

Lucan: It's time to begin. Bro. David, will you please offer the opening prayer?

Zahakiel: Dear Father in Heaven, We come before your Throne with thanksgiving, for the privilege of knowing You and Your dear Son, for the blessing of being guided by Your indwelling Spirit, and for the movements of providence that cause all things to work together for our good. Bless us during these Sabbath hours with your holy peace, and may this time in which your people have gathered together be an occasion of sweet fellowship. May each receive the particular blessing ordained for us from the foundation of the world, as we ask it in Yahshua's name. Amen.

Pastor Chick and Barb: Amen

Gloria Bailey1: Amen.

Lucan: Amen

Elina: Hello ☺ Amen.

Adriel Dean: Amen

Ruthline: Amen

PETER: Amen

Lucan: In our study last week, Bro. David spoke of the way in which spiritual growth takes place for those already born again; that being an instantaneous stepping up to a new height, an immediate change of situation from one state to another; through the gift and faith of Christ. Tonight I would like to continue that theme from a slightly different perspective; that of "conception."

That word - "conception," or "conceive" - is one with a number of definitions. One of the great sources of division and confusion in the earth today is, in fact, that of definition. While many of us do not speak the same first language, even among those who do, the same words often have different meanings or connotations to different people. In our outreach to others, defining terms will often reveal where a misunderstanding of simple words such as "faith," or "love," or "authority," or "evolution," or "trinity," or "sin," etc. causes disagreements that really amount to different uses of terms. "What do you mean by that?" is perhaps the most important question in identifying and resolving conflicts early as we seek to reach the heart.

Yet this is true, and necessary, for examining our own hearts also. "What do I mean by that?" is a critical question for seemingly basic concepts, because while we may use the same basic words and therefore assume the same understanding, we may have very different conceptions of what those words and concepts mean. For example, some would see "love" in a straight testimony against sin; many would see "love" in ignoring sin and 'showing acceptance.' Each would consider the other to be the opposite of love, yet both use the same word. In order to reveal Christ according to the Pattern, our conceptions and definitions must be continually brought to the standard of that Pattern.

Now, returning to "conceive," it is an interesting word. When something is "conceived," there is a "conception." A conception implies a "concept," and here we can see the link between physical and spiritual definitions of the word; between flesh and ideas. In physical terms, the Scriptures indicate that life begins at conception rather than at birth. Yet there is another type of conception, and another type of life, that we will be looking at tonight. As it is written, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." (John 3:6)

Just as physical life may be "conceived," we may also "conceive" an idea or understanding ("concept") or a spiritual state: "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." (James 1:14, 15)

We may note that temptation is not sin, but that when it conceives it brings forth sin. Temptation is the precursor; if it is rejected, it is overcome and does not "conceive;" sin is not brought forth, and cannot be brought forth in the new life. This is why the new life "cannot" bring forth sin; no woman can conceive who already has a life formed within, because the first one remains.

"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." (1 John 3:9)

Temptation, then, so far from being sin, is a cause of rejoicing; for "there hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God [is] faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear [it]." (1 Cor. 10:13)

As the magnitude of the temptation is revealed, we may rejoice at the revelation of what Yahweh has made available to us to overcome.

"Whatever spiritual blessing we need, it is our privilege to claim through Jesus." [MB 133]

Adriel Dean: Amen

Lucan: The physical life of a child begins as soon as it is conceived; for we who are born of the Spirit, the promises of Yahweh also begin as soon as they are conceived – meaning we perceive them and receive them. While temptation conceives and brings forth sin, the Spirit conceives and brings forth the life of Christ.

This is well and good in terms of bringing forth life, yet as intelligent beings with free will, our own minds must also accurately "conceive" of the concepts we claim and reveal in that life. That is the nature of "service" rather than "slavery;" the Spirit influences, but does not forcefully control us.

Yahweh has given us love; this is the fruit of the Spirit. He has given this gift to us in its fullness, the very fullness in which Yahweh and Yahshua have it, for it is by their Spirit that we have it. God is love, and as God dwells within us, love dwells within us. As it is written: "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what [is] the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." (Eph 3:17-19)

It is the very "fullness of God" that we are filled with through knowing the love of Christ. And how much of this fullness? "ALL the fullness of God." In other words, we are filled with the full fullness; none left out.

Mrs. White writes of this: "To Jesus, who emptied Himself for the salvation of lost humanity, the Holy Spirit was given without measure. So it will be given to every follower of Christ when the whole heart is surrendered for His indwelling. Our Lord Himself has given the command, "Be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18), and this command is also a promise of its fulfillment. It was the good pleasure of the Father that in Christ should "all the fullness dwell," and "in Him ye are made full." Colossians 1:19, R.V.; 2:10 R.V." [MB 21]

Yet while we may speak of the fullness of "love," the meaning of that word is subject to the understanding, as we saw earlier. The Scriptures themselves have several words for various types of love; in English we simply say "love" for all of them. Our Spanish-speaking brethren would say "Amor;" and the Ugandans have another set of words altogether, yet in all cases the word may be used or misused according to the understanding of what "love" truly is.

All that is to say that the sound of the word itself is variable and has little meaning; it is the concept that it represents that is important. Just as "Seventh-day Adventist" may mean a true or false representation of religion, we may say "love" or "agape" or "phileo" or "amor," but unless we know what love looks like – unless we accurately conceive of the concept behind the word – it is just a sound. It is, as Paul says, "as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." (1 Cor. 13:1)

We know that through the Spirit, the Father and Son themselves dwell in us in "all their fullness", and become part of us; we partake of their very divine nature. (2 Peter 1:4) Yet while the fullness of Christ is given to us, we are not instantly made entirely holy; sanctification is the work of a lifetime, not an instant. We never commit a known sin or neglect a known duty, and walk in all known righteousness. Yet "known" is the key term. What we know of sin, and of duty, and of righteousness may grow – it must grow. While the entirety of Yahshua's character is "imputed" to us legally, and we are declared just in all we know, we are also intelligent creatures with our own understanding to exercise in His service. As that understanding of righteousness grows, Yahshua's character is "imparted" to us; we understand more of His love, and thus it is

opened up to us to use consciously. We are to always be growing in our understanding of "the breadth, and length, and depth, and height" of that which has already been fully and freely provided. We must have a right conception of the principles of righteousness in order to live them, because we are intelligent creatures, and "by beholding we are changed." (2 Cor. 3:18) By comprehending more of the fullness of Christ, we understand more of what is given us and put it into action.

As a practical example, for quite some time I have used mechanical pencils for writing. These are just like pens, but the graphite – the writing material - must be pushed out a bit at a time. It wasn't until this last camp meeting that Bro. David informed me the graphite can be retracted into the pencil, rather than staying out and potentially breaking, if a particular button is pressed and pressure applied. Now in all the time I had these pencils in my possession and active use, I likely lost quite a bit of graphite during storage. If you had asked me if I had a pencil, I would have truly said yes; but I did not understand all that the pencil could do. There was more to it than I conceived, and when new knowledge came, I was now able to more fully use that which I already owned. It was my lack of understanding that kept me from fully using the pencil, you see; but the whole of it was in my possession from the beginning. I had the pencil in its fullness given to me, but there was more to be done with it than I knew; I had to grow in my conception of how to use it, and how it could be used.

Now, how long do you suppose it took once I realized how to use the pencil, to begin using the pencil?

Adriel Dean: (right away)

Lucan: I had the tool, the equipment, the ability, the power; all I lacked was the knowledge. Right. 😊 As soon as I conceived of it, I started using it immediately.

Much like my pencil, we are blessed to know the names of the various gifts we are given; we know "joy," "love," "peace," etc. We have all that we know of these things, yet we may yet understand more; we may have a can opener, yet not realize it also opens bottles. We may have a car and use it in all we know to use it for, yet not realize all that is in the owner's manual. We are right to claim these things in their fullness, for Yahweh "hath given" them to us in His Son.

As we grow, we are blessed to realize more of what has been given and put it into use. We read that we have been given the divine nature; a verse earlier, we may read: "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that [pertain] unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:" (2 Peter 1:3)

"Hath given" is past tense; in Greek it is the perfect tense, meaning fully completed in the past. "All things that pertain unto life and godliness" are what have been given, fully

and completely, to each of us. Our spiritual drawers are thoroughly equipped; there is no principle, no characteristic, no tool that has anything to do with life or godliness that we lack in its fullness.

Yet it is upon conception – the understanding of what it means to apply these principles – that the life of Christ is made manifest, as we co-operate with Yahweh as intelligent beings. We know that we have “love,” yet what it means to “love” in various circumstances is something we must conceive of according to the correct pattern, and thus will learn more of as we learn of the Pattern through eternity.

We read of this walk of sanctification in Philippians: “If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but [this] one thing [I do], forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 3:11-14)

Paul here uses a word for “perfect” meaning what we often understand it to mean in English; fully completed, finished, without any remaining development or changes. Neither Paul nor we may claim such a state, as we don’t know what it is we don’t know; Yah may have something more to reveal to us tomorrow. Yet it is the next verses that have bearing for our study tonight:

“Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.” (Philippians 3:15, 16)

When Yahweh reveals anything in our mind that is not perfect, Satan may tempt us to shame, condemnation, or despair. Yet this is cause for rejoicing above all others. And why? Because the moment that Yahweh reveals to us a higher walk, we have conceived it; what is revealed is necessarily understood. We see the path and may walk in it. We already had the righteousness given to us, but now it is ours to use intelligently; now it may manifest in the life as we put away what is behind, and take hold of the example before us. As Bro. David said recently, now we “are there” upon visualizing it and exercising the will. Now it has been “conceived,” and nothing in earth or hell can prevent that life from coming forth. Where we once had a sin registered, we now have the fullness of Yah’s righteousness revealed. Is this not cause of rejoicing before the “author and finisher of our faith?”

The moment Yahweh reveals to us a new facet of understanding of love, patience, joy, kindness, diligence, temperance, punctuality, honesty, self-denial, peace, or any other thing that “pertains to life and godliness,” we know that we have the thing itself

already; He "hath given" it. And this because we, "as many as be perfect," are thus minded.

This form of "perfect" is a different word than before; it does not mean "completed, without further change," for that is what we cannot claim to be. Rather, it means "perfect" in the sense of growth for our expected level; having all things necessary to perfection. It is in the understanding of a concept that we have the "attainment;" I must know what diligence looks like in order to be diligent; I must have an idea of it in my head. Once Yahweh has revealed an updated idea of what that is, I have conceived it; if I know what it looks like, I have it; I receive it, claim it, praise Yah for it, and it has now been "attained."

And what of those things we have attained?

"Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing." (Philippians 3:16)

Now some may say, "you cannot claim to have the thing until you have performed it, and proven it."

No; that is not how faith works. The proof is in Yahweh's Word, as with all of His healing miracles. We have it because Yahweh has spoken it; we claim it when Yahweh has spoken it, even as Abraham was called a father of many nations by promise before he ever brought forth a son.

We have said that to follow a "sin-repent" cycle to better feelings over time is spiritual evolution. In a similar vein, to allow any possibility of failure for the life of Christ in us between our receiving of it and our outworking of it in the flesh is to consider the life to begin at the physical birth, rather than at the conception. Just as a child, the truth and life of Christ is ours in its fullness the moment the seed of Yah's Word is implanted and received in the soul by faith.

When we understand what the word "kindness" means, we have that concept within us; we understand it. Should our idea of what it means to be "kind" grow, so does our application grow to match the new understanding; we always do according to what we know of righteousness. Yet we always had "kindness," as the gift was given in full; that which we had already attained, we have walked by the same rule, we have minded the same thing. We now forget those things which are behind, and reach forth to those things which are before. We may ask with Yahshua, "Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?" (John 8:46)

If we are not convicted of sin, then we stand justified before Yah and man. If we are convicted of an unknown sin, then Yah be praised; to be convicted of a previously unknown sin is to realize an aspect of righteousness that has not previously been

understood. It is having a way in which we "are otherwise minded" "revealed unto us." We thus repent, and still stand justified before Yah and man; "who [is] he that condemneth? [It is] Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." (Romans 8:34)

We are thus blessed to see more of the "breadth, and length, and depth, and height" of what has been given to us. We are thus blessed to have attained a greater understanding of Yah's freely given righteousness, which by the promise of Yahweh we will always walk according to.

"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, [even] as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Cor. 3:18)

It is "from glory to glory" that we are changed, and that, "into the same image" as the glory of Yahshua, by the Spirit of Yahshua. We begin with Yahshua and we end with Yahshua; thus He is both "the author and finisher of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2), in whom we are "confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform [it] until the day of Jesus Christ:" (Phil. 1:6)

It is only those who experience defeat that fear conflict; it is only those who are overcome that do not rejoice at further victory on the horizon. "But thanks [be] to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. 15:57)

Adriel Dean: Amen!

Lucan: There is no retreat in the life of Christ; there is no backsliding, or losing of the understanding He has given us, for He has sworn: "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him." (Hosea 14:4)

There is only the gaining of ground, an ever-Heavenward advance - "from glory to glory." This is the testimony of Yahshua, and the individual experience of every CSDA, else we have nothing of value whatsoever to give to the world. It is only the gospel – Yahshua Himself in you, the hope of glory – that gives our work, our message, our very lives their value and purpose.

And this fullness of God, being given freely to every one who will receive Him, is the gift that binds together His people on the earth. What other outcome may there be? If you and I both have the fullness of God, if we both have been given all things pertaining to life and godliness, do we not have all things in common through our common experience, and common Spirit? All that may differ is the understanding – the conception, the view of just what those various gifts are, what they mean, and how they are to be applied.

The world rejects and treats with suspicion those who do not understand just the way they do, as the world has the spirit of Satan, which is the spirit of self; self-exaltation, self-worship, and self-esteem. The world does not understand the concept of the "covenant," made between Yahweh and His people, and between His people and one another. Yet in the covenant experience, there is joy unending. In the fellowship of brethren, there is joy in our shared understanding. In the fellowship of brethren, there is joy in unshared understanding; there may be perplexities to be worked through, yet the promises of Yahweh are to others as well as ourselves.

At worst, Satan is a tool in Yah's hands for the sanctification of His people. At worst, disagreement is an opportunity to either learn or share understanding of the gifts Yahweh has given freely to us all. As it is written, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to [his] purpose." (Romans 8:28)

If all things work together for good, do we not give thanks for all things?

"In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." (1 Thess. 5:18)

May we who stand by faith in Christ rejoice in Christ and in one another. May we who walk in the Spirit walk according to that which we have attained, and rejoice in that irrevocable progress, pointing others to the same path. May we who are helpers of one another's joy assist in conceiving "with all saints what [is] the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;" and, having seen Yahshua formed within, reveal Him perfectly to the world "from glory to glory."

"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, [art] in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." (John 17:20-23)

"The truth of a heavenly origin converts the soul. The truth from heaven has an influence upon the human life and upon the human character that is elevating, ennobling, sanctifying, refining—making us more and more like Jesus—and thus we are changed through the sanctification of the truth from glory to glory. What is the glory? It is the character—"From character to character."" [MS 36, 1891]

Lucan: Are there any comments on the study tonight?

Adriel Dean: Amen!

Lucan: If not, I'll ask Pastor to offer the closing prayer.

Marie-kadeth: Amen

Lucan: Oh, it seems they are having connection issues. Bro. David, would you please offer the prayer?

Zahakiel: Dearest Father, We give you thanks for the light you have shed upon the path of your people. We thank you that you have given to us of your glory, which is interpreted through our flesh as character... as the way that we think, and act, and respond. Because your glory dwells within us, we know that trouble shall not arise a second time, and in beholding this vision, we become changed. We thank you that you have placed all the fullness of this glory within us, and have given us the victory over sin and self, the tool by which we are made perfect in love. As time draws ever closer, may this good news go forth to gather in the sincere seekers after your righteousness, that your joy in us may be full, even as ours is in you. Bless the remainder of our Sabbath hours, whether we are together in fellowship, or apart in thoughtful meditation. We ask this in Yahshua's name. Amen.

Lucan: Amen

Gloria Bailey1: Amen.

PETER 2: Amen

Adriel Dean: Amen

Ruthline: Amen

Elina: Amen.

Pastor Chick and Barb: Amen

Marie-kadeth: Amen