers say about Yeshua. This can be seen in Asher Intrater's book, *'Who Ate Lunch with Abraham?'* Published in 2011 by Intermedia Publishing Group, Inc. PO Box 2825 Peoria, Arizona 85380 www.intermediapub.com]

As we ponder the Genesis revelation, that God appeared to Abraham and made a blood covenant with him, we must realize that it was God's living Word who appeared. He is the one the Torah keeps revealing to us. The Living Word is also called, the *'Living Torah.'* The written Torah reveals and explains Him. So in that sense, the Living Torah gave Himself to Abraham and his family, long before He gave the written Torah to Moses! In both cases, it was God's living Word doing everything. So since the written Torah reveals and explains the living Torah, we can see that Scripture keeps revealing God's living Word, Yeshua, the one who called us to follow Him. And the written Torah keeps directing the attention of all men to the living Torah, who is God Almighty Himself!

"For Christ is the end (aim or goal) of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes."
(Romans 10:4 Amplification and emphasis added.)

Since the living Word of God appeared to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; and later to Moses and Joshua, it should not surprise or jar us to read that the same Word of God appeared in human form again, centuries after Mamre and Sinai – in the humanity of Yeshua.

Look at it from the opposite direction: the Living Word who lives in us and interacts with us through the Holy Spirit, also appeared in the first century CE and interacted with His original

New Covenant Jewish disciples in human flesh. Before that, He gave the written Torah to Israel at Sinai. And before that, He appeared to Jacob, Isaac and Abraham in their day. Perhaps that will help us to realize that our Master can be seen and known throughout all of Scripture, even in the portions that were written long before His incarnation in the first century!

“Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.” (John 8:56)

The Eternal Covenant Link

And there’s another awesome reality to consider: God’s eternal Covenant links all disciples spiritually. Starting with Abraham and going to the very last disciple God will ever create; the living Word of God unites each one of His disciples to Himself. And by that union with Him, they are thereby united to the Father who sent Him and the Holy Spirit who makes Him known to us in such a living way. And because each one of us is united to God, we are therefore, united to every other disciple that is also united to God. The living Word binds each of us to each other. We are all one Covenant Family forever, through our Messiah.

“Even so Abraham BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS. Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham. The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, ‘ALL THE NATIONS WILL BE BLESSED IN YOU.’ So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer...For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s descendants, heirs according to promise.” (Galatians 3:6-9; 26-29 Emphases added.)

So in this Blood Covenant sense, when our Master appeared to the ancients, we were there too, in Him. God includes them, and us, in everything He has done, is doing and will do. We are all bonded even to the unborn disciples of the future who are yet to appear on Earth. We are all part of everything that has or will take place within the Family. So whatever portion of Scripture you examine, look for our Master in it. God is doing everything through His living Word – through our Master – Yeshua. And look for yourself in there too if you are one with Him. In Him, each one of us is part of everything God has done since the beginning and is doing and will do, lasting into all of eternity! It’s not just God’s Kingdom and Business...it’s our Kingdom and Business too!

“The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me. Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, although the world has not known You, yet I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me; and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.” (John 17:22-26)

The Family Connection Unfolds

Because we are all bonded in Covenant, we all affect each other. The ever-deepening significance of this awesome Family dynamic means that, whether we realize it or not, we are always representing God and His entire Family, past, present and future, in all of our thoughts, choices, decisions, actions, reactions and interactions. In God's Kingdom there are no Head-less, 'radically independent' citizens. All are part of Messiah's Body. We embody His Life and Activity. We all wear His 'uniform' and serve under the orders of the same Head. We take God's presence and all of our Family members with us whenever it is time for us to enter the Arena of Testimony. We are never alone no matter what we are experiencing at any given time. We are forever part of our Master and His Covenant Body and all others are forever a part of us!

So you were spiritually present when God interacted with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the others who have gone before us. Remember this whenever you read Scripture. What is going on in each portion is part of you and you are part of it. If it happened to them, it happened to you. When our Head, God's living Word, dealt with Adam and Eve, and Abel and Enoch and Noah and Shem and when He interacted with Abraham at Mamre, we were there; and what they did and what happened to them, affects us all!

So let's return to Mamre and consider the significance of what happened when Abraham gave hospitality to his three visitors. The Torah simply calls these mysterious persons, 'men.' But it gives one of them the personal proper name of God! So it was God's living Word who appears in human form and interacts with Abraham in a very normal human way. The other two visitors are called 'the angels' (Genesis 19:1). The three of them eat Abraham's food and discuss various matters with him.

Abraham clearly recognized the Lord when He appeared, no doubt that was because He had appeared to him previously. So as soon as Abraham saw Him, he recognized and worshiped Him and then made Him and the other two welcome. As is customary in the Middle East, he offered lavish hospitality to his guests and interacted with them easily and gracefully. This tells us something about our Master Yeshua, doesn't it? There is little difference between His demeanor in Genesis 18, and the way He interacted with His disciples in the four Gospels. So that is how He will be with us in our day...from the inside!

Our Ever Present God

In every era and location, God is with His people...not only the unknowable God, but God incarnate also! The living Word makes it very natural and possible for Abraham and the rest of us to interact with Almighty God Himself:

*"Now **the LORD** appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, while he was sitting at the tent door in the heat of the day. When he lifted up his eyes and looked, behold, three men were standing opposite him; and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth, and said, 'My Lord, if now I have found favor in Your sight, please do not pass Your servant by. Please let a little water be brought and wash your feet, and rest yourselves*

under the tree; and I will bring a piece of bread, that you may refresh yourselves; after that you may go on, since you have visited your servant.

“And they said, ‘So do, as you have said.’ So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah, and said, ‘Quickly, prepare three measures of fine flour, knead it and make bread cakes.’ Abraham also ran to the herd, and took a tender and choice calf and gave it to the servant, and he hurried to prepare it. He took curds and milk and the calf which he had prepared, and placed it before them; and he was standing by them under the tree as they ate.” (Genesis 18:1-8)

There is no reason to deny that the Torah is giving a plain straightforward, literal account of a historical time and space event. It doesn't matter whether people of today believe it or not. The issue before us is that as far as the Torah is concerned, Moses intended to convey the exact primary, literal meaning of the words. There is no legitimate reason to take what he said in any other way but at face value. Many refuse to do so because their minds are pre-conditioned to reject Yeshua. And in order to do that, they must twist certain texts and ignore others altogether. But the Truth remains. And thus there is no reason to insist, as so many do, that this particular passage must be interpreted symbolically and allegorically rather than according to the plain literal sense of the words.

The Two Aspects of God

As we said, there is an aspect of our awesome God that is transcendent and always far beyond us. But there is also an aspect of Him that does enable us to interact with Him in very personal and intimate ways. This knowable aspect of God is *‘the living Word.’* Genesis 18 reveals that God's living Word actually came to visit Abraham in the form of a man. So here is the Scriptural precedent! It is already set and established within the first book of the Torah! And we will see later, this precedent is added to and reinforced in later portions of Scripture...long before Yeshua's arrival in the first century! By the time He was born, it should have been no surprise to His contemporary Jewish brothers that God's Word has a habit of appearing among men...even in human form!

Those who have refused to admit this could not refute it on Biblical, textual grounds. So they had to resort to a variety of theological and linguistic gymnastics in order to twist and contort the plain meaning of Moses' words. To this day, rather than focusing on the clear statements, they read their divergent theologies, traditions, and subjective biases into the text. They insist that God is so transcendent, that it is impossible for Him to appear in human form. Thus they require this passage to be understood only in an allegorical, mystical symbolic sense. But...if it really is true that the Lord appeared to Abraham as a man, we can easily accept it when He appears again – as Rabbi Yeshua of Nazareth.

Many try to ‘edit’ and limit what God inspired Moses to write to indulge and justify personal biases. But Yeshua's claims cannot be denied exegetically with intellectual integrity. Moreover, isn't it true that Yeshua, better than anyone else, fulfills Israel's prophetic writings concerning the Messiah? Is it not also a fact that He is, by far, the most famous and influential Jew in all of human history? Does He not continue to exert unparalleled world-wide Messianic impact on the

whole world? And isn't it true that no other claimant to Messiahship even comes close to equaling, much less surpassing, the impact He has on *'all the families of the earth'*?

Yet despite all of this convincing evidence, many reject or ignore Him. But even their rejections help His cause enormously. They give Him even greater credibility! By holding Him in contempt and rejecting Him, Jews and Gentiles alike clearly fulfill what God predicted in Scripture! (see Psalms 2 and 22; and Matthew 10) The Torah and the prophets and the psalms made it clear that much of Israel would reject Him and that others would try to take His place by creating and offering alien gods and false creeds. Pay attention to the warning God gave to Moses and His Israelite contemporaries:

"I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command him. It shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which He shall speak in My Name, I Myself will require it of him. But the prophet who speaks a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.' You may say in your heart, 'How will we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?' When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him." (Deuteronomy 18:18-22 Emphasis added.)

Through Israel's prophet Isaiah, God, in His infinite wisdom and foreknowledge, promised that when His living Word came in human form as The Messiah, many of His own people would reject, abhor and despise Him, just as they continue to do to this day:

"Who has believed our message? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of parched ground; He has no stately form or majesty that we should look upon Him, nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him. He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

"Surely our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried; yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him." (Isaiah 53:1-6)

Is that not exactly how many people react to Yeshua? No wonder He said the following words to some of His fellow Jews. They kept fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy before His very eyes!

"You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life. I do not receive glory from men; but I know you, that you do not have the love of God in yourselves. I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, you will receive him. How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and you do not seek

the glory that is from the one and only God? Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father; the one who accuses you is Moses, in whom you have set your hope. For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?” (Jn. 5:39-47 Emphasis added)

Tens of thousands of His fellow Israelites believed and embraced Him. But the majority did not. That widespread rejection of our Master by many is no surprise, at least not to God. It is confirmation of the many Biblical prophetic warnings. And that, along with all the other prophecies He has fulfilled and what He Himself prophesied would happen to Israel for rejecting Him, helps to confirm that He indeed is the one that God promised to send!

“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. Behold, your house is being left to you desolate! For I say to you, from now on you will not see Me until you say, ‘BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!’” (Mt. 23:37-39)

Were You Present at Mamre?

Because we are one with our Master in His eternal Covenant, we were present when God’s living Word visited Abraham at Mamre. And we’ve seen that Moses used God’s proper personal Name when he related that account. Let’s consider more of what happens when he uses that name. Our English translation reads:

*“Now the **LORD** appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre...”* (Genesis 18:1)

In the original Hebrew, it appears like this: יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יָצָא לִמְרֵאָה אֲבָרָם בְּעֵץ מַמְרֵי

The highlighted Hebrew letters spell the proper, personal Name of God. The exact pronunciation is disputed. But the four consonants are, *Yud, He, Vav* and *He*. In English we render those letters as YHWH (Yahweh) or YHVH (Yehovah). This is God’s proper personal Name. But for various reasons, translators replace it with generic euphemisms like, ‘*Lord*’ or ‘*God*.’ Thus they create a protective ‘fence’ around God’s real Name. But Moses himself used God’s unique proper personal name! It is the Name that is so sacred and holy in Jewish tradition, that for centuries Jewish people have not dared write or pronounce it lest it be desecrated. So they substituted names like ‘*HaShem*’, ‘*The Name*,’ or ‘*Adonai*,’ ‘*The Lord*’ or ‘*eloah*’ or ‘*elohim*,’ ‘*God*’. This is why doubt and controversy arose over the centuries concerning the proper way to pronounce God’s personal Name. But Moses deliberately put it into the text. There is no doubt about who he was writing about. He meant what he wrote: that the living God, through His living, creative Word, was appearing to Abraham once more. And this time, He appeared in the form of a man!

Torah reveals that aspect of God that is absolutely transcendent and beyond our ability to see, hear, touch or comprehend Him; He is ‘*totally Other*’. No created being can break through the eternal, infinite wall of His transcendence and make direct contact with or gain knowledge of Him. One example of that transcendent ‘*otherness*’ is expressed in the book of Exodus:

“But He (God) said, ‘You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!’” (Exodus 33:20).

This reveals the aspect of God that we can’t sense or comprehend. But in other places, Scripture clearly reveals an aspect of God, through which He does appear to men and is perceived and known by them in discernable, understandable ways. This is what we call, *‘God’s living Word.’* God ‘speaks’ and His Word comes forth from Him. He is one with God. And through Him, God acts, creates, sustains, protects and deals with all of Creation. This Word of God is our Master, Yeshua. He is one with you and me; and He appeared to Abraham, as one of the three men. Almighty God actually received and enjoyed His friend Abraham’s gracious hospitality. And by entertaining the One to whom we are bound, Abraham entertained us as well! Because we are one in spirit with this living Word of God, we were there in spirit – right in the middle of everything. This is more than mere words or ideas. It is Blood Covenant, God-imparted Reality.

“The King will answer and say to them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.’” (Matthew 25:40)

Sometimes, as we see in Exodus 3:2, the same name of God appears again. In this case, the name is often translated as *‘the angel of the Lord.’* The literal meaning of the word *‘Angel’* is *‘Message’* or, *‘Messenger.’* So we could say *‘the Message of the Lord’* or, *‘the Messenger of the Lord.’* But if that’s all we do, we end up with two separate entities, 1) the message, (or messenger)...and, 2) God.

But Asher Intrater, in the book cited above, points out this significant fact: the Hebrew language has a special word construction that he believes the Holy Spirit specifically reserved for expressing appearances of God’s living Word. It is being used when we see translators inserting the term, *‘the Angel of the Lord.’*

The Hebrew puts it in a form that resembles this: *Angel-YHWH* or, *Angel-YHVH* (depending on how you pronounce the Hebrew letter ‘vav’). The Hebrew links the two nouns *angel* and *Lord* into one unit. This is similar to what we do in English when we create nouns like, *‘baseball’* or, *‘capstone’* or *‘punchbowl.’* In Hebrew, this special construction is called, *‘s’**michut**’* which places two nouns so close together that they become one new entity. Their union becomes the expression of a new third thing that neither of the two component words could represent, as long as they stand alone.

Moses uses *‘s’**michut**’* to express special appearances of God’s living Word. But translators express it as, *‘the angel of the Lord.’* However, just as the word *‘baseball’* means more than just a *base*, or a *ball*, and just as a capstone is more than a *cap* or a *stone*, so is it with the *‘s’**michut**’* word construction. *Angel-YHWH* or *Angel-YHVH* depicts something more than an emissary angel – a created being sent by God, to deliver a message on His behalf. When the two words are put together and *‘s’**michut**’* takes place, they express an appearance of that aspect of Almighty God that can be seen and known...the living Word of God Himself! So the Hebrew words of Moses tell us that God Himself is appearing and interacting with a human. The living Word of God who created the universe and who sustains every molecule of it according to God’s plan and

purpose and who supplies all our needs, and whose image we are intended to be, is appearing and interacting with some human or group of humans.

So when he uses God's proper, personal name in Genesis 18, Moses is telling us that God's living Word is one of the three men that appeared to Abraham. He is the one through whom God does and says everything in the Bible...and He appears as a man.

God's living Word came at a later time, *became flesh* and lived in Israel as Rabbi Yeshua of Nazareth. So when John the apostle began his Gospel, he immediately identified his risen Master Yeshua as the living Word that Genesis chapter 1 reveals as the Creator of the universe:

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light." (Genesis 1:1-3)

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being." (John 1:1-3 Emphasis added.)

"And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14 Emphasis added.)

And it is this same living Word made flesh that Paul describes in this text:

"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 Emphasis added.)

God's Living Word Revealed Throughout His Written Word

These revelations of God's living Word appear throughout Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation. Each time they appear, you are getting a glimpse of and learning something about the Master who said *'Follow Me!'* to you. Each disciple is privileged to live and interact with the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, day and night, just like the ancients did. We are to become His temple and His image and likeness. He is here to live and work from within us by the power of God's Holy Spirit. In that capacity He obeys His Father through us, and meets God's perfect standards, perfectly in our name. So it's imperative that we base every aspect of our lives on this Reality. Our Lord appeared centuries ago in the life of Abraham. But He continues to appear in the lives of each one of us as well. So the Bible is part of a disciple's life...and a disciple's life is...Biblical!

We've discussed the people who accept the Tanach (Old Testament) but reject the New Testament. But there are also many who accept the New Testament, but virtually reject the Tanach! How can this be? Again, there is no legitimate reason for doing it. It is done to protect and maintain concrete-hard subjective religious and theological biases that have been around for centuries. But since we're seeing that our Master is being revealed in every book of the Bible, we can also see how vitally important *every part* of Scripture really is to us. If Our Master is revealed throughout, and it's our job to know Him intimately, can we afford to ignore and neglect large portions of Scripture? Shouldn't disciples be masters at showing Him to others wherever He appears, from Genesis to Revelation? Without His full revelation, we can't know or respond or interact properly with Him. Nor will we be able to develop the precise, authentic and credible testimony of our Master, as God's New Covenant Royal Priesthood, that will be needed in the Last Days, by any means that falls short of what God has actually revealed in His written Word.

If the world is ignorant of the Scriptures God entrusted to Israel, then by what other means will she be able to reveal her God to the rest of the world and bring them into the Covenant union with Him that everyone so desperately needs? Without the written Word that reveals the Living Word of God, by what other means can He be made known? Ponder what Paul wrote to his young fellow Jewish disciple, Timothy:

"...evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:13-17 Emphasis added.)

When Paul wrote this, the only written Word in existence was the Hebrew Tanach! The Gospel of Salvation and everything Yeshua and His apostles taught was based upon the Torah and came exclusively from the Tanach! So if our Master found that to be completely sufficient for His purposes and those of His apostles, what should our mindset and attitude toward them be?

"A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master. It is enough for the disciple that he become like his teacher and the slave like his master. If they have called the head of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign the members of his household!" (Matthew 10:24-25)

"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 Emphasis added.)