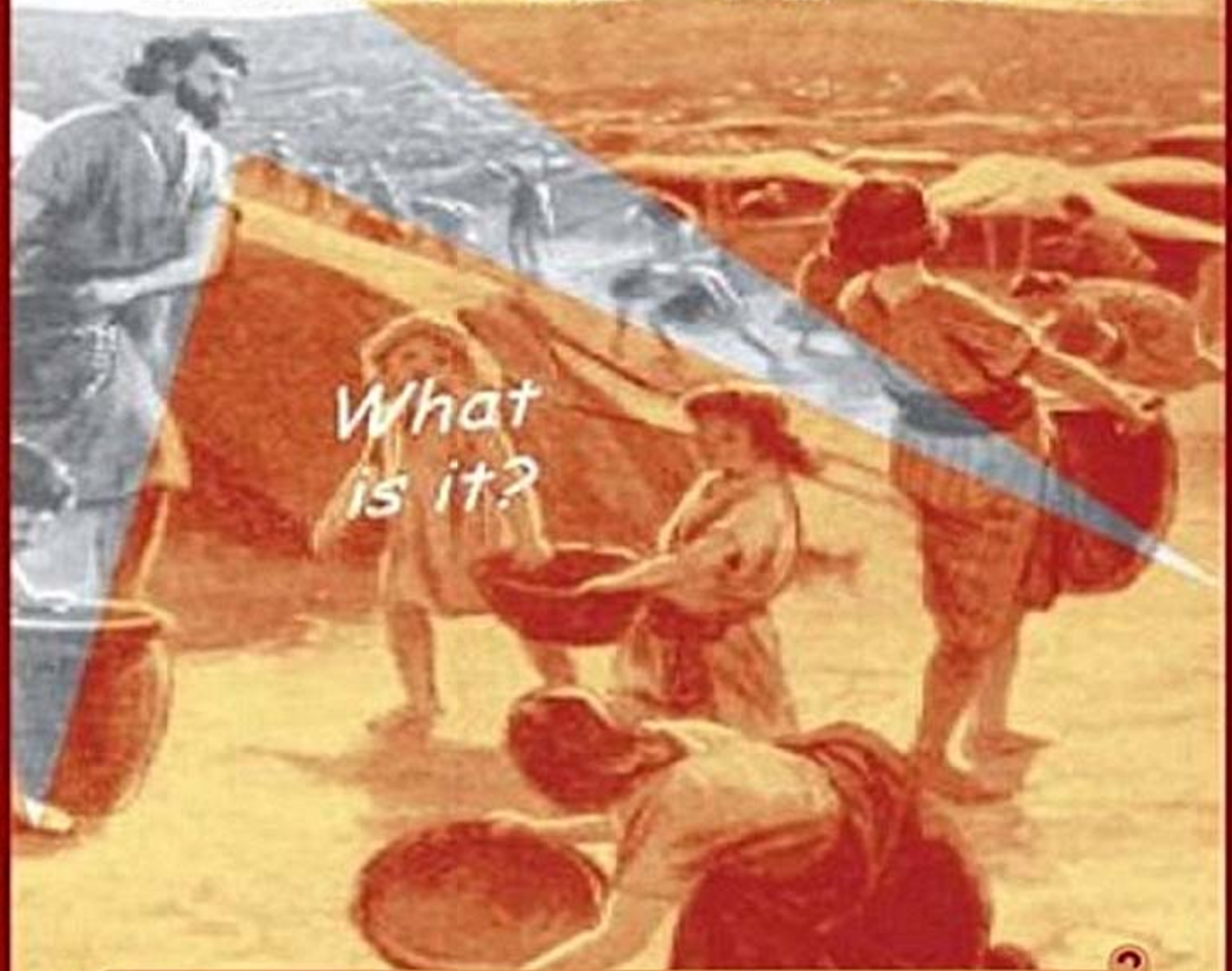


REVELATIONS

ON MANNA



*What
is it?*

DON C. HARRIS

Revelations On Manna

By Don C. Harris

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Scripture quotations are taken from the Red Letter Edition of the King James Version of the Bible, unless otherwise indicated. References to the red ink, red letters or red words is to distinctly identify the words spoken by Jesus Christ as recorded in the Scriptures.

Revelations On Manna

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Chapter 1

What IS It?

What is it? What is *what*? What Is It? *What*? No! What is it? What is *what*? It! What is... *it*? Yeah, that's right! What is this, an old Abbott and Costello routine? It may seem like it, but, no, it is the Scriptures:

Exodus 16:15 (paraphrased), "*And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, **what is it:** for they wist not what it was.*"

The revelation about the correlation of Manna to communion with the Almighty seems to have acquired the same inquisitive notion, "*What is it?*" The purpose of this writing and study is to show the ancient desire of Jehovah is to commune with mankind.

This has always been His desire and purpose since the days of Eden. Yet, even today it is still a mystery. Oh yes, I know there are those who claim to have the undivided attention of the Almighty as they "speak to God" and, consequently, He speaks to them, clearly and distinctly.

This book is not for them. This book is for the more honest and down-to-earth man or woman who only wants to receive the daily guidance that was promised. If this describes you, your honesty will simply not allow you to manufacture miraculous communications out of what you know are your own mental processes; nor, will you afford yourself the luxury of re-creating your common dreams into heavenly visions. You just want to know that you live and walk in the will of your God so you can face whatever comes your way.

The interesting thing about the guidance promised to us is that we *DO* experience it (or at least we *can*) everyday. Many times it is not noticed. Sometimes it is not recognized as guidance.

When the hungry Israelites walked through the fields that morning, their bellies growled as they looked down upon the perfect food "*they did not know*"; and, as many of us do when we experience our miraculous sustenance on a daily basis, they asked, "***What is it?***"

Manna – The Word of God to our hearts – daily guidance – our daily bread – remains a mystery yet today; this why manna so perfectly describes our mysterious communion with the Almighty. You see, the word "manna" actually means "what is it".

As the children of Israel walked into the fields where the manna fell, they were saying, "*Maw na?*" which, when translated is, "*What is that?*"

Exodus 16:31 And the house of Israel called the name thereof Manna: and it was like coriander seed, white; and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey.

In Deuteronomy, the LORD YHVH [1] added words of description to explain "Manna," ". . . which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know." In other words, He said, "I fed you with what you did not know – you didn't know what it was and neither did your Fathers."

Deuteronomy 8:3 "*And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD*

doth man live."

Deuteronomy 8:16, "*Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end;*"; ***that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.***

Also, notice the *reason* for the manna is included in both Scripture reference. "***[So] that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.***"

If these words sound very familiar to you, remember that they were the very words Messiah used to rebuke Satan at His temptation: "***Man shall not live by bread alone.***"

What Did Jesus Say? (Think Red Ink, remember?) [2]

We find one of the strangest chapters in the Bible is John 6. There is a clear connection to manna, though, if only we let the words sink down into our ears.

John 6:5, "*When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy **bread**, that these may eat...*"

v13, "*Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten.*"

v14, "*Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, 'This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.'*"

The subject was bread; however, we find the Great Teacher attempting to expand the subject beyond the physical.

John 6:26-27, "*Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. **Labor not for the [food] which perisheth, but for that [food] which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.***"

Lacking understanding and still hoping for a free meal, the people moved the subject back to food.

John 6:30-31, "*They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? What dost thou work,*" *Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.*"

Please allow me to paraphrase the rest of the story:

"*Then Jesus said unto them... 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, [what] Moses gave you [does] not [compare to the real] bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.'*"
(John 6:32 – 33)

"... *I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me*

shall never thirst." (John 3:35)

"The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven." (John 6:41)

Jesus continued, *"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day."* (John 6:44)

Now, with the next verse, do we have a subject change before switching back to the topic of bread ...

*"It is written in the prophets, **And they shall be all taught of God.** Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me."* (John 6:45)

"I am that bread of life." (John 6:48)

... then on to manna...

"Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead." (John 6:49)

... then back to Himself?

"This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." (John 6: 50-51)

NO! NO! NO! The subject does *NOT* change! These verses are not a string of disconnected thoughts. They all center on the **SAME** subject; but, what *IS* the subject? Jesus? Bread? Manna? Being taught of God?

Let's read the remaining verses of John 6:

v52, *"The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"*

v53, *"Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you."*

v54, *"Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day."*

v55, *"For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed."*

v56, *"He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him."*

v57, *"As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me."*

v58, *"This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever."*

This Is A Hard Saying; Who Can Hear It?

How are the following ideas related?

-Manna

-Jesus

-Word of God

-Bread from Heaven

In each of these, we can hear the Savior exposing His nature, character, and His mission. There were many who resented His implications of being so familiar with the Father (in other words, His "*Coming down from Heaven*").

John records this event and these words of Messiah, not because they were mysterious and he thought they might generate interesting "Mind Candy" for the spiritually starving contemporary masses of Christians, but because he well understood what these words meant – both at that time and what they would mean in the future.

It is deficient and simplistic to put these words spoken by Jesus into the same mystic category of the inexplicable sayings of Eastern philosophies or the "dark sayings" of sages or shamans.

*"Eat my flesh and drink my blood! I am the **bread** from heaven."*

No doubt, these words were puzzling and hard on the Jewish ears; but, it was neither the intention of Jesus nor of John to hide the spiritual meaning. They both desired to reveal the spiritual meanings.

John gives us a clue that is peculiar to his gospel alone. He reveals the true identity of the Son of God, His nature, and His mission. The words bear a life-changing message, and contain a key that fits into and unlocks the mystery of the Scriptures. As a matter of fact, it is imperative that we hear it; but, ***WE NEED THE KEY!***

Okay, what is it? What is what? Oh no! Not *that* again! Let's discover this key.

Chapter 2

The Key

When Messiah conveyed this key to the audience at Capernaum, they, "*Went back, and walked no more with him.*" When this key was delineated by the Savior to the rich ruler, he turned on his heel and went away. No doubt many of us today will not like Jesus' message either; but, like it or not, it is one that we must *hear* – and *obey*.

From the beginning, John focused on presenting the key to his readers.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (John 1:1)

You still don't know what *IT* is? That's okay, this is a tough subject. It always has been. The Bible has been friend, comforter and guide to so many Believers for such a long time that it is nearly impossible to critique its long held interpretations without insult or injury to those who hold them. We will have to break down some of these axiomatic ideas in order to make any progress toward revelation.

The tired old-time religion mindset has to go. If we desire revelation; if we are looking for a relationship with the living Messiah, it is imperative to get an opinion of our own. My advice is to read the Bible and believe it – or throw it away; but, don't just lay it on the coffee table and point to it when making some reference to God or attempting to spout quotations and references.

Some people believe the Bible to be the "holy infallible, inspired, and complete Word of Almighty God." Then, there are those who are equally convinced that it is an antiquated, adulterated, book of superstitious ideas with no real relevance to 21st-century living. (Curiously enough, my experience proves that in both of these categories there are those who have never *actually* read it; rather, they have only developed their ideas from protagonists claiming to have read the Bible and purporting themselves to know what it says or doesn't say.)

I have little to say about those in either end of these categories. The extremists (those who make the Bible into God or try to turn God into a Bible and those who care not a whit about spiritual things) are both ill-informed and lost! *However*, the person in the middle – the one who **knows they do not know** and are **sure that they are not sure** – THIS PERSON has promise and potential! I find that the average church-going Believer usually falls into one of these three camps.

Wouldn't it be so much better to have a Friend, Comforter and Guide who is alive and able to speak? With that thought in mind, let me quote some red words.

"...And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that it may abide with you for ever; Even the BIBLE. ...I will not leave you comfortless: The BIBLE will come to you. ... These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the BIBLE which the Father will send in my name, shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. ...Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it

be afraid.... when the BIBLE is come, which I will send unto you from the Father, it shall testify of me." (John 14)

How did I do? Before you criticize my "quotation," consider that according to modern theology and what is taught across nearly every pulpit in America – and throughout the entire world – there **is no doctrinal problem with the way I quoted that verse!**

How is it that in our hearts and minds we know that this Scriptural interpretation is wrong; yet, most of us live by these words every day?

I attended a meeting recently where the "pastor" encouraged the congregation to hold their Bibles "close" while they sang love songs to the Holy Spirit. "Bibliolatry" performed before my very eyes, went unnoticed by seemingly everyone in attendance. Like the Nehushtan [3] of the Children of Israel, our generation is dangerously close to book worship.

Is the Bible To Be Our Comforter and Guide – Or Not?

Once upon a time...ten-year-old Elizabeth, having received orders from her mother, danced into the next tent and announced to her father and brothers, "We are having 'what is it' for dinner tonight!"

When the realization of what she said occurred to her, she quieted, her lips began to pout, her brow wrinkled, and she looked up and to the left as if the answer may be written on the ceiling above her. She turned on her heel and ran back to her mother, "Mom, why do we call it, 'what is it'?"

In these days, children had been born in the wilderness and known nothing else. They had never thought it the slightest bit strange to walk out in the fields every morning and find manna lying all around. These children, along with their mothers, sisters, and aunts would pick it up and carry it home to eat. The word "manna" (what is it) became the name for this food.

No doubt, from time to time it would occur to someone like little Elizabeth that "what is it" was a strange name for something so familiar.

When Elizabeth grew up she had children of her own. She had been born in Arabia among the people of Jacob, and she and her husband had followed Joshua into the Promised Land. Although the divine provision had faithfully followed them across the wilderness, the very day they set foot into the new land, the manna had stopped.

After a while, manna was only a memory. Sometimes, Elizabeth would tell her own daughter, Rebecca, about it. "What did it taste like, Mommy?"

Elizabeth recited the words of Moses to Rebecca, "*And the house of Israel called the name thereof Manna: and it was like coriander seed, white; and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey.*" (Exodus 16:31)

"Here, let me see if I can make something like it." Elizabeth tried and tried. "It's not quite right... it needs something."

"I think it's delicious," little Rebecca exclaimed.

As time went by, other mothers tried Elizabeth's wafer recipe and said it was good ...but, it just wasn't manna. Some of the older neighbors agreed that the wafers were just not the same; but, the younger ones enjoyed them anyway. They laughingly called them "manna," but, everyone knew they were but Elizabeth's invention.

As the years went by, Elizabeth enjoyed her grandchildren and even a great grandchild. As with all the children of Israel, her Rebecca had never known grandparents, so it was a real treat to enjoy multiple generations living within the same house.

One morning, years after her death, Elizabeth was fondly remembered by her family. Rebecca missed her mother and the wafers they had made together. On this day, she struggled to remember the recipe.

Finally, she ran to the cupboard, made the wafers, baked them, and had them waiting when lunchtime arrived.

"Ummmm," all of her children and her nieces and nephews called out wanting more. In their language, they asked, "Manna?" But, they were not calling it by name. They were actually asking, "What is this?"

"This is 'manna.' It is the bread that fell from heaven and fed our people for so many years in the wilderness. "Well, it's not really *THAT* bread – but it is *like* it."

"It's good!" they all agreed.

After many years it became a novelty to bake "manna" on special occasions. The recipe was exchanged and spread throughout all Israel. (I think there was eventually a snack food company that put it into cellophane bags and offered it in cheese, barbeque, and original recipe flavors!)

My point is that many people grew up believing that they knew what manna was – when they didn't know at all!

The Lord YHVH has given me a difficult revelation. He has shown me – unequivocally – that the **Word of God** is definitely not what I had always thought that it was! It is probably not what many people think it is! Perhaps it's not what *YOU* think it is either. Like Rebecca in our story, the church at large having good and pure intentions, as well as the clergy and religion in general have baked up a recipe that is good... but, **it's NOT manna!**

If the Bible Is NOT the Word of God, What IS It?

More importantly, if the *Word of God* is *not* the Bible, *what IS it?*

What did Jesus say? The red words hold the answer.

Mark 4:11-14, "*And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand...And he said unto them, **Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables? The sower soweth the word.***"

Do you sometimes wonder why you hear the words and yet do not understand? (Jesus said, "...

you see [but] you do not perceive.")

There is an answer in Proverbs 30:5, "*Every word of God is pure: **HE** is a shield unto them that put their trust in **HIM**.*" (Notice the masculine pronouns, "He" and "Him"?)

Hold that thought and couple it with this thought, "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us*" (John 1:1)

Has it become apparent to you yet that the question, "What is the Word of God?" should not be **WHAT** but **WHO** is the Word of God?

Perhaps this seems like a basic doctrine to you. You may say, "Well, of course. Everyone knows that!"

Then, the next question must be why does almost everyone refer to the Scriptures as "The Word of God"? Furthermore, is there anything wrong with using this term to refer to a book?

It may not be wrong to refer to the Bible with this name, but, in doing so, many erroneous ideas, doctrines and practices have occurred. Worst yet, when HIS title is placed on a book, we may forget **WHO** the *real* Word of God is; thereby, continuously misinterpreting the Scriptures and, even worse, teaching error to others.

The Parable of the Sower

*"Now the parable is this: **The seed is the word of God.**"* (Luke 8:11)

Have you ever been taught (or taught others) that the explanation of the "Parable of the Sower" is that we are to deliver **the Scriptures** to the entire world in order to effect salvation? The conclusion is this... if the Word of God is indeed the Bible, the Bible is sewn into the hearts of men.

I know many, many Christians who believe this. Of course, they also believe that daily Bible reading will grow their faith because the "Word of God" says, "*It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.*" (Luke 4:4b); and says, "*So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the **word of God.***" (Romans 10:17)

Do the Scriptures *really* teach that we are to gain faith by hearing the Scriptures?

Luke 5:1, "*And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to **hear the word of God,** he stood by the lake of Gennesaret...*"

Luke 8:21, "*And he answered and said unto them, 'My mother and my brethren are these which **hear the word of God,** and do it.'*"

Luke 11:28, "*But he said, 'Yea rather, blessed are they that **hear the word of God,** and keep it.'*"

Acts 13:7, "*... who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to **hear the word of God.***"

Acts 13:44, "*And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to **hear the word of God.***"

Did you notice that in these accounts nobody read the Word of God? As a matter of fact, in the entire Bible there is never a reference to *reading* the Word of God. (Yes, and that includes the following phrases: "The Word of God", "the Word of the LORD", and "the Word of Elohim." None of these terms **EVER** refer to a written document!)

The Bible = Word of God?

Look for yourself at the following Scriptures to see if any actually refer to the Bible, the Torah, or the Scriptures.

Acts 6:2, "*Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the **word of God**, and serve tables.*"

Acts 6:7, "*And the **word of God** increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.*"

Acts 8:14, "*Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the **word of God**, they sent unto them Peter and John:*"

Acts 11:1, "*And the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received the **word of God**.*"

Acts 12:24, "*But the **word of God** grew and multiplied.*"

Acts 19:20, "*So mightily grew the **word of God** and prevailed.*"

"But," you may say, "They likely do not refer to Jesus either!"

You would be correct! Looking to the Scriptures themselves (and only the Scriptures) it is evident that there are two (and only two) definitions of the Word of God, as follows:

- 1) The name and title of Messiah (Yeshua, Jesus) as previously cited above (John 1) and Revelation 19:13 "*...and his name is called **The Word of God**.*"
- 2) The Word heard within oneself, whether spoken by YHVH Himself or under anointing or unction of the Holy Spirit by another person.

The **Word of God** is the supernatural voice or communication from the Almighty to a person's heart, mind, eyes, ears or spirit; from which comes faith, salvation, guidance and power – otherwise known as "grace".

Now, with your new understanding, read the following Scriptures as if for the first time:

Ephesians 6:17, "*And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, **which is the word of God**.*"

1 Peter 1:23, "*Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, **by the word of God**, which liveth and abideth for ever.*"

QUESTION: Does the Bible live and abide forever?

1 John 2:14, "*I have written unto you, fathers, [and] I have written unto you, young men,*

because ... **the word of God** abideth in you..."

QUESTION: Is it the Bible or the Spirit of Messiah that lives within us?

Finally, let's look – with enlightened eyes – at another very familiar Scripture; and ask yourself, "Does this Scripture really tout the attributes of the Bible?" (Remember to notice the masculine pronouns!)

Hebrews 4:12-13, "*For the word of God is [alive] (KJV = quick), and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. **Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.***"

Messiah **alone** fits this description!

Now, read it again, this way, "*For **Jesus** is alive, and powerful, and the words of **His** mouth are sharper than any two-edged sword, (Revelation 1:16) dividing the soul and spirit, and **He** discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart. **Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in **Jesus'** sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of **him** with whom we have to do.***"

With your new understanding, read again this verse of Scripture, "*So then faith cometh by hearing, **and hearing by the word of God.***" (Romans 10:17)

The **Word of God** is what we hear within ourselves prompting us to believe! The Word of God is – to our own ears – the Whisper, the Still, Small Voice guiding us and urging us to repent. This **Voice** – the *true* Word of God – *makes known the words we read in the book!*

Can we obtain this level of faith because we read the Bible? No! Sadly, *many* read the Bible and have no faith at all!

It is possible that we were supposed to be listening, but instead spend our time merely reading the **Word of God**? Have we totally missed this most crucial element in our theology?

There are many more mis-defined words and thus misdirected doctrines...but, *FIRST* we must get this one right!

"... Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables? **The sower soweth the Word [of God].**" (Mark 4:13, 14)

Whenever I speak on this subject there are a variety of responses. Some people just consider the concept as "mind candy." "Wow," they say as they try to rightly define the Word of God, the Bible, the word of unction and knowledge. Still others are relieved that they have discovered this obscuration of a perfectly documented Christian/Biblical principle. BUT, there are some seekers of Truth who, realizing that the Word of God is His voice, wonder...*What is it?*

Chapter 3

Hearing the Voice of YHVH- By Faith

When someone begins to talk about *hearing the voice of God*, the nuts start falling from the trees. Those who "hear" Him speak daily come to the front and those who are more conservative in their thinking start to retire to the back of the room (and many times eventually slip out the door never to be heard from again.)

So, what is the truth? What can an honest, non-nutty, sober, Bible-believing, person expect to experience by way of communication from the Almighty?

YHVH's communication with man-kind is complicated by His decision to save us *by faith*. If He appeared to us every morning and spoke to us every night, ours would not be a journey of true faith. It would be a "forced faith" and far from His objective.

I believe this fact brings to the forefront yet another very important factor involved in communication with our God that hinders and forces the surreptitious scenario.

Why pray in the closet? Why "visitation in visions of the night"? Why silence? Why does He hide Himself? Job answered these things quite nicely.

*"For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; Then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction, **That he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man.** [In doing this] He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword."* (Job 33:14-18)

Job was sure that personal encounters with our Creator would surely destroy us. He discovered that YHVH visits with us in our sleep. He whispers in our ear. He gives ideas. He is the "...still, small voice."

Isaiah promised, *"And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left."* (30:21) *"Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts... For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people."* (28:9-11)

Isaiah's description clearly relays an idea of an *unclear* and *unsure* communication. Why would our God choose these qualities in His method of communication?

"Oh, thankfully" (the Jews must have thought) "when Messiah comes, He will speak plainly to us!" (Wrong, again!)

Stammering Lips...Another Tongue?

Have you ever traveled abroad or encountered a foreigner in an airport and asked them a question only to receive a response in an unknown language? It is awkward. You don't know what they said or what they heard. You can't even be sure if they answered your question.

Have you ever tried to converse with someone having a severe stuttering problem? You want to anticipate their responses. You may even be tempted to be rude enough to finish their sentences for them. Both of these scenarios are frustrating and embarrassing!

Likewise, the disciples were disappointed that Messiah spoke unclear messages.

"And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables?"
(Matthew 13:10-13)

Yeshua answered, saying to them, *"Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand."*

Obviously, Messiah's method of "secret" communication (speaking in code – if you will) is necessary for reasons we do not fully understand.

Warfare Communications

Remember when Daniel prayed and received no answer for nearly a month? (Daniel 10:11) Finally, the angel came and explained to him that there were forces that had hindered his arrival with Daniel's answers.

Obviously, there are things we do not know. There are forces, adversaries, hindrances and details of spiritual warfare we may never know. One thing is sure – *poor communication stymies warfare!*

Has YHVH stopped speaking to us, and instead given us a very old book from which we are expected to develop battle plans?

No! There was a time when the Almighty sent a prophet to say what needed to be said to His people. Now, He has instituted a better way:

*"...a **new and living way**, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God;"* (Hebrew 10:19-20)

The writer of Hebrews made the arrangement abundantly clear. He has sent a faithful prophet to speak to each of us individually.

*"There was a time in the past when YHVH spoke to us through the Prophets, **but now He speaks to us through His Son.**"* (Hebrews 1:1 - paraphrased)

Like it or not, this is the way Jehovah has **chosen** to speak to us.

What Did Jesus Say?

Please allow me to truncate the red words and pull out the lines that deal with communication in order to make fluid the thought of His entire message. Don't just read, **LISTEN** as Jesus explains communications following His future ascension:

*"... If a man love me, he will **keep my words**: and my Father will love him, and **we will come unto him**, and **make our abode with him**. ...and the **word which ye hear** is not mine, but the Father's which sent me. ...But **the Comforter**, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, **he shall teach you all things**, and **bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you**. ... Hereafter **I will not talk much with you**: [and next we get a glimpse of the warfare considerations involved in communication] **for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me**." (John 14:23-30)*

We are left to wonder what He meant exactly. *If* we have settled on the fact that we will **NOT** be receiving a phone call from YHVH this afternoon; *if* we will **NOT** be getting directions from a TV evangelist posing as a prophet; *if* we realize that we will **NOT** be scrounging some direction for our lives from the stories written in the Bible, then we are once again left with our original question...

If guidance does not come from golden letters written in the sky; *if* we cannot expect daily direction to come from the Scriptures; *if* there is no prophet to expound the "Word of the LORD"; if the "Word of God" is not what we have always thought it was... **WHAT IS IT?**

The List

Let's begin to establish the forms that divine communication (the Word of God) **WILL** take, as follows:

- Prophecy – Hearing another person speak for Jehovah
- Scriptural Mandate - Compunction/ Compulsion
- Righteousness - "Rightness"
- Word of Wisdom/ Word of Knowledge
- Nightly guidance
- "Great and powerful doors"
- A still, small voice.

From now on, we will be addressing the points in this list. I don't expect you to understand it – **YET**; even those of you who have read and heard the words and phrases within it will likely get some wrong concepts because of tradition. The points are placed in the order that they will be presented, and likely the way they will appear in the life of an average Believer who decides to walk by faith and listen for **THE Guide**.

Chapter 4

Prophecy - Hearing Another Person Speak For Jehovah

Like the Israelites of old who did not recognize what they saw before their eyes in the shadowed plains of Sinai, the modern Christian has as little or even less understanding of true manna, the Word of God. As the term cannot be readily comprehended, it has fallen into obscurity.

The word "prophecy" has been misused for such a long time that many of us do not know what it is. To clarify, let's first discuss what it is *NOT*.

A prophet is not a mystical, magical church office held by a select few persons. Neither is prophecy merely the foretelling of future events (although it could contain such information).

Simply put, prophecy is ***speaking the Word of God***. Mind you, I did not say *reading* or *reciting* the previously recorded words of God. Prophecy is ***speaking the words*** that Jehovah is saying ***at that very moment***.

When prophecy is *real* it is a marvelous thing to witness. Unfortunately, it is much more rare than many of us imagine.

Much of the "power" attributed to modern preaching is merely poetic charisma (that is, words and personality used particularly for the *purpose* of evoking emotion); but, when you encounter the true Word of God from the mouth of a person, it is an instrument of YHVVH; and, it is a powerful and moving experience (maybe even a little frightening!)

This powerful ***Word of God*** can come from a six-year-old child, a garbage man, or a jack-ass having an owner named Balaam – it matters not! It has the same power!

Deep Calleth Unto Deep

When men and women seek guidance, they frequently seek it from *other persons*. Beware! The *gift* of prophecy and the *talent* for seduction are so similar it will take a discerning ear to distinguish between them. (Later, in a particular verse, we will see that Paul actually warns those who receive from men to beware of these "seducers".)

Since there is a risk of seduction, why would we pay attention to *any* word of prophecy?

Although it is YHVVH's plan for us to hear and obey, the sad truth is, many times, we just don't. In this condition of disobedience, we can no longer hear for ourselves.

The Problem – The Solution

We have not sanctified ourselves. We have not brought our appetites under control. Instead, we

have harbored pet sins and indulgences that clog our ears and fog our minds. These conditions make communication with the Almighty nearly impossible. This is why *true* prophecy is a lifesaver which has been given to us. It is "*...a word fitly spoken*" to put us on track, give us hope or assurance, and sometimes even dig out hidden or unknown sins and motives. All are intended to improve our lives.

Many times that word delivered to us by a mere man is only an *external* witness to an *internal* truth. It rings clear and true because "*...deep calleth unto deep.*" (Psalms 42:7)

When we believe that the Kingdom of God is within us (Luke 17:21) and believe that the Word of God is "*nigh*" ... "*even in our mouths*" (Romans 10:8), we can better understand. Only then are these words clear to us, "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him." (1 John 2:27)

Now, with your new understanding, carefully read the following verses:

"But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory ... But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received...the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." (1 Corinthians 2:7-12)

Paul went on to claim, "*Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual*" [then, he then warned (as I did earlier) about our mutual problem of carnality] *But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ."* (1 Corinthians 2:13-16)

So, if we can hear for ourselves, what is man's role as prophet, teacher and guide?

The story of the Ethiopian eunuch perfectly portrays man's role. Often, this story is cited in rebuttal of the concept that we need no teacher. When Philip inquired, "Do you understand what you read?" the Ethiopian asked in response, "How can I – except some man should guide me?" This is why I've compiled a condensed version of this story, as follows:

"And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south ...and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority ...[who] had come to Jerusalem for to worship, was returning, and sitting in his chariot read[ing] Esaias the prophet. Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.

The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and

like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus." (Acts 8:26-40)

At first, it may sound axiomatic that we all need a human guide; but, when we examine the scene that day, we will clearly see that the "guidance" was provided for a person who did **NOT know Messiah**. Without the Word of God, evangelism is reduced to guesswork. It's "scattergun marksmanship" at best.

Philip received the Word of instruction and obeyed by giving the Word of God to the eunuch. The Word of God actually makes at least three appearances in this story:

- Philip heard the angel of the LORD

- He was told to approach the chariot and he himself then spoke the Word of God to the African ruler.

- Finally, the eunuch listened as Philip presented the Word of God and that Word eventually accomplished what It was sent to do.

This is the kind of communication we need in our own lives! I cannot speak with any authority pertaining to conversations with angels or hearing voices from heaven as I have never encountered these; but, I can speak to the idea of having had daily inward guidance, and I live by it every day.

You might ask, "Wouldn't it be easier to just do what the preacher says?"

Of course, it would be easier! (Note: If *EASY* is what you are looking for... *FIND ANOTHER BOOK TO READ – NOW*. It only gets *HARDER* from here!)

The fact is that the Ethiopian eunuch needed a man to guide him because he had no Inner Guide. Furthermore, Philip was caught away immediately afterward because there was no further need for his instruction.

Once anyone acknowledges Jesus as Messiah, the gift of the Holy Spirit is received and the great Teacher Himself becomes the Guide (You don't think that maybe the Ethiopian ordered Philip's books and DVD teaching series or just stayed in touch by email?)

This Ethiopian man provides a clear case of someone in need of guidance because *he did not* know the promise of Messiah. *He did not know* that the Son of YHVH would come and live inside him, teach him and guide him into all truth. This poor man needed Philip. He *needed* someone who *did* have the power to guide him into truth.

How About You?

Do you need a prophet? There are also some people who are so far from truth that they will never "*return to the faith once delivered by the saints*" without a guide. They cannot return; and, they do not know or why they *should*.

Many people know within themselves that something is missing – some information or doctrinal truth is absent. Their philosophy of life is nothing more than denominational rhetoric. Their way of life is dependence upon weekly stimulus from the interaction with those who believe the same empty doctrine that they believe.

These poor people are "ripe for plucking." They are fodder for the seducers. They feel that they can trust no one while simultaneously they trust anyone dressed in religious garments or promising a closer walk with God.

There are those people who get high on teaching. It is "info-tainment" to them. They mistake their mental highs for drawing closer to YHVH. In reality, they care nothing about nor can they recognize truth.

Paul said, "*And they [the teachers] shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.*" (2 Timothy 4:4) (Notice that Paul did **NOT** say (as is often quoted) "...shall turn **THEM** from the truth;" he said "...turn away **THEIR EARS**..."

All our adversary wants, all he needs... are our ears. When our ears are turned, **it will take a prophet to turn them back**. We cannot (or will not) hear on our own.

This is exactly why prophecy is first on our list. It will likely be your **initial** encounter with the "Word of God." If you are far from faith, it will likely be your **next** encounter. Your response when you hear The Word is to **OBEY**! Walk away from what is false and unsupported by Scripture, historical fact, and common sense and you will hear.

His message to those who were "increased" with goods was that they *DID NOT KNOW* they were wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked (Revelation 3:17). Is it possible to be in this desolate condition and not even be aware of it?

He That Has Ears to Hear...

Time is shorter now than ever! Be honest, be true to yourself. Realize that you may be deceived on many levels; and deceived about things you have never doubted before today.

"**Many are called...**" but, how will you be **chosen** if you do not obey?

Did you hear it? That "...word behind you..." Was it the **WORD OF GOD**?

There is a lot to accomplish in a very short time. Take some time today before the Lord and examine yourself while He is speaking.

Chapter 5

Scriptural Mandate Compunction/Compulsion

It seems, when it comes to playing games, there are two different kinds of people. There are those who appreciate the rule book (and refer to it at every opportunity); and there are those who would rather just play and have a good time.

As it is with Golf, Go Fish, Monopoly or Mahjong so it is in the world of religion. Which kind of person are you?

The Bible is full of rules. Depending upon our character- type, the same rules can threaten or comfort; but, whether the rules provide a sense of warning or wellbeing we are, nevertheless, *required* to obey them.

We are *expected* to live by certain Scriptural mandates. We don't need, for example, to pray for guidance about keeping the Sabbath Day holy. This is a *Commandment*, a *rule*. We don't have to wonder whether it is right or wrong to keep the Ten Commandments. They are rules. They are mandates. These are rules that require no further investigation. They require only our obedience.

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." (Romans 8:14)

However, our goal should not merely be to obey the words written on parchment (or, even on animal skins); we should *want* to be led of the Spirit. We should *want* to be the sons and daughters of our Father and our God!

As our familiarity with the Scriptures grows, as our obedience to the Commandments becomes more fluid and natural, we enter another level of obedience. We find ourselves obeying a law that we cannot find ***written*** anywhere. If this "law" is not merely a personal preference or tradition, it is likely a compulsion or compunction that has been attached to our ***understanding*** of Scripture.

If it's compunction, we will have a resistive feeling that appears at a time when we least expect it. When we become compelled in this way, we may not be able to find Scriptural "proof text", but we are sure that we should obey it.

This feeling of compunction is the Word of God to our innermost being. We are compelled to act on our feeling. We ***KNOW*** it is the right thing to do – but, there is not a shred of Scripture to lend credence. This is the Word of God to our soul.

So ... If It Feels Good, Do It?

In a perfect world doing whatever "feels good" would be perfectly safe and wholesome. The fact is that it has been a very long time since this world was perfect, and the reason this practice is so dangerous is because we are so far from what the Father wants us to be.

How can we safeguard our *senses* from being *mis*-guided? *Enter...the Commandments!*

Feelings can be wrong; so, until a person has lived by the Commandments for a very long time and has developed a good track record of obedience, I would not give counsel to operate by any "senses."

I cite the wisdom of the Apostle Paul, who said, "*For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the **word of righteousness**: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their **senses** [4] exercised to discern both good [compulsion] and evil [compunction].*" (Hebrews 5:13-14)

The word used here for "senses" is defined as a faculty of the mind used for perceiving, understanding, and judging. Isn't this *exactly* what we desire? When Paul speaks here of the "word of righteousness," he warned that those yet on "milk" CANNOT POSSIBLY trust their *senses* to discern good and evil.

If you are one who has always been taught that the "word of righteousness" is the *Bible*, this Scripture has been used improperly to coax you and other laymen into more Bible study and more learning. However, the meaning is changed completely when we apply what we have learned; that is, that the "Word of God" is not necessarily just the words of Scripture. It is much, much more. The Word of God involves a living and powerful *communication*.

Paul's phrase the "word of righteousness" is EXACTLY what we are discussing. (By the way, this is the only appearance of the term in the Scriptures.) The word of "right-ness" to our spirit is how we wish to live, but, should we rely upon our own wits? Can we?

Compunction (a resistive sense) and compulsion (a supportive sense) drive our consciences; consciences which are *only* reliable when we are *fully* obedient to the expressed Laws of YHWH.

Here's a test. Ask yourself if you would trust the counsel of someone who continually justifies a weekly indulgence to steal? Would you trust anyone who commits adultery ...or murder? No? Well, then, if you have justified your own sins and effectively ignored the Commandments of God, why would you *trust your own* heart to guide you?

Who *can* be trusted? What are we to *do*? How can we be sure of guidance? All of these thoughts, if considered for more than a moment, can easily explain why folks give in to the rules and just play the game. They just take out a "fire insurance" policy (so-to-speak), and take on the attitude of, "Just tell me what I need to do to stay out of hell!"

Just as we want certain things from our God, we must understand that in our relationship to Him, He has desires, too. One of which is that we would obey Him out of *love* and not *duty*. Of all who obey Him as servants only a very few are deemed as His *friends*.

Let's look at a red-letter discussion from the Son of God about how the role of *communication* can make us His *friends*.

"Henceforth I call you not servants; for the *servant* knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you *friends*; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." (John 15:15)

Insurance or Assurance?

In order to trust our own leadings, we must "...*assure our hearts before Him*". We must have confidence toward our relationship with our God and enable Him to communicate His will to us. If we do not follow this process... if we skip a step... we are ripe for deception, delusion, and we are doomed for ultimate failure.

How can we KNOW that we are right? How can we KNOW that we are of the Truth? John gives us the answer to this important question.

*"And hereby we know that we **are of the truth**, and shall **assure our hearts before him**. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater [more strict, more exacting, and more demanding] than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, **then have we confidence toward God**. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, **because we keep his commandments**, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight."* (1 John 3:19-22)

If the Commandments are not a part of your life – or if you feel that they have passed into obscurity, you are jeopardizing a true faith relationship with the Almighty God and His Son, Jesus Christ. In reality, you are disregarding the *ordained guidance* you have so long desired in your life.

Contrary to the common preaching and teaching that the Law is the "enemy of faith", the exact opposite is true. The Commandments have incredible power to *facilitate* true faith. They are our *safeguard* – enabling us to trust the leading of our own hearts.

When this kind of faith is ours, we can follow our compulsions, and we can allow our compunctions without fear that we are disobeying any of the Commandments. Otherwise, we become legalistic, pedantic and mechanical. Our lives can be only hollow examples of dry and laborious compliance to words made merely with pen and ink.

Finally, when we have this kind of faith, we will be able to follow our God in faith and love without merely obeying in miserable ignorance and impersonal conformity.

When the RELATIONSHIP is center stage and the CONSCIENCE is clear of violations; when the Commandments are not ignored, the heart (upon which the newest covenant's Commandments are now written) can be followed in full assurance of faith.

*"Let us draw near with a true heart in **full assurance of faith**, having our **hearts** sprinkled from an evil **conscience**..."* (Hebrews 10:22)

"Full assurance of faith..." This concept appears all over the Bible! Everywhere we look, the conscience is tied to true faith and assurance. Assurance is tied to Commandment-keeping.

Obedying the Commandments facilitates purity, and purity demands an inviolate conscience. Why else would Paul say, *"And herein do I exercise myself, **to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.**"*? (Acts 24:16)

A clear conscience is of utmost value to those living by faith. Paul puts this idea together in perfect form in a discourse with young Timothy.

*"Now **the end of the commandment** is charity out of a **pure heart**, and of a **good conscience**, and of **faith unfeigned**: From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain*

*jangling; Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm. But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, ... This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, ... that thou by them mightest war a good warfare; Holding **faith**, and a **good conscience**; which some having put away concerning faith have **made shipwreck**:" 1 Timothy 1:5-19*

Isn't it interesting that Paul describes the process of trying to live by faith without a good conscience not as *having* a wreck – but, as *making* a wreck?

If we live only to avoid the consequences of broken laws (that is hell and destruction), we are like those who avert their eyes as they pass under a traffic light because if they don't see the light turn red they somehow are justified and not going to be held accountable for running that red light!

Many, many people do not take into account the *danger* of breaking the Law! When we attempt to avoid the consequences of law-breaking, we won't just *HAVE* a wreck – we will likely *MAKE* one!

"Let Us Hear the Conclusion of the Whole Matter"

So, what is left for us to do? The Preacher said it best, "*Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.*" (Ecclesiastes 12:13.)

When we live in compliance with His commandments and our consciences are clear, we can safely act upon our compulsions, we can withdraw at our compunctions, and we will know that we are hearing and obeying the Word of Righteousness – the Word of God.

Chapter 6

Righteousness - "Rightness"

We have been talking about manna. Not the *actual* manna that fell in the wilderness, but its *spiritual* equivalent, the Word of God. We have found that religious society, in general, has mistakenly re-named the Scriptures as the "Word of God" and, therefore, has caused a most severe and dangerous condition. Without clear understanding of *what* – more perfectly, *WHO*, is the Word of God, we are miserably destined to wallow in non-communication and doubt for the whole of our life.

If we use only the Bible as our guide, we will be limited, to say the least. We have learned that the Word of God actually takes two forms. First and foremost, It is the name/title of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ (Yeshua Messiah).

Secondly, the Word of God is the *realized* communicative connection between YHVH and His children (whatever form that may take).

We have also learned what the Word of God is **NOT**. It is not what the Almighty *has said* or even *will say*. The Word of God is what He **IS** saying! The realized forms can be found in our original list:

- Prophecy – Hearing another person speak for Jehovah
- Scriptural Mandate - Compunction/ Compulsion
- Righteousness - "Rightness"
- Word of Wisdom/ Word of Knowledge
- Nightly guidance
- "Great and powerful doors"
- A still, small voice.

Righteousness is often considered in a liturgical sense, thereby skewing its meaning in the mind of the average Believer. If this word is only contemplated in a "religious" sense, the "real world" application will be missed. *Righteousness* is simply *rightness* or *correctness*; it is that which is *appropriate* or *suitable*.

The King James Bible uses another term that would suffice as a definition of *righteousness*; that is "meet." The term "To be meet" means that it is perfectly suitable; so suitable, in fact, that it was nearly a "duty" to carry out.

Have It Your Way! (Copyright - Burger King Corporation)

There is much controversy about a particular Scripture in the Old Testament, specifically, "*Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk.*" (Exodus 34:26b - first instance) The Jewish community has wrestled with this verse and ultimately interpreted (actually they have *mis*-interpreted) it in such a way that making a cheeseburger is a sin. (Anyone with taste buds knows that *can't* be right!)

This is the Scripture upon which the practice of segregating meat and dairy (a rule that carries much importance in the Jewish household) has been based. It has brought about the use of separate refrigerators, separate preparation surfaces, separate kitchens, even separate restaurants. When in Israel, you will have to decide whether you want to enter the "meat side" of the restaurant or the "dairy side". (For a guy who likes ice cream after his steak sandwich this was EXTREMELY difficult for me!)

Amazing as it may be, Abraham was totally unaware of this requirement. When the heavenly visitors came to visit him, Abraham "... took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them...and they did eat." (Genesis 18:8)

So, just what is the meaning of this Scripture? As we have come to expect, the Lord YHVH explained exactly why He used the term.

*"And the LORD said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the **tenor** of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel."*

I sincerely believe that the phrase about seething a kid in its mother's milk was a saying or a motto given to Moses by YHVH with the desire that it often be repeated. Much like the more modern phrases such as "shooting fish in a barrel" or "cutting off your nose to spite your face," when taken literally, these sayings are ridiculous, but they *illustrate* something more in order to make us think about what we are doing.

It is the *message* of the verse – not the *words* – in the verse that is to be obeyed. Moses was told to *write* these words, and to write them just as YHVH had said them, "...for after the **tenor** of these words I have made a covenant with Israel."

The King James translation of the Bible uses the perfect word, *tenor*, to describe the intentions of the Father. It is a delightful word conveying harmony, expectation, and understanding. When we catch the *tenor* of a song we know almost instinctively what the next note might be. We understand the melody. We hear the song as the composer intends.

The Red Letters Have Lessons in "Tenor"

Matthew recorded Jesus as He quoted from Hosea (6:6), "*For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and **the knowledge of God** more than burnt offerings.*" (Matthew 9:11-13, "... the Pharisees ... said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners? But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But **go ye and learn what that meaneth**, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.")

Do you remember when Jesus revealed the "modus operandi" (method of operation) of His ministry? He said, "*I simply bear witness to truth – those who are of the truth, hear my voice.*" (John 18:37)

In like manner, Jehovah has deliberately sprinkled high ideals and deep theological thoughts into the pages of Scripture hoping that we would recognize and follow them. These are clues meant to create not sound theology, as such, but, a **knowledge** of Him.

Knowledge of YHVH is the key! It is His desire for us to know Him, understand Him, and do His will *because it is our own desire*. Jesus called this very fact to the attention of the Pharisees, "*But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.*" (Matthew 12:7)

Higher, purer thoughts than our own are sometimes difficult to attain; but, with a saying, a colloquialism, a maxim or moral, we may flash to a thought of righteousness and actually be able and willing to do the right thing.

Here is another rather obscure Bible verse that serves as an example: "*If a bird's nest chance to be before thee in the way in any tree, or on the ground, whether they be young ones, or eggs, and the mother sitting upon the young, or upon the eggs, thou **shalt not take the mother with the young**: But thou shalt in any wise let the mother go, and take the young to thee; that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days.*" (Deuteronomy 22:6-7)

Just as with "...*seething a kid in its mother's milk*", we could take this idea to be **THE LAW** and, therefore, inviolable. According to the literal meaning of these verses, we are to remove the eggs out of every nest we chance upon – whether we want them or not – whether we are hungry or not. IT'S **THE LAW**! We *must* take them!

This is exactly the kind of folly that causes so many problems within our congregations. It is clear that Jehovah is trying to tell the Church we should consider the natural order of things on earth. If mother birds are removed from their nests often enough, there will be no eggs and eventually no birds!

Do you hear Him implore you to be compassionate? Why would you leave the eggs or the young birds to die in the nests? His exhortation is, "Don't be so selfish! Don't cut off your nose to spite your face just because you walked up on a free dinner so easy to acquire that would be like shooting fish in a barrel."

(Get it?)

So, just what is boiling a baby goat in the milk of its mother all about?

Many times we may be **ABLE** to accomplish something; but, just because we are **CAPABLE** does not mean that it is the **RIGHT** thing to do. Remember our subject? **RIGHTEOUSNESS**! Is it *right*? Is it *wholesome*? Is it *good*? Is it *compassionate*?

Somehow, it just isn't "**right**" to boil a baby in the milk of its own mother. Using the very liquid meant to give life to the young one in order to prepare it as a meal is just not **right**! We don't need sound theology to see these things. Neither do we need supernatural communication from heaven to tell us. We just know that they are wrong.

Sensitivity to the Lack of Rightness

We may find ourselves in situations that **ALLOW** us to *do* something, *go* somewhere, *buy*

something, or even *say* something. We may be **ABLE** to perform certain tasks or even indulge ourselves in some pleasure, extravagance or luxury *against which no Scripture exists* – but, we discover a "stop" in our spirit and find a flicker of "wrongness" in the actions.

I assure you, friend, when you find yourself feeling this "wrongness", when you sense this "stop" within you, it matters not a whit whether the Scripture prohibits it. If you continue against your conscience, you continue against *RIGHTEOUSNESS* – and *AGAINST YOUR GOD'S WILL!*

"... *if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.*" 1 John 3:20.

We will all be held accountable for our obedience to the Voice – as well as to the Scriptures! As a matter of fact, the Scriptures tell us that those who are led of the Spirit are held to a higher standard than those who followed only the written Law.

Listen to the message that emerges as we couple the ideas of Hebrews 1:1-2 and 10:28-30:

*"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets [the Scriptures], **Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son...**"*

*"He that despised Moses' law **died without mercy** under two or three witnesses: Of how much **sorer punishment**, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, **who ... hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?**"*

Rightness in our spirit is the Word of God to us; but, how can we be sure that what we hear is indeed the Word of God? This assurance can only come by living in such a way as to trust your sense of right. Obey these two rules and you can trust your Guide!

RULE ONE: Never violate the Commandments.

RULE TWO: Never violate your own conscience.

Be not deceived. That Voice within did not originate with you. If you *ever* want to hear His Voice again, obey Him *while* He is yet speaking! (Obedience makes the voice clearer still!)

Remember, just because what you want is not prohibited by the Scriptures, does not mean that it is the right thing to do. Paul understood this and attempted to share this message with the Corinthians in his first letter, "*All things are **lawful** for me, but all things are not **expedient**: all things are **lawful** for me, but all things **edify** not.*" (1 Corinthians 10:23)

How Will You KNOW If You Have Only READ But Do Not HEAR?

There is a voice within that can fool us. I call it the "**Cultured Conscience**." This voice has developed over years of *habit* and *personal preference*. Sometimes it is due to the strong personalities involved in our upbringing or rules imposed upon us when we were young by those we admired or respected (or feared and resented).

It will take some time in meditation and careful consideration to sort these things out; but, in the meantime, don't violate your conscience. Go with what you have. You must obey, as Paul says, "*...for conscience sake.*" (1 Corinthians 10 – Romans 13)

A good example of the results of a Cultured Conscience is church attendance. Many people feel it is inexcusable to miss going to "church" on the sun-day. Even though there is no Scriptural mandate anywhere to attend any meeting, on a weekly basis! (Oddly enough, usually those who teach that church attendance is a mandate also ignore the clear Commandments to attend the annual Feasts of YHVH!)

Also, moderation notwithstanding, some people cannot step over the alcohol barrier. Others cannot tolerate tobacco, movies, dancing, or.... (this list is long!) all the while engaging in many abhorrent behaviors which have been clearly and directly addressed by the Father and His Son.

Gossip, gluttony, immodest dress, theft of the tithe, and Sabbath desecration) go unchecked and are even deemed acceptable by conventional churchmen! How is it that we strain at such gnats and swallow the camels? It is our Cultured Conscience which allows that for which we are accustomed and rejects those things with which we are not familiar.

Although these horrible behaviors are in direct violation of the Commandments of both of the Father and the Son, they do not exist as "sin" in the minds of many Christians. This is because the average Christian allows culture, environment, and society to dictate to their conscience.

Social behaviors considered to be sins by many are not even mentioned in the Scriptures at all; yet, they present immovable barriers in the consciences of many Believers. If we allow this condition of our conscience to continue in our lives, we will find it greatly difficult to be led of the Spirit. The Spirit who wrote the Scriptures will have great difficulty with any mind set according to society's priorities in defiance of Scripture.

There is no quick solution to this problem. Renewing of the mind is a slow and difficult process. It requires many hours of immersion in the Scriptures as well as isolation from religious influence. Gaining a renewed mind necessitates a dogged determination to reject what comes from the imagination of men (no matter how well intentioned) and accept *only* what the Scriptures of Truth have revealed as necessary and important guidelines.

Can I Trust My Guide?

Your Guide, you *can* trust; but, beware of your own heart's leadings until there is evidence of true humility in your life along with respectful submission to the Scriptures and frequent repentance. For now, allow inconvenient inconsistencies – both in your own *AND* in the consciences of others.

The contradictions will diminish over time. The disparity in your thinking and the wrong doctrines you hold are much less important now than you learning to listen and obey your conscience. Your God will keep you safe – *IF* you are contrite and honest with Him.

Our Master seems to say in despair, "I have given you all you need to be guided along your path. I have placed the Holy Spirit inside you; still, you continue to look to men and religion for answers."

One of the red-letter questions of Jesus comes to my mind. It reveals His concern in this area when He asks, "*Why judge ye not of yourselves what is right?*" [5]

Chapter 7

Word of Wisdom/ Word of Knowledge

The fourth item in our list will require us to take a step toward that which is undeniably *supernatural*.

Has a person ever said something to you that changed your very life? Has it ever happened that someone said something to you that spoke such perfect wisdom or application to your situation, even when that person did not – *could* not – even know you?

This can also happen in reverse. A person that you do not know may hurt you deeply, changing your life for the worse; or, they may cause you an untold amount of grief and pain with a single statement, question, or even with a single word. When this occurs by mere happenstance, it is a curiosity and very peculiar; but, when the Almighty sends someone your way to guide you with a word of wisdom and knowledge from their mouth, it is an undeniably awesome experience indeed!

Right here is where this concept can go wild. The people of Jehovah are not to believe everyone who has a "word" for them. Most of the time these individuals just want to help; but, on occasion, some advice can be deadly. How are we to know the difference?

The same two rules apply:

RULE ONE: Keep the Commandments.

RULE TWO: Do not offend your conscience.

When we are in His will, even the wildest advice and admonishments coming to us may well be from YHVH. When advice or words seem really extreme, we should take it, hear it, and wait for the Spirit to speak to us about it. Sometimes He will send another bit of nutty advice with the *opposite* message just to show us that we are exactly where He wants us to be – right in the middle of the two extremes! (Let him who has ears to hear...)

We should be open, at ALL times, to ALL persons without fear. If something in your life hinders your God from speaking to you directly, He may send someone else to speak for Him. If He does, it could be *anyone* – of *any* kind of means or appearances. This individual may offend you or please you; they could be a bum or bank executive; but to you, this one is an angel – a messenger of YHVH.

Will this person know they are such a messenger? Maybe, but it is not likely. Jehovah has a way of hiding pride in us thereby making His will and Voice come through without the stain of our ego.

Listening for the Voice of the Lord in *every* person is a good habit. (I cannot tell you how many times I have heard the true Word of God come to me while listening to absolute heresy being preached at high pitch!) We will recognize the Word of God when we hear it.

We have a record that Paul was pleased the Thessalonians could identify his own words as the Word of God.

"For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God..." (1 Thessalonians 2:13)

Does Jesus Have A Sister?

There is a female entity in heaven who is declared to be eternal. Like Jesus, She was around before the worlds were formed and has great interest in helping the human race. Like Jesus, She has her own ministry to mankind.

Do you know who "**She**" is? She has some very peculiar characteristics:

- She is a rare and beautiful being, but many people turn from her because she is so particular about Her acquaintances.
- She has a "man-eater" personality that threatens to destroy those who are unsure of themselves.
- Although She implores all to come to Her, many times She spends Her days alone.
- She loves Her Father, the King, and provides a way for mankind to approach Him. Her Spirit is the very Spirit of YHVH.
- She only introduces Herself at the moment we begin to properly respect Her Father.

Do you recognize who "**She**" is? Here's a hint: *"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of..."*

She is introduced in Proverbs 8 and 9. Meet Wisdom, the "little Sister" of the Lord Jesus! (As a matter of fact, we, too, are admonished to, *"Say unto Wisdom, Thou art my sister; and call understanding thy kinswoman..."* Proverbs 7:4)

The ministry of Wisdom (if you will permit me to continue to speak of Her as a person) is to us. She wants to help us in our relationship to our Father, Jehovah. She is convinced that we would all get along a lot better if we had Her understanding about Him. (I agree with Wisdom!)

King David knew Wisdom, and recorded this awareness:

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever." Psalms 111:10

With this one sentence David gives us a great communication tool. Start with the fear of YHVH – which gives us wisdom; combine it with Commandment-keeping – and there we have it – **UNDERSTANDING!**

Wow! Could it be this simple? Yes, but we must **HEAR** wisdom when She speaks and **OBEY** when knowledge presents itself.

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding." Proverbs 9:10

I hope you understand by this that wisdom and knowledge are not just gifts to make us wealthy and prosperous (although they may). They are essential, necessary and integral parts of our walk of faith.

We will not make it through the next great trial without Wisdom and the knowledge She brings. Without these attributes we will cave in and fail. We will suffer needless torture. We will waste our resources. We will ruin relationships. We will end up doing and re-doing, building and re-building, starting and re-starting every worthwhile endeavor of life. Saddest of all is that these conditions perfectly describe almost every life.

How Did We Get in Our Condition?

We have forsaken Wisdom; whether from the mouths of our close acquaintances, written in the pages of Scripture, and even when supernaturally sent to us by those exercising the prophetic gifts. Why *do* we do this?

Remember, Wisdom is a man-eater. She demands that we make changes. She requires that we look deeper and that we look beyond what stands directly in front of us. She compels us to consider the implications of our actions and regard the spiritual, eternal, and divine in everything we do. She adds (seemingly unnecessary) burdens of accountability and liability to our understanding. Wisdom makes us responsible; and Wisdom broadens our understanding of those responsibilities.

When it gets down to the nitty-gritty, many of us accept "ignorance is bliss" as truth.

Do you realize that a Believer who says, "I would rather not know", "I would rather not talk about it" or "I don't want to consider anything contrary to what I presently believe" is living in a state of *drunkenness*? Drunkenness is nothing more or less than making oneself unaware.

"Ignorance is bliss" said another way is stated, "Unawareness is happiness." This is the credo of every drunk and the by-word of every languid Christian (if there can be such a thing).

Sex Talk

There was an old advertisement that used to have the word *SEX* in big, bold letters across the page, and then went on to say, "*Now that I have your attention...*" but the mention of sexual relationships in the Bible is not so gratuitous.

Scriptural text uses sexual vernacular, in many cases, to explain the spiritual relationships between our Father God YHVH and us. The first chapters of the book of Proverbs begin with a warning of sexual impropriety that can have **dual** applications. Of course, they contain good advice when taken literally but there are many *spiritual* implications, as well.

The verses preceding the introduction of the sister of Yeshua are littered with warnings. They imply, "Don't go after the worldly seductress – seek Wisdom."

It is very important to note that you must have a *DESIRE* for Wisdom in order for *Her* to consider *you* as a suitor. If you want Her, you will pursue Her with strength. When you *capture* Wisdom, before you expose Her, She will expose you! If you can see your own heart and its

foolishness and yet pursue Wisdom, She will let you have your way with Her.

Did I make all that up? Actually this is exactly what the Scriptures say.

*"Through desire a man, having separated himself, seeketh and **intermeddleth** with wisdom. But a fool hath no delight in understanding, that his heart may discover itself."* (Proverbs 18:1-2)

The word *intermeddleth* actually means **to be laid bare**. (Let your imagination take flight.) Because of desire, mankind will attempt to find a secret place in order to coax Wisdom to come with the intention of making Her his own.

When She comes, She will show us our own heart, and – if we can bear the sight of it – She will stay with us.

Many will not, some **cannot**, allow themselves to *be discovered*. Their lives are so ragged and disjointed that they may never give in. Wisdom threatens these people. Understanding frightens them. Sadly, therefore, the knowledge of the Most High is withheld from them.

Do you feel fear welling up inside you as you consider the removal of the foolishness in your own life?

Do you fear the threat of social pressure if you accept what you *already know* is right?

My friend, if you do not repent and clear these barriers, they could eventually suffocate you. You cannot reject Wisdom/Knowledge forever. She WILL fulfill Her ministry to Her Father in you – or She will move on to work in those around you!

The vital relationship of Wisdom's promise and warning is revealed in Proverbs 8:35-36:

"For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the LORD. But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death."

This concept was the pivot point in my own relationship to Messiah and His Father YHVH. The realization that we have not been left comfortless, but that He has given us a *living* entity within to guide us – this is the most precious gift He could bestow upon His children!

Remember – the Word of God is not what the Almighty *has said* (the Scriptures) or even will *say*. The Word of God is what He *IS SAYING*, today, now!

"Every word **that proceedeth**... (not **proceeded** – past tense) out of His mouth."

Chapter 8

Nightly Guidance

When a machine or a device is manufactured it is tested thoroughly. If it overheats or starts to cause abnormal wear, it needs a chance to cool off before it can resume working again. If it is a powerful device, it may, after working for an hour or so, have to be turned off to give it an opportunity to rest for several minutes before it can resume its operation. This process is known as a *duty cycle*.

Many people do not realize that the starter in their vehicle has a duty cycle of only about thirty seconds. After that, it must rest for at least a minute before trying it again or it will severely overheat and burn its internal components. In this case, it is said to have a duty cycle of 30 seconds on and 1 minute off. (So much for the auto repair class.)

Our "machine," our own body, has a duty cycle of about 16 hours on and 8 hours off. Have you ever wondered why the Almighty created us with such a pitiful duty cycle? Why didn't He make us "on" all the time?

As we grow older, we naturally start to think about our remaining years and wonder how much time we have left. It may occur to us that if we spent our life operating on the duty cycle specified by our Creator, we have "wasted" a third of our time in a state of unconsciousness!

How can that cycle make sense? An eighty-year-old man has spent almost 27 years... *asleep*! Who would not like to have an extra 27 years to live? What was Jehovah thinking? As you may expect, YHVH *did* have a plan.

Back to Guidance

Have you ever wondered how your life would be changed if you were able to have conversations with the Almighty on a daily basis? When Adam was in the garden he had such conversations with his Father.

"And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day... And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?" (Genesis 3:8-9)

In our modern and sinful day, daily personal conversations with our God would produce disastrous results. Look at what happens to those who only *pretend* to hear the voice of God. Their lives become complex and proud. These people claim to be "above the crowd", and many times are deemed by others to be "people of God." Others elevate them to a station in life rivaling God Himself. Then, pride takes hold, and they are deceived. Finally, in many cases, they are damned by their own deception.

The hard reality is that if YHVH spoke to us today – in all His power and majesty – it is likely

that we would die; even if we did live through it, we would probably be ruined. Our pride and arrogance would get the better of us. Our sinful minds would ultimately swell and our egos would soar onto a self-deceiving journey that would ultimately destroy our testimonies, our lives, and eventually, our souls.

The Almighty knows this is true; so, how will He give us daily guidance and still protect us from our own worst enemy – our egos? The book of Job brings these two thoughts together in a very obscure verse:

"For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceives it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; Then he opens the ears of men, and seals their instruction, That he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man. He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword." (Job 33:14-18)

The duty cycle of mankind is not a waste of time. Our "off" time, our sleep, is designed to recondition our bodies – AND it is intended to restore our souls! While we sleep, He gives us instruction – knowledge and wisdom about how we are to live every day.

Because this is a "secret" communion, we never fully realize that we are being led, day by day, hour by hour, with an impartation of supernatural wisdom. Not being able to claim some special gift or ability, we have no temptation to consider ourselves any better than the average person. **(If this is hard to understand... maybe you should "sleep on it.")**

How many times have you awaked in the early morning hours with the answer to a perplexing situation? How many times have you handled a problem with clarity and wisdom – the origin of which was unknown to you?

Ego-free guidance! This is the gift of Jehovah to those who love Him.

When attempting to help someone learn how to meditate, I am never surprised when they complain that the quietness purposefully induced causes them to fall asleep.

"Why do I fall asleep?" they ask.

My answer is the same, "Because you are tired!"

In America, many of us are tired. Since our youth, we have learned to resist sleep – to consider sleep as a wasteful enemy of ambition. We turn on lights when it gets dark. We drink coffee when we start to dose. We engage ourselves in nighttime activities that are better left out of our lives.

My dad used to say, "There's nothing to do after nine o'clock except to get into trouble." Maybe his advice to a teenage son is not bad advice at any age. If we viewed sleep, good solid restful sleep, as an opportunity for our God to speak to us, would we be so reluctant to go to bed at a decent hour?

The Cool of the Day

If you thought that your God waits, in the cool of the day (evening) to converse with you and

give you the guidance that you have so long desired, would you avoid that communion by snapping on lights and TV – by pouring another cup of coffee?

When did the manna fall? Many assume that it was every morning because the Scriptures told of them going out in the morning to gather, but Numbers 11:9 says, "*And when the dew fell upon the camp **in the night**, the manna fell upon it.*"

As the evening falls, a sanctuary of communion presents itself to us as well as an appointment of such importance that it may **not** be forsaken by those who truly seek guidance from their Lord.

Those who have studied the calendar of Jehovah will recall that the fundamental principal is that **days begin at sundown**. Is it starting to occur to you yet why this is? I used to wonder why He would start the day with *retiring*. I thought that when I woke up, it would be a brand new day, not when I went to sleep; but, as you have come to expect, we have things backwards.

Because our days revolve around US, we begin as soon as we open our eyes. If we understood the wonderful gift of nightly guidance, our days could and would begin with Him – in the evening – every evening – when we are *scheduled* to commune with **HIM** and be refreshed.

So, will you keep your appointment? Pleasant dreams!

Manna - Our Daily Bread

When we receive our daily bread – our **manna** – there are many problems that just go away. One of those problems is **fate anxiety**, "*Where do I go? What do I do? How will it end?*"

It's about **GUIDANCE**. When it's all said and done, it is *guidance* that we, as children of God, desire more than anything else. The knowledge that we are where we are supposed to be will give us the feeling that we can handle anything that happens.

We **can** handle anything that happens! We can even walk through the valley of the shadow of death **IF** we know that **He is with us** – that *He led us there* – and that we are doing what He wants, where He wants, and when He wants us to do it. Why? Because, if He **leads** us . . . **HE IS WITH US!**

David knew of this blessed guidance when he wrote:

"He ... leadeth me in the paths ... Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me...." (Psalms 23:3-4)

As long as we are being led by the Father, and we are **AWARE** of **HIS LEADING**, we can handle anything.

Jesus was assured that His Father was with Him because He was **following His Father**. In turn, Jesus passed on the ministry of the Holy Spirit in order to lead and guide **US** into all truth. When the Father is watching us, and He is a part of our daily lives; when we live in communication with Him and live as His Son, Jesus, lived, we, too, can have this assurance.

The whole purpose behind what our Messiah came to do, every word He said or preached, and indeed every parable He taught was to develop in us a keen awareness of being led by a living God – through His Holy Spirit – on a daily basis. His ever-present message was that we have no

need of books, liturgies, or rules and words written in stone.

". . . *but he shall be in you . . .*," The prophecy of Jeremiah 31 fulfilled at last! Easy, decision-free living!

Have you ever thought about the fact that Jesus never made a decision in his whole life? Jesus said it like this, "***I always do what pleases the Father.***"

A Red-Letter Question

The desire of our Father is to live with us every day. Jesus taught this truth when he asked the red-letter question, "*Are not two sparrows sold for two farthings?*"

The example of this obedient Son, our Messiah, illustrates that the Father feeds His children every mouthful of food. His teaching ultimately concludes with the fact that, "... [*not*] *one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father...*" (Matthew 10:29)

Truly the Christian life is all about guidance and daily sustenance. Yet, ridiculously, these are the very areas most of us often attempt to handle ourselves – without our Guide. Many times we call on our God like we'd call a tow truck to get us out of trouble. Although a tow truck driver would be glad to get the business and may, for that reason, respond to a call from some fool who has the family Buick stuck in mud to the fenders because of doing a little "off-roading" just for the fun of it, it is clear that our Father does not answer stupidity-induced distress calls.

"Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you. Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh ... Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer." (Proverbs 1:23-30)

It is very easy to see the character of YHVH in this account of Wisdom's counsel. We cannot expect Him to "dig us out" when we purposely do not follow His instruction.

"So", you may ask, "when did God speak to me and I refused to hear?"

We have learned that from the beginning of creation the Voice of God has been available to lead, guide, and comfort mankind. This has been THE plan. (Have you noticed that Adam walked with the VOICE of God in the cool of the day? Genesis 3:8)

We have learned to hear His voice come from other people.

We have learned to listen for the Word of God to come to us in secret visitations of the night.

We have learned to recognize His guidance in our urgings, unction, our hesitations, and compunction.

When our conscience is clear, and the Commandments inviolate, we can trust Him to take us through each day. If He tells us to take the station wagon through the swamp, we can depend on His "tow service," but if He doesn't . . .

Chapter 9

Great and Powerful Doors

Sometimes life does not take us in the direction we desire. We get ahead of our Guide and make big trouble for ourselves and others by "pushing doors open." We see opportunities to get what we want, and we go about to accomplish getting it on our own.

We need to look for "great and powerful doors" already being opened for us!

The Apostle Paul used this same terminology, "*For a great door and effectual is opened unto me....*" (1 Corinthians 16:9)

The King James Version of the Bible leaves this idea unclear. Actually, the indication is that "An **undeniable** and **obvious** door is opening here and I must go through it." Paul continues to qualify this compulsion, "... *[although] there are many adversaries.*"

Here's the Harris translation: "*Even though there are many hindrances and adversaries that are contrary to what I am doing, the size and effect of the doors that are open to me are undeniably the will of God for me.*"

These great and powerful doors are actually a common occurrence in the life of the dedicated, Commandment-keeping Christian. Time would fail for me to tell you of the people who have, through this ministry, learned to keep the Commandments and maintain a clear conscience. They have dropped the religion and now listen to their Guide.

Now, they often experience these "open doors" in almost every area of their lives. "It was obvious!" they say. "It was right there in front of me! There was no decision to make!"

It does not matter if we are talking about the smallest things in life or the largest, inconsequential decisions or the massive life-changing ones, the best option appears, the door swings open, it is obvious!

"Now," you may object, "people taking this advice will simply do whatever they *want* to do!"

Yes! That's right! What do you want them to do – whatever **YOU** want them to do?

You see, there is no danger when following **THE GUIDE**.

This plan is only for men and women who **KEEP** the **COMMANDMENTS**. It is only for those who do not violate their own consciences. This kind of direction does not exist for those who get their guidance from human sources or religion. (Well, it *does* exist – it just works to destroy.)

The reason guidance from YHVH is so coveted and rare is because the main ingredient is **OBEDIENCE** – the very thing that mankind **DOES NOT WANT** to do.

Sometimes we become dissatisfied with the speed at which we are "sailing through life." We want to speed things up, so we put our oars into the stream and pull with all our might. We end

up being ship-wrecked.

Without obedience, pushing through doors and pulling with oars can destroy us.

If you don't obey your Guide, you will hear other voices of guidance, not HIS voice. If you live with a dirty conscience, you will see open doors of opportunity, but you will continue to live in fear and doubt. You will forever wonder if your decisions are right. You will obey your tainted reasoning and always make the wrong decisions.

But, I Am Persuaded Better Things of You

Our little car was proving to be no longer sufficient for us. It was time for us to find another. Pam and I were visiting in an Ohio RV park for a week or so with our friends. On a Friday afternoon, we all went out for a ride in their vehicle.

We had already decided what kind of vehicle we needed, and were settled into that "rocking chair" in our minds that allows the LORD YHVH to work. Pam and I were looking for the "open door."

Suddenly, we saw it! The very vehicle that we had decided we needed! It was parked in a front yard with a bright orange *FOR SALE* sign in the window!

What else could we want by way of guidance?

We stopped and asked about it. The lady had just put it in the yard and was selling it for much less than the actual value. It was *THE ONE* for sure!

I looked at my friend and said, "Well, let's go!" and to the lady I said, "We'll be back after the weekend."

She replied, "Okay, but you need to know, my (uncle, aunt, cousin – I can't remember) is coming back to buy it!"

"I'll see you on Sunday," I said.

"It may not be here," she emphasized again.

"I'll see you on Sunday," I repeated.

My friend was amazed and totally confused. He asked, "What are you doing? Do you need some money?"

"No," I said, "I am just giving someone else the opportunity to buy it."

"What?" He asked. He had never heard anything like that before. He did not understand that we wanted to take this "small door" and allow it to open as a "great and powerful" door.

"But, you might lose the vehicle that you want!" Our friend stated.

Here was the question before us. Would we rather have a new vehicle or a mistake? In other words, did we want our own will or His?

Is this like tempting (testing) God? Or, is He testing us? ***NOTHING, NOTHING, NOTHING***

is more important than guidance! I would rather be guided by my God into Hell than to arrive in Heaven by my own wits and ability (in my new vehicle!)

Take every opportunity to allow another path to materialize. Don't hurry. Don't rush. Don't seize upon your desires the moment they appear. There may be more to it than what appears immediately. How many times have you been shown a better way, a better car, a better job, or a better opportunity just after you had already jumped on the first chance to have what you wanted?

It could be that He has an even greater plan coming within the next few days, weeks, or months. Avoid the natural tendency to make things happen. Do not become impatient. How intelligent would it be to dislike the speed at which we are sailing and put an oar into the water to speed things up when our Father is well aware of the rocks ahead and is trying to plan our route around them?

Don't push on the doors or pull on the oars!

So, Pam and I went back on that Sunday to buy the car and... (Well, maybe I'm boring you with these details.)

Chapter 10

The Still, Small Voice

YHVH spoke to the prophets, the priests, and the fathers of our faith. He spoke to Adam, to Abraham, to Moses, and He spoke to Paul after the death and resurrection of His Son. If He spoke to these men of the past, He can speak *now* – to *us*!

Although this thought may appear to be sound theology, it's not. The words may sound reasonable, but, we must realize that we are talking about an autonomous God who may ...well, He may choose not to speak! As a matter of fact, when I fully investigated this mode of hearing, the still small voice, it was the most depressing of them all. It was depressing because our God is sovereign and there is an ancient curse to take into account.

Younger Days

I feel that the Lord YHVH called me out when I was a young man. I have made many mistakes and missteps in the years since; but, I started out sincerely wanting to do His will.

Soon, I found myself following the crowd and idolizing certain preachers in my life. I wished to be like them and wanted to share their fame.

Like so many men before me, I fell prey to the trap of the ill-defined and misunderstood meaning of the Biblical word "*leaven*." As taught by Messiah and the Apostle Paul, leaven refers to the hypocrisy involved in considering another's approval and then changing our lives, speech and manner because of what someone else might think in order to gain their approval.

My calling was suspended, my vision was blurred, and my growth in truth was halted. The words of the Apostle ran deep within me and convicted me at the roots of my faith. "*Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.*" (Galatians 5:7-9)

I digress for a purpose. I want you to know that my mission started out right. I always knew that my message would be to His people. I knew I would be one to call back to God the Backslider and rekindle the Lukewarm. I knew I was to re-ignite the fires and rediscover the faith once delivered to the saints.

My first opportunity to preach came when I was 16 years old. My grandfather, after hearing that I had this desire, telephoned his own pastor in a little congregation in southern Florida. "He wants to preach if you'll let him," Grandpa said on the phone to this man I didn't know. "My heart skipped at his response, "You want him to preach tonight?"

I can still remember the smell of the musty sanctuary and feel the heat of the evening sun in the room. Mixed with my nervousness, the hot, thick air made it hard to breathe. Most of all, I

remember the text of my sermon – my first sermon:

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it." (Amos 8:11-12)

How about that? I'm still preaching that same message. I just didn't know the meaning of the Bread or the Water; and, I didn't understand the true identity of the **WORD OF GOD**. (These were small details that would consume the next 30 plus years of my life in order to discover the truth!)

Putting all of the nostalgia aside, I find it interesting that my direction was set, my message was true, and my heart *did* hear correct instruction from the beginning. Many years of well-intentioned disobedience wasted a lot of time and effort; but, at last, with whatever years I have left, I find myself right back where I started!

Now for the Discouraging Part

One day, as I considered this realization, I became disheartened. I called my brother, Dale, and asked him, "Do you realize that the Lord has prophesied that my ministry will fail miserably?"

It was then that I realized that I preach all over the earth that we are to receive our instruction directly from the Almighty; we are to hear the Word of God from our only Pastor, the Lord Jesus, but the Scripture says, "Behold, the days come...that I will send a famine in the land... of hearing the words of the LORD: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and ***shall not find it.***"

Does this mean that we will ***not*** hear from Him?

Yes! Not until the two last-day prophets mentioned in the Revelation are manifested should we expect to hear the voice of God, nor should we expect visions, dreams, or miraculous communications. The Father has decided to forgo direct communication for His own reasons. We may search for His words, but we, "...***shall not find it.***"

"Wow!" You may ask, "Are you recanting everything you have taught up until now?"

No, I am qualifying it.

Carefully now, consider the plan of the Father to save us – by **FAITH**. We cannot expect Him to give us tangible evidences of communication, guidance and doctrine. We must receive our guidance by **FAITH**. If we were to get a "phone call from God" or see golden letters written in the sky, how would this be **LIVING BY FAITH**?

To live by faith is very important to our Father's plan for us. Let's look at what Paul said about how His plan must be executed in order to save us by His power alone (by **grace**):

"Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed... of Abraham; who is the father of us all," (Romans 4:16)

YHVH will likely not speak into your ear. As appealing as this may seem, it should be

considered a failure of grace if He did as it would prove that you are faithless and deaf. It would indicate that you cannot operate by faith and that you do not have, as described by the Lord Jesus, "...**ears to hear.**"

If you expect to hear His voice you will only do so by faith and obedience in your everyday life; but, what about the *still, small voice*?

An inaudible, yet perceptible, word of direction is as close as we will get to hearing the *still, small voice*. Although it is rare, it is possible for those who have proven to be faithful and obedient to hear from Him in quietness.

(If you are one who insists that God does indeed speak to you on a daily basis – and in an audible voice, I cannot offer my opinion. It has never happened to me like that so I cannot say how or why it happens to you. Perhaps you should be writing this book.)

However, in order to give Him opportunity to speak to you every day, you must spend time with Him in quietness every day. I make no pretense to hear exclusively or directly, and I certainly make no pretense to hear on your behalf, I just know that when my life is led in the way I have prescribed to you in this thesis, troubles are foreign, power is steady, and life is sweet.

Furthermore, my opinions in these matters and my instructions to you seem to be backed by the Scriptural accounts of the men and women of the past and the teaching falls within the parameter of Bible doctrine.

When I approach the throne of YHVH with confidence and faith mixed with no foolishness, I never seem to lack for direction; and I am blessed in everything I do. Why wouldn't I share, with confidence, this Manna that He has given me?

My hope for you is the relationship the Lord YHVH has set aside – just for you. I would be happy to know that your doctrine came from your Lord, that your ministry is directed daily by His words, and that your life knows no bounds but the borders that He has placed upon it.

It would give me great joy to know that the reality of the words of Messiah have become comforting truth to you and that His voice is the **manna** that feeds your soul.

*"It is good for you that I go away – [then] the Comforter will come – and He will lead you and **guide you into all truth.**" (John 16)*

*"[The Good Shepherd] ... goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers... **My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.**" (John 10)*

Chapter 11

What Stinks in Here?

More than three millennia ago the children of Israel were at a crucial juncture. Having just left the bondage of Egypt and escaping their enemies by divine intervention the Lord YHVH was about to establish the community of His people.

Lessons in discipline, self-control, and holy living were about to become necessary. A new-found desire for the Lord YHVH to live among them was quickly finding its way into the hearts of the children of Israel. The chasm between the holiness and purity of their God, and themselves was about to become an issue. Even though He had delivered them from Egypt – Egypt was still in their heart.

Exodus 16 reads as though the quail and manna happened at the same time, but Numbers 11 gives us more and necessary detail. The manna became despised and boring. Lust for the savory meat of Egypt was slowly being resurrected in them. The place where this lusting for meat took place became known as Kibroth-hat-taavah (the graves of lust).

The manna had a peculiar characteristic. It did not have a shelf life! Remember the instruction for gathering it?

"And Moses said, Let no man leave of it till the morning. Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses; but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and stank: and Moses was wroth with them." (Exodus 16:19-20)

The next verse mentions its other peculiarity. It would evaporate when left in the field. Albeit, fresh manna would appear the next day as though it was subject to a "hydrologic cycle" of sorts.

"...and they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating: and when the sun waxed hot, it melted." (Exodus 16:21)

The characteristics of the manna allowing for its intended use were "perfect timing" and "perfect portion." This translates easily to the correlation I have previously made. I predicate what I submit to you now as foundational doctrine, based upon the following red-letter verse:

"I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever:" (John 6:48-51)

It becomes clear that we are to view the life, body, and blood of our Messiah as the fulfillment of manna.

You may ask, "What 'fulfillment' is necessary for Manna?" Hold that thought – you are going to need it – or at least I will in order to conclude this message. For now, let's deal with the characteristics of manna and how they pertain and speak to the ministry of Messiah.

"This (referring to Himself) is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die." And, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever:" (John 6:50, 51)

By way of review, we have established the Word of God to be Jesus Christ. We have also established the Word of God to a person's own heart and life to be that communication between himself and YHWH alone – with no human mediator. This is the very principle behind 1 John 2:27, "But the anointing which ye have received of **HIM** (the Word of God) abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you..."

From here, let's apply the characteristics of Manna to the Word of God. However know this, we may not gluttonously devour the Bread of Life, we must *"Take... eat..."*

Moses, in Exodus 16:19-20 said, *"Let no man leave of it till the morning."* What did he mean by this? He was speaking to the greediness and impatience of the people. Perhaps it was even laziness that made them want to gather enough that they would not have to come tomorrow, I don't know, but whatever the motivation, this special characteristic of manna would not allow such a practice.

"Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses; but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and stank..."

Even now, our ministry receives mail from those who want it all... **NOW!** "Send me everything you teach!" they ask. "I have a lot of catching up to do!"

I find myself slamming on the brakes and saying, "Where are you going in such a hurry?" Remember it is, *"Give **THIS DAY** our **DAILY** bread..."*

Too many of us are gluttonous devourers. Even when it comes to revelation, we can't wait for the next "dispensation of grace."

When Ezra (read in II Esdras [6]) received his answer that the angel would not continue to answer him insisting that Ezra wait, saying, *"Fast yet for another seven days..."*

"Let no man leave of it till the morning." Meant don't pick up more than you can digest **TODAY**. *"Give us this day..."* means the same thing.

Perfect Timing – Perfect Portion

Many Bible teachings are based in this type of gluttonous behavior. Well-meaning people devour tapes and books, CDs and videos, seminars, conferences and teachings – they gather paraphernalia and trinkets, equipment, supplies, and trappings of their new found "truth" – their shelves are lined with manna stinking and putrid, wormy and rotting manna. Then as their lives start to resemble the very life they left behind for "truth," they look around wondering, "What stinks in here?"

Quickly they are rescued from their "error" by more "truth" coming from a new author, teacher or rabbi who sends them in another direction. As you might guess, they will handle it (pretty much) the same way they handled their last "revelation" and repeat the whole procedure all over again. They find themselves with a hollow relationship, a little older... but, no wiser.

Paul alluded to this very cycle when he warned those who did not discern the Bread of Life properly so that they suffered ill health and even death.

"For I have received of the Lord that ... the Lord Jesus ... took bread: And ... he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. ...wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread ... For he that eateth and drinketh [in an unworthy manner] eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged." (1 Corinthians 11:23-31)

He had just chided them, *"For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. ...What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not."* (1 Corinthians 11:21-22)

How can we avoid this dangerous roller coaster ride that is bound to toss us at the next curve? **SLOW DOWN!** Gather only what is required to maintain your soul's *health* – and keep that appetite under control! **There *WILL* be more manna in the morning.** Can't you wait until then?

Like the children of Israel, we have a tendency to undulate from one end of the spectrum to the other. Let's take a look at the opposite reaction and its dangers...

Got Manna?

Some people, like my wife Pam, are the trusting type that would walk through the woods, pick a berry from a bush, and say, "That looks interesting!" just as she pops it into her mouth to taste it. When she sees a berry she sees pies and preserves in pretty little jars with lace ribbons around their shiny tops.

Me? I would be scared to death to try it. I can only envision men in white shirts barking my vital signs into walkie-talkies, flashing ambulance lights, my eyes rolled back in my head, and foam dripping from the corners of my mouth while someone is pounding on my chest and screaming **"STAY WITH US, DON!!! STAY WITH US!!!"** (Well, you get the picture.)

Anyway, we are **NOT** all alike and so we may handle the unknown differently. When it comes to faith in YHVH we differ as well. Unfortunately, **FAITH** is the junction that Jehovah has chosen. Faith is not an option or an appurtenance that we may or may not possess, may or may not practice. Faith is critical, crucial and an indispensable part of our relationship to the Father, and He takes it very seriously.

Recall to your memory Hebrews 11:6, *"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God **must believe that he is, AND that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.**"*

Faith is the Key!

You may begin to think that general faith in YHVH is simply, "believing that He is".

"I believe that He IS," you may say, but what if He asks you to step out of the boat... onto the water...? Can you see that to disobey IS to doubt that ...He *IS*?

Now let's deal with the perfect timing aspect of manna. The children of Israel suffered a failure of their faith. You probably know the story in Numbers 13. Caleb and Joshua had given their report, "*...We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey... And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.*"

In the next chapter we hear the response of the people, "*And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night. And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness! And wherefore hath the LORD brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt? And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt.*"

And the LORD said unto Moses, "*...How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have showed among them?*"

Chapter 12

The Bread of Heaven

Now the time has come for us to gather up all we've discussed about manna:

- Manna is a symbol of Christ.
- Jesus was (and yet IS) the Word of God.
- Manna is the Daily Bread that comes to us upon the evening dew.
- It is the Word of God to our soul which comes to us upon the stillness of our day's end, in the night visions and slumberings.
- Manna is the sustenance that is so important that Yeshua cryptically referred to in His famous but miscomprehended words in Matthew 4, "Man shall not live by **bread** alone, but by every **word** that proceeds out of the mouth of God."

Manna - Jesus - the Leavened Bread of Pentecost - Communion - Sustenance - Miracles - Word of God - Guidance - Relationship - Loaves - the Shewbread in the Temple that David ate - the Bread of the Last Supper ...

"Take, Eat, this is ME! I am that Bread from Heaven"

Now, with all these recollected thoughts in your head, let's return to our story of the Word of the Lord to the people of Israel...

YHVH was angry with His people's reaction to His promise. He relayed to Moses His displeasure, "*And Moses told these sayings unto all the children of Israel: **and the people mourned greatly [they repented!]**. And they rose up early in the morning, and gat them up into the top of the mountain, saying, Lo, we be here, and **will go up unto the place which the LORD hath promised:** for we have sinned. And Moses said, Wherefore now do ye transgress the commandment of the LORD? but it shall not prosper. Go not up, for the LORD is not among you ... But they presumed to go up unto the hill top...*"

Repentance is good... *right?* Well... it seems that repentance did absolutely no good at all in this situation. What went wrong?

Think of manna. (Got it? Let me help...)

The Word of God came to the children of Israel. "*Go up!*"

They recognized the Word as a promise, "*We will go up unto the place which the LORD hath **promised...***"

(Deuteronomy 1, when recalling this incident, even called this Word a *Commandment*. "...we will go up and fight, according to all that the LORD our God **commanded** us.")

So, how can we get in such trouble from repenting and then *obeying a **commandment***?

Our key to understanding is in the narrative of Moses: after repenting they, "...*girded on every man his weapons of war, ye were ready to go up into the hill. And the LORD said unto me, Say unto them, Go not up, neither fight; for I am not among you; lest ye be smitten before your enemies. So I spake unto you; and ye would not hear, but rebelled against the commandment of the LORD, and went **presumptuously** up into the hill. And the Amorites, which dwelt in that mountain, came out against you, and chased you, as bees do, and destroyed you in Seir, even unto Hormah.*" (Deuteronomy 1:41-44)

The Sin of Presumption - Ever Heard of It?

Not much is said about this sin today because it totally destroys the new age "Faith Movement" practices and procedures. **PRESUMPTION** is how we set about to discount the characteristic of Manna thus causing it to melt when the sun is hot!

Remember that manna-gathering, dining on that Heavenly Bread that preserves life eternally (John 6:50), the daily guidance of the Holy Spirit (John 16:13), requires not only ***perfect portion*** but ***perfect timing***!

The fact is that the manna (the Word of God) melted when the sun was hot. We must act while the manna is **FRESH**! The children of Israel simply allowed doubt and fear to rob them of their immediate promise. Less than 24 hours had passed; but, the manna couldn't last in the hot sun of fear and the daylight examinations of doubtful, half-hearted followers. (So, how can the "faith teachers" get results from two and three-thousand year-old promises written to people they never met? Actually, it's **IMPOSSIBLE**!)

We cannot depend upon ancient promises made to a people of antiquity to meet our needs today. We need **FRESH** manna. We need to gather it for ourselves and act upon His promises **AT THE TIME HE GIVES THEM**! Slow response, doubtful disputations and acts of cowardice in the face of revelation and promise can rob us of a life of sweet, daily guidance.

Pam has the berry in her teeth before I can holler, "***What are you doing!!!***" However, I may stand and stare at my daily provision examining every consequence, every contingency, until I finally look up and see the sun high in the sky. "*Sorry... it's too late,*" I hear the Lord say, "*I'm looking for those who will **listen** and **obey**.*"

Hearing Alone is NOT Enough!

"*Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock.*" (Matthew 7:24)

***Perfect timing** and **perfect portion** ... I guess it comes down to this...*

Take all you want - Eat all you take!

Chapter 13

Eternal Manna

What's the fuss about manna? Bread crumbs fell from the sky and fed the starving people in the wilderness - right? So what? Well, had Jesus never said, "***I AM that Bread***" perhaps I would have chalked it up as another miracle and moved on; but, there was more to it. I pursued. I found every reference and mention by Messiah. I kept finding, in equilateral position, the words and concepts of Jesus, the "word", the bread, the "Word of God", the Son of God, daily bread, Manna... I had to wonder, "What's going on here?"

"If you don't understand this parable, then how will you understand any parable?"

If you don't know what the word of God is - I'm sorry, my friend, **you will likely never fully understand ANYTHING the Bible tells you.** It's a paradox. It is nearly absurd to state that unless you understand the Word of God you cannot understand the Word of God. It's a paradox because our definitions are not correct.

It was the first parable Messiah ever told, "...*the sower sows the word.*"

The **WORD OF GOD** is not the Bible. The Bible is not the **WORD OF GOD**. Although, these statements have the exact same meaning, the second one is likely to be more offensive. When you take the tangible, temporal, and material "Word of God" otherwise and formally known as "The Bible" away from Believers as the "the only rule and authority," they start to panic. Although the Apostle said, "*We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:*" (2 Peter 1:19)

We (including me) have been taught (and taught others) and used the phrase "The Word of God" for so long that the Bible has become familiar to us to use as our "Guide." As a result, when we think about the Bible as anything other than the Word of God, ideas and fears begin to swirl around in our heads and make us doubt, "Could this be right?"

Granted, there are some false doctrines and false teachers whose intent it is to call people away from The Book, but there are *THOUSANDS* more who have carried well-meaning folks into error with their Bible firmly clasp in hand - all the while proclaiming that the Bible is the only rule of faith and practice. (What they don't tell you is that it is merely their understanding of the "Word of God".)

Contrarily, there is One Voice that has NEVER led a single person the least bit astray - not even one centimeter to the right or left of PERFECT truth; that is, the Guide promised to every Believer. Let's recall these red words, "*Howbeit when **he**, the Spirit of truth, is come, **he** will guide you into all truth: for **he** shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever **he** shall hear, that shall **he** speak: and **he** will shew you things to come.*" (John 16:13)

If the plan was (and yet IS) for the Spirit of Truth to guide us, we have made a gross error. To

discount the Holy Spirit as the Teacher and Guide - exchanging it rather for a book of widely interpreted meanings, doctrines and instructions - would have to be the root cause of EVERY problem experienced by the modern Church (and I believe it is!)

Many of the doctrines often fussed about among us are temporal and temporary. Think about these words, "*Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.*" (Hebrews 6:1-2)

I hear the Apostle saying that there are things more important and of weightier moment with which we should concern ourselves; namely (as he continues to explain later in the chapter), "...the **hope** that is set before us."

Our hope is in our perfection; but, perfection will not come through study. Perfection will only come through **communication**. Has our God left us with sketchy, ambiguous communication? Has He left us with the necessity of education in the Scriptures? No! He has always - since the evenings in the Garden of Eden with Adam, to Mount Sinai that burned with His fire, through the still, small voice in the troubled mind of the prophet, all the way to the Mount of Transfiguration - He has always wanted to communicate with mankind! His purpose has always been to feed him with knowledge and understanding - to feed us our daily bread, our MANNA.

The Law

The Law is indeed an everlasting part of life in the Heavenly Father. Without compliance to His eternal standard, we are destined to lose communication with Him. When we lose communication with Him, we need an intercessor, another eternal article... but, what about manna? What about the concept of daily communication? Did our Father see His daily provision of communion as an eternal part of mankind's existence?

As you know, this writer has an abundance of respect for the Law as well as the "Old Testament" doctrines and practices. The Feasts of the Lord YHVH are a part of my life, as are many of the concepts and ordinances of the Tenach [7]. I am one who could be *mistaken* as someone who has slipped under the burden of the Law. Pork and shellfish do not appear at our table. We keep the proclaimed Sabbaths of the Moedim [8]. We practice many of the statutes and ordinances found in the Law. However, although at first glance I might be mistaken for one who has embraced the Law, this would be impossible after a modicum of investigation into the doctrine I live by and believe.

Some aspects of the Law have been fulfilled. Many of the Laws simply do not pertain to those who are in Christ Jesus, those who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Paul put it like this, "... *if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.*" (Galatians 5:18)

Although I do believe that works and faith are both necessary to place ourselves in a New Testament experience of salvation, no honest investigation into my life or doctrine will render anything less than salvation by Christ's finished work.

All that being said, I would like to share an aspect of my revelation into manna regarding it as an *eternal* concept.

Quail was provided in the wilderness. Miraculously, water, protection from enemies, and empowerment over all the inhabitants of land to which Moses was called were also provided. The brazen serpent was given to heal the children of Israel; and, by Messiah's own testimony, was a type of Himself. (John 3:14)

How many of these things were placed in the Ark as an eternal testimony?

Look at two items placed INSIDE the Ark of the Covenant - the Law (the Ten Commandments) written with the finger of YHVH, and the rod of Aaron that budded. They were placed there as a testimony to their institution and eternal value. When these Laws are broken, a mediator - a priest of Jehovah's choosing - will be necessary to make intercession for us. We cannot do this for ourselves. The office of Priest will be forever a part of our lives because of our inadequacies and heritage in Adam. Mankind has tried to usurp this office of Priest and attempted to stand in the gap between the holiness of YHVH and his own sinful flesh; therefore, the rod of Aaron was placed in the ark to, "... *be kept for a token against the rebels...*" (Numbers 17:7-10)

Here we have two eternal reminders, the Law and Jehovah's appointed Priest; but there was a third eternal item placed into the Ark. Hebrews 9:4 lists the three items in the Ark: "*Which had the golden censer, and the Ark of the Covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant;*"

This list was obviously compiled from the following references:

2 Chronicles 5:10, "*There was nothing in the ark save the two tables which Moses put therein at Horeb, when the LORD made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of Egypt.*"

Numbers 17:10, "*And the LORD said unto Moses, Bring Aaron's rod again before the testimony, to be kept for a token against the rebels; and thou shalt quite take away their murmurings from me, that they die not.*"

Exodus 16:33, "*And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a pot, and put an omer full of manna therein, and lay it up before the LORD, to be kept for your generations.*"

These Scriptures make it clear that an omer of manna can be found, miraculously preserved, in the Ark of the Testimony. Why is there not a quail in the Ark? Why not a cruse of water from the split rock at Horeb? The brazen serpent would have been an interesting artifact, too!

There are two reasons why these particular items were chosen. The first reason contains my point about eternity. The immutable Law and the Priestly Intercessor are partnered with the loving daily Bread provided then - AND STILL TODAY. Remember the words of Jesus, "***I am that Bread.***"

The tables of stone are another Messianic reference. In addition to this revelation is His claim to ownership of the Commandments, "***If ye love me, keep my commandments.***" (John 14:15)

Now that Jesus has sat down at the right hand of YHVH, the role of High Priest is clearly filled by Him. We have three items, eternal items, representing the finished work of Yeshua. Not the least of these is ... Manna.

Chapter 14

Manna – A Witness

I mentioned that there were two lessons to learn from the presence of the golden pot of manna placed in the ark. While the eternal aspect of manna is comforting, the presence of manna in the ark of the testimony -- as is true with many of the lessons presented by YHVH -- is a two-edged sword.

What exactly *IS* the Ark of the Testimony? Some call it (as the Bible itself does) the Ark of the Covenant. Others refer to it as the Mercy Seat (another Scriptural term); but, what exactly *IS* it? Let's look at the Biblical description.

The books of both Genesis (6:14) and Exodus (2:3) make it obvious that an ark is merely and simply a box – a container. It can be big or small, but, it's just a box.

Noah's instructions were to, *"Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch."*

Moses' mother, *"... took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein..."*

But, what is Ark of the Covenant supposed to represent when it was commissioned in Exodus 25:10? *"And they shall make an ark of shittim wood: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof."*

What is this box (approximately 50 x 30 x 30 inches) supposed to be?

*"And there I will **meet with thee**, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel."* (Exodus 25:22)

It becomes clear by this description and the instructions that this is the throne, or seat, or place where YHVH will interface with His people. The Commandments contained within serve as a standard of holiness - they outline the minimum requirements for communion and communication with our Holy God.

We are held to these standards when we come to meet Him. This is a seat of judgment as well as communication.

When I did the study called **On Prayer** [9] I discussed a fundamental requirement that seems to be overlooked in the minds of most "common, proud American Christians" concerning prayer; that is, the level of humility, fear, caution and plain ol' respect for the One with whom we seek audience. Unfortunately, most of us would be more cautious seeking an interview with Donald Trump than we commonly do seeking conversation with the Almighty God.

As Believers, we have been taught for so many years now that we are to *"...go boldly to the*

throne of grace..." that we have inadvertently stripped YHVH of the respect that He so much deserves. When the total perversion of the meaning of "grace" (most people think it is a wholesale overlooking of their sinful condition) is coupled with a "God is my Pal" attitude, we are left with a prayer resembling something more like a conversation held on a riverbank with a fishing buddy.

I am not condemning this type of communion for I have enjoyed it myself - but, only after allowing the searing light of His holiness to examine me - only after receiving His forgivingness and mercy - only after a long time of repentance - and certainly only during those encounters when He has called me to His throne for an audience.

Selah...

The lie in the message about our "rights" as Believers is in the misquote I gave you above. The Scriptures do NOT say, "...**go boldly**...." Rather, the Scripture says to, "...**come boldly**...." (You may have to think about this for a while in order for the difference to occur to you; but, if it does, it will change your life -**Selah**.)

As we stand before His throne, we are never to forget the documents He sits upon when He is ensconced upon this Mercy Seat. The Law - the immutable Law of YHVH - inscribed in stone lays inside the Ark as a witness - *FOR* us or (perhaps) *AGAINST* us. We must ask ourselves if we come up to the standard He set so many millennia ago. Are we keeping His Commandments?

Contrary to both extremes of what is commonly taught by Bible teachers (that is, that we *CANNOT* keep any of the Law **OR** we must keep all 600-plus of them) the truth is - as it is usually - right in the middle. We *CAN* keep the Ten Commandments. We *MUST* keep the Ten Commandments; if we do not, the very foundation of the Throne of Grace will witness against us.

Remember that the stone tablets are not all that lies in the Ark as a witness. Those who usurp the authority of YHVH, acting as His mediators, will one day see the rod of Aaron - budding as if on a spring day. As it is pulled from the Ark it will witness against them as the false Priests and false prophets they were as they spoke and taught in the place of Messiah.

They will hear, ringing in their ears, the warning of James (3:1), "*My brethren, be not many [teachers], knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.*" and of Matthew (23:8 & 10), "*Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ... be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren.*" (I am always amazed how important this is to our God.)

Chapter 15

Conclusion

Oh, but there is yet another item in the Ark! How is it a witness? This is the "hard to hear" news. Many people have a legalistic attitude when it comes to compliance to the Law. The Talmud is rife with examples of this. The letters of the Law are examined, expanded, contracted, interpreted and interpolated. The final outcome of which is that if there is a loophole it gets used in order to allow the most heinous behaviors imaginable and still be in "*compliance*" to the written letter of the Law.

The Pharisees alone are not guilty of this. We Gentile Believers have our own systems of getting around Jehovah's Law. "Well, nowhere in the Bible does it say anything about _____" (and we insert our favorite sin in the blank.)

Have you learned *anything* about manna?

Manna represents the daily communion that has been afforded you through the grace brought by Jesus Christ.

Manna is symbolic of the Voice that guides us and the conscience that helps us know right from wrong.

As you peer into the Ark – there it lays – in its golden bowl – as a witness!

Are you obeying that Voice? One day, you will not only be held in the light of the Law written in stone, but you will also be held accountable for how you obeyed your conscience.

Do you know it is wrong... even though there is not a word of Scripture to "prove" it is a sin? You will give an account of your life - in the light of your revelation. This why James could say so emphatically, "*Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.*" (James 4:17) Do you know to do good?

Our Daily Bread tells us what to do. One day the manna will testify to that fact!

Doubt

Paul says, "*And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.*" (Romans 14:23)

Let's take a look at that word "doubt." In the Greek, it appears as "diakrino" {dee-ak-ree'-no}. One of Strong's definitions is: to separate one's self in a hostile spirit, to oppose, strive with dispute, or to contend.

Contend with what? Separate ourselves from what? It is nothing less than our own conscience!

Another definition appears: To be at variance with one's self, hesitate, doubt.

The word "doubt" comes from "double". When we find ourselves at the Throne of Grace, what confidence will we have that we can hear and be heard if we have lived in violation of the Voice commissioned to help us? Perhaps, it was this realization that prompted this Scripture: *"But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A **double** minded man is unstable in all his ways."* (James 1:6-8)

Without guidance, my friend, not only, will you be unstable in this world, but you will one day give an account of your life's compliance to the Voice you were given to obey. The manna will testify against you. You will not be entering a court of Law - you will be answering to a God who has made provision for you, loved you, and given you guidance. Hopefully, you have not rejected His Voice.

Manna is not merely an optional mode of communication. We do not choose to obey *EITHER* the Scriptures OR the Spirit of YHVH. The message culminates in these red words of Messiah, *"... For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed... But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them. Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower... the sower sows the word..."* (Matthew 13)

Trust AND Obey...

By the way, **hearing** is not enough. We must obey as well. Note that **BOTH** of these men **HEARD**:

*"Therefore whosoever **heareth** these sayings of mine, **and doeth them**, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock... And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, **and doeth them not**, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand..."* (Matthew 7)

Hearing the Word brings an awesome responsibility; it also makes us liable. Can a little pot of manna waiting inside the Mercy Seat actually carry such implications? I believe the Almighty does nothing by chance. The manna will serve as a testimony against what we **knew** to do... what we **knew** was wrong. It will fill in every loophole in the Law and condemn everyone who has ignored that still, small Voice.

Hebrews 12:25 has an important message for us:

*"See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, **much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven...**"*

###

"Thanks for allowing me to share the insights I received in my life and study. Had this treasure proved to be worthless, "more of the same" or less than a valuable addition to my life, I would have felt no compulsion to put it into the form of a book. I feel no need to add yet another book

to, the Modern-day Christian's unending bookshelf. I hope the revelation on Manna is now yours."

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ron C. Hill". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

About the Author



Don C. Harris (a/k/a Don Harris) is a former pastor who was plagued by an inability to accept the illogical explanations of traditional Christianity. He quit. For 23 years he traveled to all 48 contiguous states as well as to Alaska, Canada, Mexico, Nigeria and Israel looking for answers. What did he find? Questions.

Don discovered Jesus did not come to give us the answers; He came to teach us to think. If you have been turned off or turned out by traditional Christianity, you will find a refreshing approach to hearing the Word of God in Don's books.

His nickname? The Eraser. His job, to clear the chalkboard for The Teacher. The ideas, ways and perspectives of Jesus often, if not always, surprised those in His audience. "You've never heard anything like this before!"

There are many false notions and ineffective ideas which must be considered in light of the red ink - the words of Jesus as recorded in the Scriptures. "What did Jesus say?" To see Jesus, to hear Jesus, to follow Jesus... we must Think Red Ink.

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"...of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh."
Ecclesiastes 12:12

Appendix

Why judge ye not of yourselves what is right?

An excerpt from "*The Questions of Jesus*," book by Don C. Harris, pp.249.

Luke 12:57, "***Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?***"

From time to time we witness Jesus' fascination with mankind's stumbling. This was just such an occasion.

Christianity's greatest strength has been rendered virtually ineffectual in our day. This has been done through the well intentioned as well as the insidious, but mostly through the clergy. I heard a preeminent preacher/teacher giving advice to a woman who was looking for a church to attend. He told her to make sure it stood firmly in the Faith, believed in the Trinity, administered the Sacraments, and believed that the Bible was the Word of God. He then warned her of signs of a cult (a word that has yet to be defined among evangelical Christians) and one of those sure signs of a cult was "personal revelation" or "internal witness." The teacher went on that we should never trust ourselves to judge what is right; we should get that direction only from the Bible.

It is factual that many have been led astray by following without reservation their internal witness; but, we must admit many have been led astray from the true Christ Jesus and the faith of our forefathers with their Bible held firmly in hand and enthroned in their heart. We must also realize that NO ONE has EVER been led into darkness or error or even slightly askew by following the Holy Spirit. This idea of elevating the Bible to the status of Christ Himself (and even giving it His name, "Word of God") and vilifying the Holy Spirit as an untrustworthy guide is probably the most crippling doctrine in our modern world.

When we turned our lives to the service of Jesus Christ, He placed within our broken hearts the down payment of our eternal life. Paul says it this way, "*In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession...*" (Ephesians 1:13-14)

The Spirit of God Himself lives within us and IS our very life. Why, then, are we told we cannot trust or consult Him? Must we consult with a book, a pastor or a teacher to keep from going astray?

An attempt to find motivation for this kind of doctrine could not be done without being unkind to those who promote it. For whichever it is, whether it is ego, job security, propagation of the priesthood, or a combination of them all, it would not be complimentary.

There was a time when preaching was a tough job, and it was done in adverse circumstances. Preachers of the Gospel brought that Gospel to a hostile world, proclaiming for God the way of righteousness to an unrighteous world. Today, preachers have come off of the streets and have taken safe refuge in churches behind pulpits preaching to those who are not hostile toward

Christ. They have told us we need these "men of God" to read our Bibles and to tell us what it means.

In our day we have "educated" men who stand before us and expound to us the Bible. They tell us what it means when properly translated from Greek, Hebrew, and Latin. All the while, they tell us to stay away from personal revelation because it will lead us astray. They say, "Trust me." Some are bold enough to tell us, "Go to your Bible, check up on me; make sure I am telling you the truth." Alas, we are not as educated as they are in Greek, Hebrew, and Latin. We do not have any letters behind our names. We have no idea what hermeneutics [10] or apologetics [11] are. How could we open and hope to understand this book?

The True Light Within

How many of us have heard an idea, a sermon, even a song or hymn, and felt within ourselves, "Something is wrong with that"? We may not be able to put our finger on it, but we just "know" it is not right. That is the guide within us that we need to obey. That is the guide within us that we need to cultivate. That guide was put into all of us. It is the light of guidance.

"That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." (John 1:9)

As a person heeds that light and recognizes Christ as One sent from God to redeem us; when a person finally surrenders to Him as Lord, the Spirit of God accompanies and increases that light. More light to lead, guide and direct our steps is given.

The Scriptures can be twisted, and deceitful men can manipulate them; but, the Spirit of God within an honest heart can be trusted. It is our only duty to remain honest and pure in heart and listen to our Guide. He will direct you. Just as the initial light that was given to all led you to Christ and told you that surrender was the right thing to do, this Guide, given to you afterward, is a hundredfold brighter and deeper, and He will guide you into all truth – ALL TRUTH.

Knowing that God did not create mankind without a moral compass, Jesus was astounded that men had so quickly extinguished this light given to them. He must look at us the same way when we run from church to church, from preacher to preacher and teacher to teacher seeking someone to tell us what to do, how to feel, and how to find our way. He knows that within all of us there is a Guide that will lead us to Him.

If you find this Guide, you will be filled with that living water that springs up from inside so that going from well to well is unnecessary. He will fill you with the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, and the Author of the Scriptures, the Voice of the prophets and Wisdom of the ages will dwell within you.

When our Messiah, Christ Jesus, sees us as sheep with no shepherd, He is saddened; because, all provision was made for us to have comfort, guidance, and nourishment. He put within us – at the expense of His own life – the Holy Spirit of God! **Why don't we judge in ourselves what is right by this Spirit?**

Before you read books or follow preachers around; before you sign up for every seminar that remotely sounds as though it will answer your questions ... first listen for the Spirit to speak. As you throw down one book and pick up another, go from one meeting to another and from one

counselor to another, quietly listen in the depths of your soul. Can't you hear the Savior ask, "...
Why judge ye not of yourselves what is right?"

<http://www.QuestionsOfJesus.com>

Endnotes

[1] Wikipedia - The tetragrammaton (from Greek meaning "four letters") is the Hebrew theonym (yuh-hey-vav-hey), commonly transliterated into Latin letters as YHWH. It is one of the names of the God of Israel used in the Hebrew Bible. [\[return\]](#)

[2] Think Red Ink is an idiom which refers to the words of Jesus. The origin of the Red Letter Edition Bible is attributed to the 1899 idea of Louis Klopsch (editor of The Christian Herald magazine) who perceived that the words of Jesus should stand out from the rest of the script. He chose the color red. [\[return\]](#)

[3] Nehushtan - 2 Kings 18:4, "He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brasen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan." [\[return\]](#)

[4] Aistheterion {ahee-sthay-tay'-ree-on} Greek Lexicon [\[return\]](#)

[5] See Appendix - Question 76, pp. 249, *"Why judge ye not of yourselves what is right?" The Questions of Jesus* by Don C. Harris [\[return\]](#)

[6] Apocryphal book [\[return\]](#)

[7] Wikipedia - (also Tanach, or Tenakh, or Tenak) is an acronym that identifies the Hebrew Bible [\[return\]](#)

[8] Wikipedia - Jewish holiday or festival is a day or series of days observed by Jews as a holy or secular commemoration of an important event in Jewish history. (We know these to be the Feasts of the Lord.) [\[return\]](#)

[9] The audio study "On Prayer" is available in MP3 and audio CD format from www.IamReadyToKnow.com [\[return\]](#)

[10] Hermeneutics - the branch of theology that is concerned with explaining or interpreting religious concepts, theories, and principles [\[return\]](#)

[11] Apologetics - a branch of theology that is concerned with proving the truth of Christianity [\[return\]](#)