

Lucan: It's time to begin; let us open with prayer.

Dear Father in heaven. We thank you for the blessings of the past week, and for the opportunities to reflect your character to those in our influence. We thank you for the sanctification of your Spirit in the recent New Moon, for the restful blessing of the Sabbath, and the hope of a new year hastening your return. May your Spirit guide our study this evening, to the blessing of each one present. In the name of Yahshua we pray, amen.

Pastor_Chick: Amen.

Zahakiel: Amen.

Barb: Amen

Naraiel: Amen

Adriel Dean: Amen, Amen

PETER 2: Amen.

Elyna1: Amen

Daphna: Amen

Ruthline: Amen

Gloria Bailey: Amen.

Lucan: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." (1 John 3:2, 3)

In a recent study, we looked at this verse in the context of "hope" – that is, an earnest expectation of a future event that causes us to act and plan accordingly. Because we have hope of Yahshua's advent, we are Adventists, and we "purify ourselves, even as He is pure." This speaks well to our individual accountability before Yahweh, and the personal garden of character that each of us is called to diligently tend, nourish, and weed. Yet this is not the end of our accountability, nor is it the end of that which is purified in the hope - the expectation of being like Him at His appearing:

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Ephesians 5:25-27)

We see then that the church also is purified, even as He is pure. We had a brother among us once who had a testimony regarding this verse; in his previous church experience, he had been told that such a thing as a faultless church would never be found. Yet what does the Scripture tell us? "These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, [being] the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God." (Revelation 14:4, 5)

As a people, we have often been involved in reviews of various church practices against the light given through the Scriptures and Spirit of Prophecy; the "Law and the Prophets," as it were. This is not a new experience; the path of righteousness is a progressive one, and CSDAs have been blessed over the years to come into new light regarding to the Godhead, the names of the Father and Son, the need for and manner of baptismal examinations, voting procedures, and various other matters of faith and practice.

"But the path of the just [is] as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." (Proverbs 4:18)

"We cannot hold that a position once taken, an idea once advocated, is not, under any circumstances, to be relinquished. There is but One who is infallible—He who is the way, the truth, and the life." [TM 105]

So long as the Church is faithful to her husband, she needs no creed, for hers is a living creed – the character of Christ as revealed in His word via law and testimony. As new truth becomes evident, either in doctrine or in heart application, the way becomes narrower – this is the process of sifting and refinement. This is the sign of the true Church, for no dead creed or formalism can constitute the faith of those who "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth," and no dead doctrine can long hold those who are covenanted to follow all light they may receive. The very concept of following implies the potential for movement – and a movement, not a denomination or a settling into anything but the truth, is what is represented by the first, second, third, and fourth angels of Revelation.

These are things that we know, and tonight I would like to review not only what we know, but why we know it. Tonight we will look at what is written of

the “hope” that causes us to cleanse not only ourselves, but also the Church to which we belong – the hope of a “glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”

While most Christians would agree that both the individual and the Church is to be “without blemish,” we quickly meet an issue of definition – all say “without blemish,” but few agree what constitutes a “blemish.” The phrase “without blemish” here is a single word in Greek; “amomos,” which means “without fault, without blemish, unblamable.” It means this both morally of people and physically of sacrifices, each of which has significance to us:

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, [which is] your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what [is] that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” (Romans 12:1, 2)

This word is translated in some familiar verses in unfamiliar ways. “Without fault” in Revelation 14:5, which we read a short while ago regarding the 144,000 is this same word. Similarly, we read: “Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present [you] faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, [be] glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.” (Jude 1:24, 25)

“Faultless” here is “amoma,” and we see that the result of Christ keeping us from falling is that He will present us – both individually and as a Church – “amoma,” “faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.”

Adriel Dean: Amen

Lucan: In the very presence of His glory, we are to be presented as a “glorious church.”

“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, [as] silver and gold, from your vain conversation [received] by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:” (1 Peter 1:18, 19)

“How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” (Hebrews 9:14)

Here we see the same words used of the Church in Ephesians – “without blemish and without spot” - used of Christ as our sacrifice. This also is “amoma,” and demonstrates not only the unity in Spirit and in identity that exists between Christ and His people, but the high standard to which we are called and enabled to attain. It is this unity that provides us, both through imparting and imputing, the righteousness of Christ. It is through Christ that we are presented gloriously, for it is His glory. It is through Christ that we are without spot and blemish, for He is without spot and blemish, and when he appears, we shall be like Him.

Yet this is not to say that the "glory and righteousness" are just in theory or legal declaration only; far from it. “He who is being sanctified by the truth will be self-controlled, and will follow in the footsteps of Christ until grace is lost in glory. The righteousness by which we are justified is imputed; the righteousness by which we are sanctified is imparted. The first is our title to heaven, the second is our fitness for heaven.” [MYP 35.2]

“Blessed [be] the God and Father of our Lord Yahshua Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly [places] in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:” (Ephesians 1:3, 4)

Yahweh forbid that CSDAs should ever be rightly accused of making the power and grace of Christ a covering for unrighteousness. Yahweh forbid that a man or a church should be declared “holy and without blemish” in name only, without actually changing those things that are not in accordance with the perfection of Yah, Yahshua, and the heavenly host. It is these that we expect – that we “hope” – to soon be among for eternity. It is these that constitute the kingdom of which we have been made citizens, and translated into upon justification. Therefore, it is these – and no lesser standard – to which we are to rise to the level of in testimony and in practice, both individually and as a people.

“We are all God’s workmen, and not one is to be idle; but I would ask, What are you doing for the Master in order that you may hear His words of

approval, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things"? God never makes a mistake; He will never call men good and faithful who are not good and faithful." [TM 184]

"And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in [your] mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his sight: If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and [be] not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, [and] which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;" (Colossians 1:21-23)

Yahweh calls us individually to examine ourselves against the light of His word. "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Yahshua Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (2 Corinthians 13:5)

He also calls us corporately to examine ourselves against the light of His word. "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins." (Isaiah 58:1)

And again: "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." (2 Chronicles 7:14)

While outright sins and transgressions are (rightly) uncommon to be found among the body of the saints, we are not merely those who avoid sin and Satan withersoever he goeth; we are those who follow the Lamb withersoever He goeth. Our movement is not one based on avoiding evil, but on receiving righteousness. We not only flee from sin, we follow after perfection. This is an active work; it requires effort, sacrifice, and self-examination.

"I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Yahshua. 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." (Philippians 3:14, 15)

The prize is the "high calling," and the calling is as high as the heavens, where God and Christ Yahshua dwell, and where we soon will dwell also. It is no small matter to see Yahshua, and be like Him; it is no small matter to be presented before the Father in the very same terms as the Son presented Himself as a sacrifice – "without spot, without blemish, without blame, faultless, holy."

Of ourselves we may never attain even the first step towards such a goal; and as we are gathered for the Sabbath, have recently gathered for the New Moon, and anticipate gathering through a new year in Yahweh's service, it is well for us to dwell on the extent to which this is true. The calling is higher than any man can attain, and yet we are promised that we will attain it; Christ will attain it in us, even as the Father has done so in Him.

As individuals, we have experience with this. We may often be brought to the foot of the cross in humility, having had a matter in which we were not perfectly minded "revealed unto us" according to the true promise. This is no matter of condemnation, save for the condemnation of the sins and imperfections, which are removed from us as far as the east from the west. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Yahshua, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Romans 8:1)

And again: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us [our] sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)

The Testimonies bear this witness also: "Every sin acknowledged before God with a contrite heart, He will remove. This faith is the life of the church." [TM 93]

We know these promises to us individually; let us also consider them as they apply to us corporately. We know something through experience of the diligence, the effort, and the examination we must apply to cleanse our soul temples from every defilement, as we perfect the character of Yahshua revealed to us. This same diligence, this same effort, this same examination, is the responsibility of every member of the Church towards the Church; its practices, teachings, and accounting on earth as in heaven. Every member is to feel a burden towards the perfection of not only their own soul, but the Church as a whole. Every member is to press towards the high calling, not only for themselves, but for the Body to which they belong and compose; an

unhealthy foot makes a healthy body unwell, yet a healthy foot unto itself does not make a neglected body well.

“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Yahshua Christ.” (1 Peter 2:5)

When Yahshua comes to receive His church, He will receive a Body that is well suited to its Head, perfectly prepared to perform His will. When our High Priest returns, he takes to Himself an holy priesthood, perfectly prepared for His work. The character is not changed at translation; not one will reach such a calling without diligence, examination, and confession and repentance where needed.

While it is true that the final trials of the time of trouble are intended to purge from us the last traces of earthiness, no one may stand in that day having made no previous efforts in the sanctified life. “Now is the time for the careless to arouse from their slumber. Now is the time to entreat that souls shall not only hear the word of God, but without delay secure oil in their vessels with their lamps. That oil is the righteousness of Christ. It represents character, and character is not transferable. No man can secure it for another. Each must obtain for himself a character purified from every stain of sin.” [TM 233, 234]

“A vision of excellence” is a phrase that we ought to be well familiar with; yet in terms of the Church and its operations, there is a higher calling than even this. It is not our individual vision, or our own imperfect standard of excellence that we are to emulate. We are to receive Christ’s mind and vision, that of Heaven itself and the perfect order of Yahweh when considering the habits and practices of Yah’s people, for that is our home, and where we soon expect to operate. We know the end result – it is promised to us plainly in the Scriptures. As with all of Yah’s promises, the bidding is the enabling; the speaking of the thing is itself the creative power to accomplish it.

“Take up your appointed work. The Lord will fulfill the promise on His part. These inspired scriptures would never have been given to you if the Lord had not had confidence that you could do all that He has required.” [TM 127]

We have presented before us, then, a vision of perfection – spotlessness - as the last state of the Church when Yahshua returns to receive it. Let us each take hold of the word in faith, tending to the business of the Body's sanctification as diligently as to our own, so that when He shall appear, we truly "shall be like Him."

Spiritual principles are revealed in practical, often seemingly mundane ways. Yahweh is revealed in the details. There are no sweeping generalities in the faith of Yahshua without heart application; let us consider the following (somewhat lengthy) passage regarding the earthly temple, made after the pattern of the heavenly, for an example:

"Moreover thou shalt make the tabernacle [with] ten curtains [of] fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet: [with] cherubims of cunning work shalt thou make them. The length of one curtain [shall be] eight and twenty cubits, and the breadth of one curtain four cubits: and every one of the curtains shall have one measure. The five curtains shall be coupled together one to another; and [other] five curtains [shall be] coupled one to another. And thou shalt make loops of blue upon the edge of the one curtain from the selvedge in the coupling; and likewise shalt thou make in the uttermost edge of [another] curtain, in the coupling of the second. Fifty loops shalt thou make in the one curtain, and fifty loops shalt thou make in the edge of the curtain that [is] in the coupling of the second; that the loops may take hold one of another. And thou shalt make fifty taches of gold, and couple the curtains together with the taches: and it shall be one tabernacle." (Exodus 26:1-6) (LMK)

Barb: F

Zahakiel: Finished

Pastor_Chick: F

PETER 2: F.

Elyna1: F

Ruthline: F

Daphna: F

Lucan: This lengthy and exact passage is only a minor section of the instructions given for the building of the temple. Specifically, only the curtains. Would you consider these instructions to be loose and imprecise? Would you consider that, based upon this, Yahweh is unconcerned with the

numbers, figures, and details of His temple on the earth, which temple we are? What manner of attention do you expect those who were craftsmen in this temple were expected to give?

Let us consider another type of the earthly Church of the last days: "Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. And this [is the fashion] which thou shalt make it [of]: The length of the ark [shall be] three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits. A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; [with] lower, second, and third [stories] shalt thou make it." (Genesis 6:14-16)

The measurements given were still insufficient to protect the ark, temporary shelter that it was, through the waters of the flood without the protection of Yahweh; yet had Noah neglected careful obedience, Yahweh could not have honored him with protection. In the same manner, even our most diligent efforts cannot, of themselves, bring us favor with Yahweh, cleanse us from sin, or protect us in the time of trouble. Nonetheless it is in restful, active obedience that we receive the refinement necessary to cooperate in accomplishing the task.

We may note this business of measurement and building was not one left only to the minister, but was taken up by Noah and ALL of his sons. Similarly, it is written of the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, yet another type of the last generation of Yah's people: "They which builded on the wall, and they that bare burdens, with those that laded, [every one] with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other [hand] held a weapon. For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and [so] builded. And he that sounded the trumpet [was] by me." (Nehemiah 4:17, 18)

Yahweh has given no less precise instructions, and no less sufficient power to accomplish them, to His last day people through the writings of Scripture and the Testimonies of the prophets in order to prepare a people to stand in the day of Yahweh. May each of us be familiar with those standards with diligence, not only for our own practices, but for those we assent to and participate in through corporate accountability. Each and every CSDA has a voice and mind; each and every member has a responsibility to build and

inspect the work, "with one of his hands in the work, and with the other holding a weapon."

I would like to close with a reading of the message Yahshua has given to the last faithful Church: "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, [which is] new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and [I will write upon him] my new name." (Revelation 3:7-12) (LMK)

Pastor_Chick: F

Zahakiel: Finished.

Elyna1: F

Adriel Dean777: F, F

Barb: F

PETER 2: F

Ruthline: F

Daphna: F

Lucan: As we meditate and rest during this final Sabbath of the year, may we consider what it means to be made "a pillar in the temple of my God, and to go no more out." This is a work that begins even now, as we take up the spiritual and practical work of the building of the temple on earth that will endure through to the heavens.

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and [that] the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which [temple] ye are. That he might present it

to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." (1 Corinthians 3:16, 17; Ephesians 5:27)

Lucan: Are there any comments on the study tonight?

Adriel Dean777: Amen

Elyna1: Amen

Pastor_Chick: HalleluYah!

Lucan: 😊

Adriel Dean777: 😊

Pastor_Chick: C

Lucan: Go ahead

Pastor_Chick: Luke mentioned Noah's "careful obedience" and that was combined with Yah's assurance of protection. This "careful obedience" is why we really don't need the world's insurance policies. We have Yah's protection which is Heavenly Assurance. Further, on the New Moon, we (here) spoke of carefulness in a practical application. The way we close a door or the way we close a drawer. The manner in which we handle delicate dishes, etc. will demonstrate our carefulness. So, let us live a deliberate life of "careful obedience." End

Adriel Dean777: Amen

Ruthline: Amen

Barb: Amen

Elyna1: Amen!

Zahakiel: Very good 😊

Lucan: Amen; thanks for sharing. 😊

PETER 2: Yes. 😊 Thanks for the reminder.

Lucan: Are there any further comments? If not, I'll ask Bro. David to offer the closing prayer.

Zahakiel: Dearest, holy, and loving Father in Heaven, We are blessed, privileged above all who have lived before, to stand in the spirit in your glorious presence. We are thankful for the principles you have shown to your people and through your people, all by your Spirit. We are blessed to know of

corporate accountability... that as death came upon all by the sins of one man, so by the sacrifice of your Son, life also has come to all who will receive it. We thank you for the many blessings of this past year, as men count years, and we look forward to the guidance of your Spirit in the months ahead. With eager expectation, we see the vision of your Son Yahshua before us, cleansing us individually, and His Church altogether by the workmen whom You have appointed, which workmen we all are. Dismiss us for the remaining hours of this Sabbath, but may we stand always together in your presence, One in Spirit with you, and therefore one another, as the day of our Inheritance draws closer still. May the petitions of our sanctified hearts be always pleasing in your sight, and granted joyfully by your mercy, as we ask it in Yahshua's blessed name. Amen.

Pastor_Chick: Amen.

Barb: Amen

Elyna1: Amen.

Lucan: Amen

Naraiel: Amen

Gloria Bailey: Amen.

Daphna: Amen

PETER 2: Amen

Adriel Dean777: Amen, Amen

Ruthline: Amen