

Zahakiel: Pastor, please offer an opening prayer.

Pastor Chick: Dear Father in Heaven. We are blessed to be chosen for this time in earth's history, when the end of all things is being revealed, even to those who are not given advanced light. We are additionally blessed to come before You with thanksgiving for salvation freely given...

Pastor Chick: and for sacred time to meet with You and Your Family...

Pastor Chick: now, we pray for a special outpouring of Your sweet Spirit as we focus our attentions heavenward. In the precious and holy name of YAHSHUA, AMEN.

.gadriel: Amen, Amen

Barb: Amen

Elyna: Amen.

Lucan: Amen

Adriel777: Amen

Zahakiel: Amen.

Peter_Jr_18: Amen.

Naraiel: Amen.

Kim: amen

Zahakiel: Happy Sabbath to everyone. We have recently concluded a two-part study on human governments, and how they compare to the perfect Theocratic Kingdom that Yahshua will bring with Him upon His soon return. We saw that the two that are closest are, interestingly enough, the two that have remained the most common even in the modern world, these being kingdoms and democracies. While both have their problems due to the fact that they are run by imperfect, and generally unconverted human beings, they suffice to hold off chaos until the Spirit is withdrawn at the close of human probation. Ultimately, that which has been prophesied is that which we are seeing with regard to our rulers.

With tonight's study, I would like to continue to examine the concept of human "government," but from an entirely different angle. What is it that governs our behavior individually? When we think of the word itself, government, we generally think of an outside body that determines the laws and rules of a society; however, to govern merely means to control and guide, and as such this exists on a personal as well as a collective level.

Tonight's study is called "The Casting of Lots," and it looks – yes – at the Biblically described methods of casting lots to decide difficult matters, but also at what controls the decision-making process in the Mind of Christ that we have received upon being born

again. Let's begin by looking at some passages that describe this activity. I say "some" because there are quite a few.

We read, then: "And Joshua cast lots for [the tribes] in Shiloh before Yahweh, and there Joshua divided the land unto the children of Israel according to their divisions." (Josh. 18:10)

When attempting to discover who had displeased Yahweh, "Saul said, 'Cast lots between me and Jonathan my son.' And Jonathan was taken. Then Saul said to Jonathan, 'Tell me what thou hast done.' And Jonathan told him, and said, 'I did but taste a little honey with the end of the rod that was in mine hand, and, lo, I must die.'" (1Samuel 14:43, 44)

I want to return to this one I just posted later on, but a few more before we continue..."And the rulers of the people dwelt at Jerusalem. The rest of the people also cast lots, to bring one of ten to dwell in Jerusalem the holy city, and nine parts to dwell in other cities." (Neh. 11:1)

"And they said everyone to his fellow, 'Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil is upon us.' So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah." (Jonah 1:7)

"And they crucified Him, and parted His garments, casting lots, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, 'They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.'" (Mat 27:35)

"And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed, and said, 'Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen, that he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.' And they gave forth their lots, and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles." (Acts 1:23-26)

Now, here is an interesting verse that sort of summarizes what's going on spiritually in all of those incidents: "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of Yahweh." (Pro 16:33)

This verse seems, pretty clearly, to validate what the Bible records. It explains just why lots have been provided as a tool for certain religious functions, because it is one of the means by which Yahweh lets His will be known. For the Bible believer, who understands this and other, similar verses... there truly are no coincidences. When we consider the vastness of the universe, with its countless stars and planets, and then the fact that the

very molecules of the sticks and stones of the lots are held together by Yah's power... He truly is in control of all things, except the human will – and that, by His own choice.

Based upon the verses shared above, and various others, one might reasonably conclude that the use of lots to determine the proper course to take is an acceptable practice – under the right circumstances. What are those circumstances? Examining the verses listed above, we see that in each case there is no humanly-discernible benefit to either option. When dividing the land for the various tribes of Israel, there was no clear indication of which portion was best suited to which tribe. When deciding whether Saul or Jonathan was guilty of violating the pre-combat fasting agreement, there was no way of knowing who had done so. There was no clear benefit to one goat or the other when the High Priest decided which should represent Yahshua and which should represent Azazel in the Day of Atonement ritual described in Leviticus. In the New Testament example I mentioned, it was clear that the apostles did not know which of the two, Joseph or Matthias, were to replace Judas, as both apparently had great gifts to offer.

I have pointed out in other studies that Matthias, who was chosen, never did anything worth recording in the Scriptures again... but then, neither did the one who was not chosen. The problem there was not with the fact that lots were the tool used to decide who the new apostle should be...but that there was no need to decide between those two at all. The twelfth apostle by Yah's intent appears to have been Paul. Paul, however, was not numbered among the twelve, because the others had already chosen a replacement for Judas.

None of this means that there is necessarily a problem with the practice itself under this kind of circumstance.... After all, rather than merely for deciding things by chance, although it certainly seemed to work a lot of the time, lots are even used in prescribed religious ceremonies, for example the Day of Atonement that I referenced before: "And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats: one lot for Yahweh, and the other lot for the scapegoat." (Lev 16:8)

I'd like to use a more personal example to illustrate the point I am making. A few years ago, we had a Church member – one no longer with us – who had volunteered to work for a time in the African field. Her husband was not supportive of her work with us, and in fact would often take opportunities to try to cast doubts in her mind about the CSDA message and its ministry work. This is, as you can imagine, a toxic environment in which to live; although it may not have an immediate impact, there is always a subtle weakening that requires frequent, fervent prayer if it is to be endured.

During the course of time, and I am reconstructing these events as best I can recall them, this member suffered a relatively serious injury in Africa. This incident, along with pressure

from her husband, sorely tempted her to leave the mission field before the time had elapsed during which she'd covenanted to remain. Now, this is not to indicate a lack of sympathy for her injury... but it was something that she could overcome, and the work in Africa at that time sorely needed as many workers as it could get. It turns out, she decided to stay in the mission field for a while longer, but she did so by casting lots to see whether or not she should leave or remain. The Church was, of course, supportive of her decision to stay in Africa, where she was most needed, and also where she was somewhat removed from the constant negative influence of her husband, but a few of us questioned why she felt it necessary to resort to this unusual method of deciding what to do. One might wonder, then, why the questions were necessary, since the Bible does sanction the use of this technique when it comes to hard decisions, and what we consider the "correct" decision was once again reached.

The issue in this case, however, was that the choices were not equally valid. Deciding whether or not to remain in Gospel service to others is not like deciding which goat to sacrifice and which to set free to wander the wilderness. Choosing to remain in a spiritually healthy environment as opposed to a spiritually oppressive one is not the same as deciding which plot of land to give to a tribe. Making up one's mind to remain true to promises made ought not to be the satisfaction of a "don't know" thought like discovering who the guilty party is among two likely suspects. There are some things that ought to be determined by thought, prayer, and conscience, not what the world would assume to be a game of chance. This is where the issue of "govern" – ment comes in. What is it that governs the Mind of Christ?

Governments, rulers of the land, have a part to play in setting the tone of the culture, and establishing norms. Where these social expectations have no conflict with the divine principles, we are obligated to go along with them. Similarly, there are tools that Yah has sanctioned for use in some situations, which are actually fairly rare since we have not inherited the ceremonial Temple-based practices of Judaism. And yet, for the most part our consciences (educated by the Scriptures and the Body of Christ) are to be our primary governing principle. In each case, where there is a principle, where there is a known, divine, "righteous" choice, that is the govern-ment of the Christian. For the most part, and in regard to many issues, the actual, human government will be in line with this govern-ment... or at least permit it. After all, the Scriptures do tell us, "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for Yahweh's sake, whether it be to the king, as supreme, or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well." (1Pet 2:13, 14)

Now, as Protestants, we do understand there is a place for civil disobedience, for this same Peter is the one who said before the Sanhedrin, "...We ought to obey God rather than men." (Acts 5:29) In a sense, this is the same advice, on a social level, as wives are

given on the household level: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord." (Col 3:18)

Again from Peter, "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives, while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear." (1Pet 3:1, 2)

Wives ought to obey their husbands, yet they cannot in so doing violate their consciences. This principle holds true at every level of head-ship, from married couple, to congregation, to local and then national government.

I would like to point out that there is a difference between a "protest" and a "rebellion," and perhaps this would be a good topic for another study. For tonight, we may say that a protest is the voicing of a contrary opinion, or the refusal to perform some expected behavior, for the sake of obeying a higher law (whether this means conscience, a principle, or Scripture). On the other hand, rebellion is a more general term that may include breaking away from contracts, covenants and laws for any reason whatsoever.

For the Christian, the will of Yah is the highest form of governance, of control. I use the term "control" very carefully, because the arrangement is one of mutual respect and deference. Let me give a very interesting example of what I mean by that... Picking up from where we left off in the verse I quoted above, the Israelite army had been instructed by King Saul not to eat or drink anything until a certain battle was completed. When the army encountered problems, although they still overcame their enemies, they determined that someone had violated this commandment, and they cast lots to identify who it was. When it was discovered that Jonathan had been the one (because he had not heard Saul's proclamation), "Saul answered, 'God do so and more also, for thou shalt surely die, Jonathan.'" "And the people said unto Saul, Shall 'Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? God forbid. As Yahweh liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground, for he hath wrought with God this day.'" So the people rescued Jonathan, that he died not. "Then Saul went up from following the Philistines, and the Philistines went to their own place. So Saul took the kingdom over Israel, and fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab, and against the children of Ammon, and against Edom, and against the kings of Zobah, and against the Philistines, and whithersoever he turned himself, he vexed them." (1Sam 14:44-47)

The King, whose rule is law, made a judgment, and yet the people, for conscience's sake, prevented it from being carried out. In matters such as this, the king's rule ought to be as the commandment of Yah, and yet the people did not permit Jonathan to be executed. We read, as the record continued, that no disaster followed this, and in fact Saul enjoyed great success over the nations that surrounded them. Yah had respected the voice of the

people, though they disobeyed Saul's command, which was assumed to be inspired to one degree or another.

This is not to suggest, of course, that the laws and principles of Yah are negotiable. These are absolute, and of the ultimate authority; however, in the carrying-out of these matters (and this is, perhaps, a very advanced idea) He does seem to respect human reasoning and convictions.

Another interesting passage that seems to speak to this is found here, quoting Naaman, who was healed from leprosy by the prophet Elisha: "'In this thing [may] Yahweh pardon thy servant, that when my master goeth into the house of [the false god] Rimmon to worship there, and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, when I bow down myself in the house of Rimmon, Yahweh pardon thy servant in this thing.'" "And he said unto him, 'Go in peace.'" (2Kings 5:18, 19)

So, in the matter of lots, in the matter of prayer, and conscience, and divine Law, we see all the various things that govern human behavior. Where all things appear equally righteous, one may as well flip a coin, or cast lots. Generally speaking, however, not all things are equally righteous. There is usually a particular choice our Father would have us make, or path the He wishes us to walk. With the Mind of Christ, we ought to seek His best and perfect will, and then diligently accomplish that will.

Next week, I will speak more about the Mind of Christ, and about our internal, spiritual government. For tonight, I will close here, asking that you consider these matters, and use them to examine your motivations from day to day and moment to moment, that our consciences will always be clean, and our testimonies will always be clear before Yahweh, and before our fellow humans who so desperately need to see good examples.

Are there any comments or questions about tonight's study?

Lucan: C

Zahakiel: Go ahead.

Lucan: I'm reminded that once Paul came into apostleship, he wrote about "governments" as being one of the functions set in the Church. "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." (1 Cor. 12:28)

That is the only time the word "governments" appears in the Scripture, either in English or in Greek in that fashion, although the notes give some reference to it being used in the Old Testament in the Septuagint in places such as Proverbs. "Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety." (Pro. 11:14) The word "counsel" there is the same as "governments" in Paul's verse.

Mrs. White wrote a little about the casting of lots. From what I understand of the context, a certain church had taken to casting lots to select church officers in the midst of disagreements. She wrote a good letter there in entirety, but some relevant sections... "I have no faith in casting lots. We have in the Bible a plain "Thus saith the Lord" in regard to all church duties. If there is not unity in the church, Christ is grieved, and the cause of truth is misrepresented to unbelievers. Let every member of the church inquire, "Am I a member of the body of Christ?" [...] She then talks about the need for the Church members to display love and unity. And in the end said "I would say to the members of the church in Austin: Read your Bibles with much prayer. Do not try to humble others, but humble yourselves before God, and deal gently with one another. To cast lots for the officers of the church is not in God's order. Let men of responsibility be called upon to select the officers of the church." [Letter 37, 1900]

These are some of the things that came up in study and reflection, considering the prior member you mentioned. The casting of lots, when described in the Scripture, rarely happens privately as it did in that case. And it most certainly has no place where the gifts of Yahweh, "governments" and counselors, are available on the matter. <End.>

Zahakiel: Very good, yes...and you see in this case of selecting officers during sharp disagreements, the lots were used as a "patch" to overlook the fact that there were these dramatic differences amongst the agents of Christ. That is exactly how this can be misused, since things are rarely equally righteous. Scripturally, it is "allowed," but it is rarely the "proper" means of resolving a decision, especially as it relates to those that have such a direct impact on the Gospel work as who is in charge of what areas, and whether or not an evangelist remains in the ministry. This is exactly why the Church members, in considering the case of that member relating to the African work, were uncomfortable with the knowledge that this was how she had arrived at (ultimately the correct) conclusion.

Are there any others with thoughts to share on this?

Adriel777: C or rather Q

Zahakiel: Go ahead.

Adriel777: Could not Satan manipulate the outcome of the casting of lots if not done for the correct reason? End

Zahakiel: The simple answer, I suppose, is that he can manipulate anything that is not done for the correct reason...and even some things that ARE done for the correct reason but in unrighteous ways. All things really must be done with prayer.

Any others?

Lucan: C

Zahakiel: Go ahead

Lucan: I think it may be relevant that most (if not all?) examples of Yahweh providing an answer via lots are in the Old Testament. We have the example of the apostles in the New Testament, but, as David pointed out, the results of that hardly show Yahweh's agreement or vindication of it. Under the old covenant, Yahweh communicated through priests and Urim and Thummim on questions of yes and no. So, the idea of lots was not without a sort of precedent. That is, Yahweh giving yes/no answers through simple signs. That is a different situation than the Spirit being placed within the Body of believers, corporately and individually. <End.>

Zahakiel: Quite true. I think that one of the reasons why I, personally, took such issue with the methods used by that former member... is what the method actually meant. She had lost, or was beginning to lose, confidence in the Spirit's voice through the Brethren. She felt that she was "alone" in making that decision, and so resorted to this simple-sign method. I think that in her case, Yah met her where she was, confirming what the Church was telling her anyway. But certainly, having faith in Yahshua's Spirit through His people is best.

Are there any others?

Pastor Chick: C

Zahakiel: Go ahead.

Pastor Chick: Actually, as I recall being there she doubted her own covenant being leavened by her husband's continuous bombardments... and yes, she had no respect for any counsel church members might offer. She concluded "chance" was her only option and further down the pike she, being more influenced by the enemy's voice eventually decided to transgress the decision she made via chance. END.

Zahakiel: Yes... thank you for adding that, as I think it is relevant that even with the various witnesses, lots, and direct advice...she did not remain true to her convictions. This is actually something I want to touch on in a future study, as I will probably be giving several about this issue of "government". The issue of the place of faith in Yah's methods as He leads us. I am happy to see that this subject has generated greater than usual participation in the discussion part of our meeting... 😊 Anyone else? All right, then I will ask Bro. Luke to offer a closing prayer.

Elyna: C

Zahakiel: Go ahead.

Elyna: Thank you for this topic I appreciated the emphasis on the relevance and significance of casting lots today. Thanks for all other comments as well that shed light upon that. End.

Zahakiel: Ok 😊 Go ahead when ready, Bro. Luke.

Lucan: Dear heavenly Father. We thank you for the blessing of your Spirit, given without measure to your children. We know that you have not left us in this world without a comforter, a guide, and a sure knowledge of your character. In no regard, from the least to the greatest, have you left our salvation or well-being to chance. But, you have sent your own Son to make a surety of it, that we might know you, and know how you would have us to walk. We ask for your continued presence with us as we dismiss into the remaining hours of the Sabbath day. In Yahshua's name we pray, amen.

Barb: Amen

Pastor Chick: Amen.

Adriel777: Amen

Zahakiel: Amen.

daphna: Amen

Kim: Amen

Peter_Jr_18: Amen.

Naraiel: Amen

Elyna: Amen