

Zahakiel: Let's begin. Pastor, please offer an opening prayer.

Pastor Chick: Dear Father in Heaven. We come before Your Throne with a readiness to receive a bounty from Heaven. We are thankful for the blessings of the past week and appealing to Your Majesty for victories over our persecutors. We ask that Your sweet Spirit refresh us during this hour and prepare us for the events to come. As we worship You in Spirit and in Truth we rest in Your Providence in YAHSHUA's holy and precious name, AMEN.

Adriel Dean777: Amen, Amen

Barb: Amen

Lucan: Amen

Zahakiel: Amen.

Gloria Bailey: Amen.

Daphna: Amen

Ruthline: Amen

Peterson: Amen.

Elyna Nat: Amen.

Zahakiel: Happy Sabbath to everyone. Tonight's study is called "A Call to The Altar."

Tonight, I will address the Church, and its members, as evangelists, for so the Father and Son have called you to be. Commonly, when Christians are called into action for the Gospel, verses from the New Testament, often the words of Christ Himself, are used as proof texts. The obligation is more ancient even than this, however, going back indeed to the very first conflict between two human beings, one righteous and the other impure. After slaying his brother, the firstborn human was approached by His Creator, and asked, "Where is Abel thy brother?"

Cain replied, "I know not. Am I my brother's keeper?" I don't know that I've ever seen an examination of the significance of this verse in its entirety, but it is quite an important one. It is, in fact, the first direct lie ever recorded in human history. The man said to His God, "I don't know." Cain, of course, knew where he had left his brother's body, but when questioned by the Almighty he pretended to be ignorant of what he knew.

When Adam sought to justify his sin, he did not speak righteously. He blamed Eve, and consequently the serpent, and Yah Himself; but it was his

motive, not his wording, that was incorrect. Cain was, indeed, his brother's keeper. Just as Adam was responsible for Eve's well-being, as her husband and elder, so Cain, as the older brother, had an obligation toward Abel. We do not know the ages of the brothers, but we know that the "firstborn" is a concept that has always been sacred to Yahweh, indicating both privilege and responsibility before God and man. Those who come first are responsible for those who follow after. This is a principle as old as humanity itself, and those who deny it, whether by outright untruths or guile, follow the example of Cain. This applies both to individuals and to groups.

We read of the intention for which Yah blessed the nation of Israel, "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto Yahweh; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Thee." (Psalm 22:27)

"And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory; and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of Yahweh shall name." (Isa 62:2)

The people of the world do not know why a "name" is important. They do not understand how it can be a conviction for a people to stand under "a new name, which the mouth of Yahweh" has pronounced upon them. And yet, those who share the mind of Christ Yahshua know what pleases the Father. They have found themselves in prophecy, and they realize that the ministry they have been called to perform involves just what is said in Isaiah 62: their righteousness, and their identity. The call to be an evangelist is an invitation to bear the honor of these long ages.

It is a summoning to stand in the light of Yah, so that again, as the prophet writes, "The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. (Isa 60:3)

In the last few studies we have had, we have seen two methods of evangelism. One, overt and open, and the other more personal and involved. We have been looking at the ministry of Elijah, and I think we will likely have a lot more to say about him before we turn to another topic altogether. We have read how Elijah called the people of Israel to an altar to demonstrate the power of Yahweh with fire and spectacle.

The glory of a neglected Creator fell and consumed a sacrifice, revealing Himself as the one true Power, the reality to which the priests of Ba'al were merely pretending. Despite its impressive nature, however, Elijah's large

display failed. At least, so it appeared to him. The would-be reformer was sorely disappointed. No doubt, the angels and Yahweh Himself, despite His foreknowledge, were grieved. And yet, Elijah's conclusion that he was the only one left was faulty. He did not see the immediate response, and therefore he believed that there was no faith at all to be found in Israel. Yahweh instructed him, however, that the work of the evangelist does not conclude with the miracle, with the tent meeting, or with the Revelation Seminar.

Adventist Pioneers such as Ellen White would write about the importance of "binding up the work" in the final transmission of the Gospel to the world. It was a mistake for evangelists to believe that their role was to make a single, big impression, and then move on.

Some, no doubt, are called to a traveling ministry, and Paul's method was to go from place to place, raising up Churches. In each place, however, he appointed individuals, Timothy and Titus, for example, to maintain the fledgling congregation. This was necessary, lest Satan's agents come in, like wolves among sheep, to destroy what Yah sought to accomplish.

We cannot yet know the individual tales of those who failed to respond to Elijah's triumph over the pagan priests. Where they were, and why they did not rise up in support of the religion of Yahweh, we are not told. And yet, Yah called them unbowed. They had not submitted to the soul-destroying deceptions of the false priesthood, but neither had they responded to the altar call set before them. Yahweh is merciful.

He would bring them to the altar again, to see what they would do. Moses and Elijah had this in common, they were not fully sensitive to when

Yahweh wished to give His people another opportunity to turn their hearts toward Him. This time, however, following the miracle before the priests of Ba'al, Yah would send Elijah, and those whom he would train, among them in a much more personal manner. We read that Elijah founded a school for evangelists, formally known as the "Sons of the Prophets." (2Kings 2:15) We do not know how many, if any beyond his successor Elisha, actually displayed the prophetic gift. Nevertheless, they were trained by divine inspiration to do the work of Yah among the people of Israel.

All of us, who have benefited from the writings of inspired authors, from Moses, through John, down to more recent works may call ourselves Sons of

the Prophets. We have been educated by them about the righteousness of Yah, and this makes us the "elders" in the things of faith to everyone who comes along after us. The work that Elijah did, we have done, and the work that Elijah was called to do, we also are called to do.

We do not know how Yah will bring about another big display before the world of our faith. What we know, however, is that the real work, the "binding up" of the work, must be done heart to heart, one soul at a time. We, as individual Sons of the Prophets, must bring people to the altar, so that they may see that the stones of Israel, the old waymarks of the primitive faith, have been restored.

We will speak of victory over sin. We will speak of the nature of the Godhead. We will speak of the Sabbath, and other holy days. We will share with them the meaning of the holy kiss. We will explain what it means when Yahweh gives His people a name. We will teach them how to live healthily in this world, and how to prepare for glory in the next. All these things we will do, and with it we will speak of what it all means, how the character is transformed. We will reveal, in our words and in our actions, that Christlikeness is beautiful, the only purely beautiful thing that remains in the world, and then we will call them to account.

Elijah asked, "How long halt ye between two opinions? If Yahweh be Almighty, follow Him; but if Ba'al, then follow him." Sadly, "The people answered him not a word." (1Kings 18:21)

We have learned, since that day, more deeply of righteousness. We do not let apparent failures quench our fervor. We do not let the fear of failure prevent us from speaking boldly. What Elijah did before the gathered people of Israel, he and his followers later had to do in households, and in little groups. The spectacle had done its work. It had brought the controversy to the front; and yet, Yah knew of the complete work that must be accomplished. Confessions made in the heat of the moment, or in response to some amazing sight, do not always endure. I became a Seventh-day Adventist initially because I got swept up in the revelations that my friends were sharing. I saw the truth of Protestantism, and it was very much like fire from Heaven, coming down to consume the nonsense I had thus far accepted as Christianity. And yet, it did not endure.

I am not saying it is impossible for people to be genuinely converted by grand works, but history and the Biblical record show that more significant

repentance often takes place among few rather than many. The impressive works set the stage, but then the Sons of the Prophets must step in, go among the people, and bind the event to the souls.

When they do so, however, they are to be mindful that they are presenting the same choice that Elijah did initially: "How long halt ye between two opinions?" "How long..." the prophet laments the delay. Evangelists, when you speak, do not provide the opportunity for delay. Give a call to the altar. When we speak of the Gospel, we ought to say, "Christ died to save you from – out of – your sins. The life that Yahweh intended for you can be yours this very moment."

We are the Sons of the Prophets, but we are bringing the people to the same point of decision as Elijah did before Jezebel's priests. We know the responses often given to our message, "You speak the truth, but I'm not ready yet." "I need to study this out." "I will think about it." It may seem wise, in light of what I have just said, that they should take the time to consider, lest they make a rash decision. However, there is a difference between deciding whether or not some impressive event is really a life-changing experience, and choosing to follow the leadings of the Spirit when conviction takes hold of the mind and heart.

We are not quick to lead anyone to the waters of baptism. More often than not, we ask our candidates to dwell in their new faith for a time, so that the baptism will be meaningful – a time of engagement before the wedding. And yet, we know that those who do not accept the proposal quickly are easily taken out of the way by unclean and hateful birds. (Mat 13:4, Rev 18:2) We know that if an individual is not in the Way of life, he is in the way of death. To the natural man, who is used to this death, it seems like a hard thing to choose life. Those with whom we speak have dwelt in darkness for many years, and have perhaps spent only a few moments in the presence of Christ's emissaries, hearing the truth. Those precious few moments must count for eternity.

When we speak of pressing the battle of righteousness "to the gates," many may imagine scenes of disobedience to the laws of man, being imprisoned for matters of faith, or preaching a sermon surrounded by hateful opposition. An advance of the Gospel may indeed take these forms,

but it may also be a Gospel worker concluding a conversation about the Scriptures and their promises by asking, "Why not today?" It is here that souls are rescued from Satan's dark prison. It is here that the Gates of Hell are pushed into retreat. It is here, in these moments, that the Kingdom of Heaven gains ground, building on the work of those who have performed the greater, and more visible acts.

We are the elder brothers of the world. We are the keepers of our brethren. We are responsible for them, as Cain was for Abel, and we dare not answer Yahweh when He inquires of us in like manner, "We do not know where they are." In obtaining a confession of sin from a sincere seeker after righteousness, we bring such a one to the altar of decision. The world's Christians say, "We all commit sin," and content themselves that they are no worse than anyone else who ever claimed to follow the Savior. Those who truly know Christ cannot say this, however; His Spirit in the heart would never release such words in a testimony of failure. Therefore, when we speak to those who are used to the cycle of sin and repentance, it is necessary for us to reveal to them what sin truly is – death, permanent and complete, from which our Father has given us a perfect, but narrow, sometimes brief, Way of escape.

When the soul confesses, "I have sinned," it ought not to be a casual acknowledgement of expected human weakness. The messenger of Yah must explain what such an admission means. Romans 7, rightly used, reveals the soul of one who has realized, for the first time, the nature of sin. "But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom 7:23, 24)

When they are there, they will not wish to delay when Christ is presented before them as He who shall deliver them indeed, from that body of death. If they say, "I must wait and consider this," they do not feel the death that sin has wrought in their members. A drowning man does not need to consider grasping for the rope. One who knows dying of thirst does not hesitate to drink.

The people of Yah, the Sons of The Prophets, are called to strip away illusions, and to reveal to men their true condition. By what they teach, and

what they testify, they show the better Way. If everyone is thirsting, then this is seen as the norm, the way things are, and ought to be.

But when one comes bringing water, then those who are willing to accept their true condition will step forward to receive it. In order to bring this water, the people of Yah are called to meet the errors head-on. Wherever error rises, Elijah, seeking those seven thousand unbowed souls, must meet it. And he must call those who hear to the altar. Everyone who carries the cross of the Savior comes to serve, not to receive. Yah calls no one in His Family "incapable," but each must use his or her capability actively in bringing the Gospel to others. Consider that Elijah was engaged fully in the work of reaching out to others, to a nation whose laws and government were based on the Divine Law; and yet he was deceived into thinking his efforts were useless. How much more, then, do we need Yahshua and His Spirit, working alongside our active engagement in winning souls, to protect us from Satan's most artful deceptions in these last days?

Some may say, "I am not a teacher. I do not know how to instruct anyone in victory." The good news is, you do not need to "teach" it at all.

The work of the evangelist is simply to testify to it. Declare it. Say, "Here are the promises by which I live. Here is the experience that has been mine," and say that God has it for them also, this experience, and these promises. Remind them that God's power is greater than both man's ability and his inability. This is the faith by which we live, and it will save, to the uttermost, all who accept it with the trust of a child.

So then, in these last days, Satan has snares within snares for the unwary. His greatest ally, however, has always been time. He has trained the mind set on the flesh to resist conviction, and then flee into the shadows of time, saying, "I hear the truth, but not yet, not yet...." The enemy of souls knows that all such delays are fatal, but so do we. We know our work. It is not to rush those whom Christ seeks into a sudden marriage, but it is to get them to accept His proposal while daylight still shines on their souls. Then He will court them. Then He will win them. We cooperate with this divine process by bringing them to the altar and saying, "Here is life. Choose ye this day whom you will serve." It must be "this day," and not another, not only because life is uncertain and "another" day may not be theirs, but because another day will bring fresh temptations for which the soul in the valley of decision is unprepared. When the life is not surrendered to Christ, Satan has the mastery. Grace gives mankind a choice, but until

that choice is firmly made on the side of the Master of Righteousness, mankind remains a slave to sin, and nothing more.

Over the past few weeks, I trust we have all been blessed by the messages Yah has sent to us, and perhaps some have asked, or have been asked by Yah, "What am I doing here?" The Spirit gives us answer, and, receiving that answer, we now choose to reject the lie of Cain, and stand in Yah's appointed place as our brothers' keepers. Some will bring Israel to the altar through mighty, open works. Others, perhaps many more, will follow through, calling them to the altar through fellowship, daily interaction and conversation.

In either case, it must be a call that is clear, and loving, and urgent. Whether by fire from Heaven, or a calm question that cuts the heart, Yah seeks the souls of those who are willing to receive Him. Let us be listening, always, for what our Father will have us do, and ready to lay the decision plainly before those who will hear, saying, "This day is salvation come to this house," (Luke 19:9) and, "Boast not thyself of tomorrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." (Pro 27:1)

Let us be successors to the Sons of the Prophets, and go about Israel, preparing Her for Her King's soon return.

Zahakiel: Are there any comments or questions on tonight's study?

Adriel Dean777: Amen

Zahakiel: If there are not, I will ask Bro. Luke to offer a closing prayer.

Pastor Chick: Q

Ruthline: C

Zahakiel: Go ahead.

Pastor Chick: Should we have an altar call? END.

Zahakiel: Ah, very good 😊 I will ask, then... who is willing, this day, to commit to the service of Yahshua, in live and in testimony bringing people to the altar of decision?

Adriel Dean777: A

Zahakiel: Go ahead.

Pastor Chick: I commit.

Adriel Dean777: I am. End.

Lucan: I commit.

Adriel Dean777: (I commit)

Elyna Nat: I am

Zahakiel: I know that there are baptismal candidates among us. I would be blessed to hear from them regarding this proposal 😊

Barb: I commit

Marie: I

Ruthline: I commit

Adriel Dean777: (Dean commits)

Marie: I commit

Zahakiel: 😊

Daphna: I commit

Gloria Bailey: I commit.

Zahakiel: Ruthline, you had a comment?

Ruthline: Yes, I just wanted to say I really liked this study, it was a blessing to me. End

Zahakiel: Amen 😊

Adriel Dean777: 😊

Zahakiel: Heaven and earth bear witness to what we have committed tonight. There are some who will hear, maybe for the first time, the Holy Spirit leading them to speak the truth in love to those around them. We look forward to the fruits of this labor.

Adriel Dean777: Amen

Zahakiel: Bro. Luke, will you lead us in a closing prayer?

Lucan: Dear heavenly Father. We thank you for the season of fellowship, and for translating us into the kingdom of your dear Son. We know that your

kingdom is filled with servants who minister with unceasing activity on our behalf. We know that your kingdom is composed of beings who serve instantly and constantly for the salvation of souls. We ask and are committed to receiving the promise that all things will be done in earth as they are in heaven. May your Spirit be with each one as we depart into the Sabbath blessing, bearing out the testimonies we have given before You. In the name of Yahshua we pray, amen.

Zahakiel: Amen.

Pastor Chick: Amen.

Gloria Bailey: Amen.

Barb: Amen

Adriel Dean777: Amen, Amen

Daphna: Amen

Elyna Nat: Amen.

Ruthline: Amen.

Marie: Amen