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Chapter 1

But vain man is void of understanding, Yea, man is born as a wild ass's colt. (Job 11:12 ASV).

But vain man can become wise If a man can be born as a wild donkey's colt. (Job 11:12 WEB)

Everyone is born shallow-minded and irresponsible, as egocentric as a young ass. The baby within its mother's womb is a consummate parasite. It shows no consideration for its mother and is concerned only for its own development. No matter the physical state of the mother, the baby will extract all of its own needs from her body. Months after its birth, it firmly believes the world literally revolves around itself, and comprehends none of the sacrifice of love which sustains it alive. Those around begin the slow process of teaching the child the value of their love, ...to say : 'Please', 'thank you', and to offer greetings. These are the first attempts at redeeming the ass.

The firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb: and if you will not redeem it, then you shall break its neck. All the firstborn of your sons you shall redeem. No one shall appear before me empty. (Exodus 34:20 WEB)

The ass or donkey has been used for centuries as a burden carrier, destined to spend its life weighed down under some heavy load. It is not treated as an object of affection, as one would a pet. The thing about an ass is, it is devoid of understanding so it only responds to brute force. Its mind is too shallow with self-centeredness to perceive the desire of another. It is a slave.

Like a horse, it is a means of transport. Unlike a horse, its movements are slow, often belabored because of its burdens. While in the wild it was self-willed and free, but its raw strength is the desire of men. It is destined to be stalked, hunted down and enslaved to the will of another.

Such is the natural life of every man.

God advised Cain while he was still free: If you do well, will it [the mind] not be lifted up? If you don't do well, sin crouches at the door. Its desire is for you, but you are to rule over it. (Genesis 4:7 WEB).

Sin crouches, a skilled hunter seeking a vehicle for its evil burden of guilt. No man can by the strength of his own blood resist being captured by sin. It is commonly said "everyman has his price" and "there is no man without a vice". Natural man is to sin as an ass is to man...a creature to capture, break-in, and load down with heavy burdens. A person can no more free themselves from the burden of guilt than an ass can discharge its own lading. Such is the tormented state of a guilty soul. His great toil of mind only produces a slow advance into fulfillment. Personal desires become subjected to prevailing circumstances, many dreams die and skepticism grows. The youthful idealist wakes up to so-called reality, coming to grips with the fact that his will is not under his own power. He finds some reprieve in surrendering to his own vices, but then sinks deeper under his burden of guilt. Man as a wild donkey's colt cannot prevail against the grip of sin...he must become a lamb.

And one of the elders said unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll, and to loose the seven seals thereof. And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.(Revelation 5:5-6 KJ2000)

Chapter 2

If mankind brings forth wild ass's colts, the Lord God brings forth the Lamb. The distinctive quality of the sheep family is their inability to be disposed to evil behavior. Sheep are harmless by nature. Lambs therefore are particularly mild tempered and easily led. Lambs are destined to the edge of the blade for shearing or slaughter, because they do not resist the shepherd.

Such is the testimony about the Son of God: "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter. As a lamb before his shearer is silent, So he doesn't open his mouth. In his humiliation, his judgment was taken away. Who will declare His generation? For his life is taken from the earth." (Acts 8:32-33 WEB)

This one who was killed, led to his death by the heavenly Father, is the keeper of the Book of Life! In this book, the firstborn from the dead keeps the names of his family members...those who belong to the sheep family. He stretched out his hand towards his disciples, and said, "Behold, my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother." (Matthew 12:49-50WEB) These are the precious and deeply loved ones, treasured in his heart and written in his book. The meekness of sheep is actually their greatness, for they do not fear the shepherd's knife. They are lion-hearted in his hand. Their trust is implicit. When the shepherd is the heavenly Father and the sheep is his own flesh and blood offspring, then the interplay of blade, sheep, blood, and shepherd is an awesome and powerful phenomenon. Rather than ending in death, it produces an impregnable life-force in the sheep.

By faith, Abraham, being tested, offered up Isaac. Yes, he who had gladly received the promises was offering up his one and only son; even he to whom it was said, "In Isaac will your seed be called;" accounting that God is able to raise up even from the dead. Figuratively speaking, he also did receive him back from the dead. (Hebrews 11:17-19 WEB)

The Lord God set up Abraham and Isaac to dramatize on earth this supernatural phenomenon of resurrection life. Then as all eternal things are established by at least a double witness, the drama was re-enacted after forty-two generations, in the Lamb of God. This then is the greatness of God's sheep: they *expect* Him to bring them back to life. "Come, and let us return to Yahweh; For he has torn us to pieces, And he will heal us; He has injured us, And he will bind up our wounds. After two days he will revive us. On the third day he will raise us up, And we will live before him. Let us acknowledge Yahweh. Let us press on to know Yahweh. As surely as the sun rises, Yahweh will appear. He will come to us like the rain, Like the spring rain that waters the earth." (Hosea 6:1-3 WEB)

Before creating the world, the Father prepared His precious only joy for a sacrifice, to be shared and enjoyed with the creation. He went through the temporary pain of killing His own Son, in order to share joyous immortality with sons of men. The Father prepared joy for us before He began to create us. During creation, a creature was made to be an object-lesson of the Son's life...the lamb.

"knowing that you were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, from the useless way of life handed down from your fathers, but with precious blood, as of a faultless and pure lamb, the blood of Christ; who was foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world, but was revealed at the end of times for your sake, who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead, and gave him glory; so that your faith and hope might be in God." (1 Peter 1:18-21WEB)

The Lamb demonstrates to the ass's colt that, if they'll trust themselves to the master through the pain, He'll replace their miserable existence with real Power.

Chapter 3

This is eternal life, that they should know you, the only true God, and him whom you sent, Jesus Christ.
(John 17:3 WEB)

The life of a donkey is characterized by a lack of understanding of its master. The ox knows his owner, And the donkey his master's crib; But Israel doesn't know, My people don't consider. (Isaiah 1:3 WEB) While the ox gets an understanding of its owner's signals, the donkey merely recognizes where to get food for itself. For this, even the ox gets a better deal in life than an ass, because it responds more positively to correction. The key to supernatural living is to *press* on to know the Lord God.

There has to be the force of pressing because the ass-life in man will be completely killed and replaced, through the journey of knowing God. The stiff-neck of the donkey will be broken. The Father's glory will crush it because it is just a bestial life form. This can be an excruciatingly painful experience. The Lord said to Moses, "Thou art unable to see My face, for man doth not see Me, and live;" (Exodus 33:20 YLT). There will be death of the soul, and also resurrection from that death.

The temptation to give up is often very strong and real. Many give in to it, only to pick up the battle right where they left off. Unfortunately, others never make it to the end.

After Adam and Eve rebelliously chose to take knowledge of good and evil, God distanced himself from them and became a mystery to the sons of men. He also ordered things so flesh would have to pass through fire to obtain the knowledge of God: Jehovah God sent him [Adam] forth from the garden of Eden to serve the ground from which he hath been taken; yea, he cast out the man, and caused to dwell at the east of the garden of Eden the cherubs and the flame of the sword which is turning itself round to guard the way of the tree of life. (Genesis 3:23-24 YLT)

Contempt of God has robbed people of their created right to understand Him. Now and always, the secret of God is with them that fear Him. From the day that He moved Adam and Eve out of His close circle, the Lord God has been interacting with people through fire. Fire consumes every earthly substance into fading wisps of smoke, uncontrolled fire spells certain death to all physical life. Through the fiery dealings of the Lord, people across the nations and generations have learned again to reverence Him. By observing His ways in the fire, multitudes have realized His great love and gentleness, as Jeremiah testifies "The kindnesses of Jehovah! For we have not been consumed, For not ended have His mercies." (Lamentations 3:22 YLT) The recognition of His patient self-restraint causes deep reverence and draws men closer...to understand the Lord. "And the angel of Jehovah appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will turn aside now, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. (Exodus 3:2-3 ASV)

The fiery manifestations of the Lord God reveal that He is purposeful and in control. Our God is a consuming fire, but He consumes with great consideration and temperance. The donkey-nature is exchanged for the sheep-nature in the fire of God, very gradually. The shepherd is mindful of the pain of transformation, and works with gentle firmness.

One must become conformed to the death of the Lamb... patterned after his holy sacrifice, so to eat of the tree of life. This speaks of being unreservedly separated to the control of the Holy Spirit. Many influences control a person's life through one's own natural instincts, perceived understanding, and personal desires. To step out of the control of these, yielding

only to the control of the Master's Spirit, is to step completely out of one's character. It is the giving up of my self-image in exchange for the Father's pattern for my life. This is not a one-time affair but a journey of many decisive steps. The process is often lonely, though its goal is to distribute Divine life among many. Worthy indeed are those who take joy in such a goal and strengthen themselves against the pain. Right here is where Adam fell from worth to insignificance. He did not step out from being controlled by natural appetites and personal desires. He did not prioritize on his position, as the administrator of Life for all generations. Adam left off being controlled by the Father's word and became subject to his wife's voice. The Lord Jesus says "Remember therefore whence thou art fallen, and repent and do the first works.. To him that overcometh, to him will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God." (Rev 2:5,7 ASV)

Chapter 4

The Way of the Wilderness

Hosea 2:14-16 Therefore, lo, I am enticing her, And have caused her to go to the wilderness, And I have spoken unto her heart, And given to her her vineyards from thence, And the valley of Achor for an opening of hope, And she hath responded there as in the days of her youth, And as in the day of her coming up out of the land of Egypt. And it hath come to pass, in that day, An affirmation of Jehovah, Thou dost call Me--My husband, And dost not call Me any more--My lord.(YLT)

The Lord God transforms hearts in the wilderness. He will get you out of your comfortable lifestyle. His love will draw you out of the crowd. He may use visions or prophecies, or touch your heart tenderly as you worship Him. It may be through miracles and breakthroughs He showers you with, or He might just upset your well organized life so nothing works anymore. Whatever the means, when the Lord chooses you, He gets you alone in His presence praying for more of Him.

The wilderness is a place of dependency because the threat of death is real there. The power of Satan is all around. In the wilderness the depth of the shepherd's love can be experienced, and responding to Him comes more easily. [The lord your God|Who led you through that great and terrible wilderness, in which were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and thirsty land, where there was no water; who brought you forth water out of the rock of flint; Who fed you in the wilderness with manna, which your fathers knew not, that he might humble you, and that he might test you, to do you good in the end; (Deuteronomy 8:15-16 KJ2000). The wilderness is a scary place, moreover because you often lack a sense of identity while there, being somewhat displaced. The only stability is the present and constant word of the Lord and it is the veritable anchor of the soul. In the wilderness, Satan repeatedly attacked the identity and self-recognition of the Lamb of God. The question "If you are..." became a very sore point. When you become confused in your own mind about who you are, then only the Word that you are sure of, will put you over. In the wilderness, people learn to listen to the Lord with their heart. They learn to treasure up His words, and obey with expectation. It is obedience to God's words spoken in the wilderness, that leads men into their Divine inheritance of things promised long ago. By far the greatest treasure of the wilderness period is the intimate bonding that forms between the shepherd, and yes...now the sheep.

The Way of the Pruning

John 15:1-4 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the farmer. Every branch in me that doesn't bear fruit, he takes away. Every branch that bears fruit, he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already pruned clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Remain in me, and I in you. As the branch can't bear fruit by itself, unless it remains in the vine, so neither can you, unless you remain in me.(WEB)

The words of God are a sculpting knife. They shape a man's heart and carve out his life. Ministry flows out of a heart that remains under the Father's knife. If the Word of the Lord ceases from your heart, it ceases from your lips as well. Among those ministering the anointing, there are no road experts, just people with highly attentive or circumcised hearts.. When the Lord works through you, He will frequently withdraw you from the public, to

teach you in private. He will call you back to the wilderness to humble you. Remember the sheep is only as safe as it keeps hearing the voice of the shepherd. These retreats are vital to faithful ministry. Here the Father cuts off arrogance, bitterness, envy and such like manifestations of the flesh, for the mortified donkey-life keeps seeking to regroup. Here also the Father reveals His love in a progressively deeper way. The way of the pruning is the way of growth in the revelation and power of the Father. He empties you of all your accomplishments. He leaves you little to show for your labor and only slight evidence of the great anointing on your life. In this way, the Lord God glorifies the *nature* of the Spirit above the wonderful gifts of the Spirit. Foliage is dispensable, but the sap is life.

Pruning turns the attention off the tangible benefits of Divine life, and unto the power of the intangible Divine nature. The way of the pruning reveals that without the Lamb of God I can establish nothing, and without love I am nothing. The love doth never fail; and whether there be prophecies, they shall become useless; whether tongues, they shall cease; whether knowledge, it shall become useless; (1 Corinthians 13:8 YLT). The sanctified heart is of far greater worth in life than supernatural gifts, because it is tender enough to love others.

Pruning times are for the Lord's ministers to be cleaned up and refilled, made ready for greater ministry. It is crucial to listen and know when it is time, to retreat for a season from ministering to people, in order to be ministered to by the Father. The apostles gathered themselves together to Jesus, and they told him all things, whatever they had done, and whatever they had taught. He said to them, "You come apart into a deserted place, and rest awhile." For there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat. They went away in the boat to a desert place by themselves. (Mark 6:30-32 WEB)

The Way of the Cup

Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up your sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father has given me, shall I not drink it? Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him....
(John 18:11-12 KJ2000)

The most profound revelation of God is found in the way of the cup. There is a cup of frothing wine in the hand of God, it's the wine of His furious wrath. When at any time someone receives the cup from His hand, it is a time of great trembling, confusion and torment in the life of those who drink it. The hot rebuke of the Lord strips off all glory, to reduce souls to crushing humiliation. The Lord God does not hand out this cup until it is filled up over time, with its dregs settled at the bottom. For in the hand of Yahweh there is a cup, Full of foaming wine mixed with spices. He pours it out. Indeed the wicked of the earth drink and drink it to its very dregs. (Psalms 75:8 WEB)

The cup can be received only by the condemned or their intercessor. Prior to the revealing of the Lamb of God, nobody could bear the cup on the behalf of others. The only person who even tried was Moses, but he did not quite make it. And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if you will forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray you, out of your book which you have written. And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever has sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book. (Exodus 32:31-33 KJ2000)

Among the prophets who saw the cup of indignation, none stepped up to avert it from the nations. They all feared to engage the fiery indignation of Almighty God: Jehovah, I heard

the report of thee, and I feared. Jehovah, revive thy work in the midst of the years, In the midst of the years make it known: In wrath remember mercy! (Habakkuk 3:2 DBY). But in the fullness of time the Lamb of God stepped up and drank it to the dregs, on the behalf of every living soul. The superior knowledge the Lamb has is, even in wrath God remembers mercy.

Even in wrath the Lord God remembers mercy. This unveiling of the Father is perfect love displayed, and the birthing of lambs unto God. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward shall be great, and you shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. Be you therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. But I tell you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who mistreat you and persecute you, that you may be children of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust. (Luke 6:35-36 KJ2000, Matthew 5:44-45 WEB). The revelation is this: at the point of heated provocation and justifiable anger, the nature of the sheep will not be altered... the distinctive quality of the sheep family is their inability to be *disposed* to evil behavior.

The confidence that the Father will never be merciless emboldens sheep to intercept the dreaded cup of fury. Every sheep that receives a cup becomes a lamb for slaughter... a scapegoat. And he shall take for the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats for a sin offering... And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the LORD'S lot fell, and offer him for a sin offering. But the goat, on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat, shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make an atonement with him, and to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness. (Leviticus 16: 5, 9-10 KJ2000) The Lord's lot has fallen on Jesus, born the Nazarene. There is only one sin offering whose blood is forever smeared upon the sacred altar in the heavens. Yet many are called to make atonement with him. Therefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people through his own blood, suffered outside of the gate. Let us therefore go forth to him outside of the camp, bearing his reproach. (Hebrews 13:12-13 WEB)

The firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb; and if you will not redeem it, then you shall break its neck. (Exodus 34:20 WEB)

Intercessors drink the cup of wrath and buy sinners time to repent. Just when the sinful are ripe for Divine judgment, these scapegoats step in and pick up the agonizing tab. They are not afraid to go alone into the wilderness with an angry Jehovah because they trust in His unchanging nature. They **expect** the Father to bring them back to life just as before. Intercessors spend a disproportionate amount of time in the wilderness compared to other sheep, because they return frequently to be broken on behalf of others. These lambs redeem the lives of donkeys whose necks would otherwise be broken without remedy. They are saviors of the world, co-laborers with the Lord Christ. "Saviors will go up on Mount Zion to judge the mountains of Esau, and the kingdom will be Yahweh's." (Obadiah 1:21 WEB) Intercessors are prophetic people of the Spirit who stand between the living God and the dead, to command life. They stand on the covenant of the blood of the Lamb and enforce it against the wages of sin.

Bold surrender to the Father's knife produces overflowing life in the lambs but every ass will die. The same word which brings revival to the repentant brings judgment on the rebellious. In the Divine kingdom asses are transformed into sheep, and the sheep mature

into lambs, growth is from hardened to tender. When the sheep yield to the Shepherd the living are sustained, for sheep go to the shearer providing comforting wool. However when the lambs yield to the shepherd the dead are raised, the knife is applied in a different way. Lambs go to the slaughter and provide their own body. The power of the Spirit lies in sacrificing my will power to the Father, and I yield it the more unreservedly as I ***expect*** God to resurrect me gloriously...Amen.

The question therefore remains, " Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"

They said to him, "We are able." Jesus said to them, "You shall indeed drink the cup that I drink, and you shall be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with;..."

(Mark 10:38-39 WEB)