

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

Pastor Chick: Dear Father in Heaven. We come before your presence with thanksgiving, asking for a refreshing from your Spirit as we worship You in spirit and in truth. In Yahshua's holy name, Amen.

Zahakiel: Amen.

Peter_Jr_18: Amen.

Lucan: Amen

Barb: Amen

nattie: Amen.

Naraiel: Amen

Adriel777: Amen

Elyna: Amen.

daphna dee: Amen

Zahakiel: Happy Sabbath to everyone. I am calling the study for tonight "Receiving the Blessing," although the principle I am discussing could really go by several other legitimate titles.

How is it that we are to receive blessings from our Father? The Scriptures are explicit, and from the testimony both before and after the cross. We may read, and I would like to begin with this most impressive passage:

"If there be in the land famine, if there be pestilence, blasting, mildew, locust, or if there be caterpillar; if their enemy besiege them in the land of their cities; whatsoever plague, whatsoever sickness there be; what prayer and supplication soever be made by any man, or by all thy people Israel, which shall know every man the plague of his own heart, and spread forth his hands toward this house, then hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart thou knowest; (for thou, even thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men) that they may fear thee all the days that they live in the land which thou gavest unto our fathers." (1 Kings 8:37-40) Let me know when you've read this.

Pastor Chick: F

Naraiel: F

nattie: F.

Adriel777: F

Barb: F

Lucan: F

daphna dee: F

Zahakiel: This is a prayer by King Solomon on the occasion of the dedication of his Temple to Yah. And lest any think that this is of anything less than absolute authority because it is a request rather than a declaration by the Almighty Himself, we should note that these words follow one of the most dramatic endorsements of Israel's actions in the Word. A few verses above we see this:

"And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of Yahweh so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of Yahweh had filled the house of Yahweh." (1Kings 8:10-11)

It is at this time, perhaps the peak of the Chosen People's glory and favor with Yah, that this, the wisest of kings, made this request of the Creator. We may learn much from this statement.

Solomon speaks of illnesses and plagues, both personal and national disasters. He speaks of confession of sin, of repentance toward whatsoever may have caused the blessing to be absent in the first place, and then he says that both individual and corporate prayers are heard. Yah is asked to "forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways... that they may fear thee all the days that they live in the land..."

These elements bear repeating, for the world today does not know such power as this. The world does not know about repentance from sin. The Churches do not know about repentance from sin. How can they fulfill the conditions that Solomon has declared before Yahweh if they will not take the first steps necessary to receiving the blessings they request? We read from later books:

"For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, 'Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea,' and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith." (Mark 11:23)

These are the words of Yahshua. The wisest of mortal kings, and now the King of Kings, agree in one. Naturally, then, these words are resisted by the flesh. We are to hold our faith without wavering. We are to pray without doubt, believing in our hearts that what we ask for shall come to pass. And it is important to understand that faith, like love, is a choice that we are able to make because the grace of Yah has come upon mankind through Christ.

The question may be asked, "How do I believe?" It sounds simple, perhaps too simple, to be commonly asked, and yet it is central to all that we may comprehend of the Gospel, from the Victory over Sin itself to reading prophecy with understanding. If we try to believe something that we know clearly to be false, our minds will naturally reject it. If I should make the attempt to believe that "the sky is yellow," my senses can confirm that this is false, and so I would not be able to accept that belief without damaging my sense of reality. With spiritual things, this is somewhat more involved (though no less simple in principle) since "senses" are rarely involved directly, and even then are unreliable. Here is the realm of faith, to "know" with a greater degree of accuracy than our natural senses, that a certain thing is true. In order to do this, we must choose – we must make the choice – to accept claims that cannot be verified by the flesh. To believe in the testimony of the Bible, for example, is the foundation of the Christian faith. Once we make this choice, and hold to it consistently, then it opens up the possibilities described by Solomon and Christ. It enables us to take advantage of the thinking, this receiving the promises of Yah without the doubt and wavering that would corrupt the channel He uses to grant our petitions.

How do we believe? We choose to.

We do not choose to accept each individual belief in isolation, however, and perhaps this is where some evangelists make mistakes in teaching the Gospel to others.

Let me clarify my meaning here.

Giselle and I recently had a visit by a couple of young ladies from the Mormon Church. We spoke of the usual things, areas we had in common and areas in which we differ (such as Victory, the Godhead, and the Sabbath). Near the end, we seemed to truly impress them with our firm testimony... one of the visitors said that our words had "made her think," and the other (the more experienced one) was mostly silent when I explained some verses to them. And yet, they made the normal last-ditch effort to convince. "You must pray," they advised us, "to know that these things are true. Regardless of what you've accepted before, or what you know of the Bible and history, the Holy Spirit can confirm for you the truth of what we have shared with you, and then you can accept it." I am paraphrasing, but that is the idea, an invitation to "feel" the truth that I've heard several times before from other Latter-day Saint missionaries. I replied in this way:

"I understand quite well that the Holy Spirit can cause a 'burning in the chest' like the Book of Acts describes, to reveal the truth about things through sensations and emotions. I have experienced it before myself. And yet, we also know that evil spirits have much control over the flesh of mankind. When holy things are genuinely revealed by the sensations of our bodies, it is because these things agree with the written Word. Christ first spoke to His followers after His resurrection, confirming the meaning of the prophecies, and then the Spirit confirmed His doctrine." Again, I am paraphrasing, but I was referring to this verse: "And they said one to another, 'Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the scriptures?'" (Luke 24:32)

That last part is critical. The belief was not based on the feeling, but the feeling confirmed the understanding they had received from the Word of Yah. I concluded, "The Word, the Bible, must be the foundation of my faith, because I have accepted it as the standard of truth."

While we may claim (like most Churches) that the Bible is THE Word of Yahweh, others use it differently than we do. Some believe that traditions and later doctrines hold equal weight. Others believe that subsequent prophecies have "corrected" mistakes and inaccuracies. Still others accept it as written, but claim that the meaning must be "figured out" rather than plainly read. Many of these are the Enemy's tricks to steal away from us the plain promises of the Creator, sent to us, sometimes through scholars and sophisticated speakers, but most often through shepherds, fishermen, and others called from various other professions.

The Bible was written for "common people," and while it has its mysteries, with which theologians and dedicated students of the Scriptures are legitimately involved, what the Word declares openly is for everyone to read, and in which we may rejoice. There is none so foolish, so slow of understanding, that they cannot be blessed unto salvation by the Scriptures. Let us take just one element of what I have described above, so that we may generalize it to explain how we may receive any blessing.

Health is a perfect example. The Scriptures say to pray for health and for healing. There are conditions provided, of course. Yah requires those who wish to be healed, and to remain healthy, to follow all the known laws of health as much as it is possible. He says, and we have all heard this verse before, "If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of Yahweh thy God, and wilt do that which is right in His sight, and wilt give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put

none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians, for I am Yahweh that healeth thee." (Exo 15:26)

In another place, "And ye shall serve Yahweh your God, and He shall bless thy bread, and thy water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee." (Exo 23:25)

We may read these words and, because we have chosen to accept the Bible as written as the foundation for truth, we have the ability to believe them. As in many spiritual things, the choice leads to the power. As I was saying, we are not called to believe each statement or promise in isolation, as if there were no consistent thread throughout the Bible. Our faith is built upon the Rock, which is the Word, and this signifies both the Bible and Christ Himself. As with love, choice leads to the "feeling" that many in the world often mistake for the thing itself. The "feeling" of believing something is based on sensations; what is real is the choice we make, to accept that Yah's statements are reliable and accurate, and then that faith is confirmed afterwards, as we see the testimony of Yahshua come to pass: "he shall have whatsoever he saith."

Are the last faithful people not to have the "Testimony of Yahshua?" Statements such as this are a part of what He has testified before mankind. He shall have it. There is no ambiguity here... there is nothing difficult to understand, and yet many feel that they must defend and explain this promise in lesser terms than they deserve. The worldling will challenge the Christian, saying, "But I prayed for this or that, and I did not receive it; why should I trust your God?" Unfortunately, the nominal Christian is often poorly equipped to respond, not knowing himself what it is to "repent" so that Yah will forgive, and do, and give unto them according to their ways – as Solomon prayed.

The Bible does not say without context, "Ask for whatever you want, and God will give it." No, first we must make ourselves into a people who are "safe" to bless, who – upon receiving the requested blessings – will have our own faith strengthened, and then edify the Church, and then shine a beacon of everlasting life to the world.

No blessing that Yah can give will ever work at cross purposes with these three outcomes, however sincere the prayer may be. Perhaps more distressingly, often the professed Christians themselves will try to diminish the power of this plain doctrine. They may say, for example, "Paul prayed for relief, but he was not healed," or, "This or that Biblical person died of disease, so why should we expect any better?"

But we should expect better.

In making statements like this, these professed Christians are doing precisely what the sinner does when confronted with the Victory over sin doctrine. They say, "David sinned, and Moses fell short. Why should I be expected to do any better?" We should expect better. Let us be clear on this – a lack of faith is a lack of faith, whether it is faith in receiving the victorious life, or faith in receiving any other prayer request.

It is true, and it deserves strong emphasis, that while Yah has created all human beings, and loves everyone perfectly, each person has his or her own unique experience with Yahweh. This is the basis for individuality in religion. None are loved any less than others; Moses and David are not

loved any more than any one of us...and while we are called to different roles based upon our times and our gifts, the affection our Father feels for us is equal in its lack of any limit. In practical terms, we cannot perfectly compare our walk with Yah with anyone else's. We may find some parallels with many Biblical figures, but our experience with Yah is uniquely our own.

In the matter of sanctification, our only example is Christ, who committed no sin. In this matter of health, our only example is Christ, who was never subject to disease. I am not equating illness and injury with sin in every sense, do not misunderstand me... but in the matter of prayer they are closely connected. Yahshua command diseases and demons alike, and because of the glory on Him, they obeyed. It is our privilege, and our duty, to let Him be our example not only in what He did, but in the blessings He received from Yah. Some may resist, caught on the hook of their flesh, saying, "His ministry required Him to be in perfect health as a representative of all mankind, and a flawless sacrifice... my calling may not require this blessing. What if my illness is to be a testimony?" Be careful... this may be a trap. While Yah has used some this way in the past, again, remember that we are each experiencing this life uniquely. There is danger in excusing a lack of faith for an acceptance of Yah's will – it is a subtle trick, but we must be wise to avoid it when it indeed comes from a less than holy place. This is not a conclusion we should draw without great care and prayer, lest we surrender a blessing we were intended to receive.

Paul is an easy "target" here, because Paul did pray for healing on at least one occasion and was not healed. But we need only read Paul's own testimony to see how applicable that is to the general case – which is to say not very much. We read: "For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And He said unto me, 'My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness...'" (2Cor 12:8, 9)

In Paul's case, Yah did not leave Him without a witness. He did not leave his servant to guess whether or not his prayer had been ignored. Paul was given a specific reason why He would not be healed, and unless we have reason to believe that exactly the same testimony is required of us, we ought to pray with expectation of receiving what we ask for. Paul's case is the exception – a useful exception on a few occasions, but an exception nonetheless, to the general rule. What we ask for in faith, we receive – and this is particularly true of the 144,000 who follow perfectly in the footsteps of our Divine Example.

The Christian is not called to condemn those who are ill. In Adventism we have a principle... that nine tenths of the misfortunes that come upon us are the results of our choices. In a typical lifetime of misfortunes, 10% of situations that arise beyond our control is still a considerable number. The purpose to which we are called may certainly involve undergoing some trial of health; however, for us as the individuals involved, unless we are instructed otherwise, we are to keep praying, and with every prayer to expect the blessing. Choose to expect the blessing, and the Testimony of Yahshua will be revealed to you.

We may read the record of the leprous Naaman who was told by the prophet Elisha to dip himself seven times in the Jordan to be healed. (2Kings 5) He obeyed the prophet and dipped himself into the Jordan six times... and we have no indication that anything was different after that sixth time. But then he dipped again the seventh time, and we read, "...his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean." (2Kings 5:14)

The instructions of Yah and His servants are not to be seen as halfway measures. The prayers we offer on behalf of ourselves and others are not mere words thrown into a well... they ascend before the Throne, borne like the smoke of incense by our angels and they do not bear that incense in vain; Yah will not ignore this kind of faith.

We cannot expect too much of our Father. We cannot grow weary in well-doing, nor in asking for that which we desire from Him. All those who are of Yahweh's covenant know, for they bear witness, that we have asked for Victory over sin, and He has never disappointed us. Like victory, then, let us expect the best in everything we ask in order to preserve that perfect testimony, and He will not disappoint us in these petitions either. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering. Let us ask without doubting, or temptations to say, "Even if I am not healed..." "Even if He will not bless me..." Let Yah reply to us on His terms, and then we shall remain in Sabbath always, knowing that our Father cares for us, for we have laid our cares on Him.

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

Adriel777: Amen

Zahakiel: If there are none, then I will ask Bro. Luke to offer a closing prayer.

Lucan: Dear heavenly Father. We thank you for the invitation to lay hold on your mercies as Jacob did, and the assurance that we will similarly be heard. We thank you for the blessing of the new heart, created in your image, through which we seek and request those things that are according to your will. May your Spirit continue with your people through the hours of the Sabbath and beyond. In Yahshua's name we pray, amen.

Zahakiel: Amen.

Adriel777: Amen

Barb: Amen PC: Amen

nattie: Amen.

Kim: Amen

Peter_Jr_18: Amen.

Elyna: Amen

Kim: Would you apply these lessons of faith and prayer to other petitions such as a prayer that a loved one would be safe?

Zahakiel: They apply to all things that a saint will ask of Yahweh.

Kim: If we ask for something such as before mentioned and witness that the loved one is being continually harmed what conclusion is to be drawn? What about a delay in outcome? What does a Christian make of that?

Zahakiel: We know from good Adventist teachings that if we are living outside of Yah's will and covenant, our prayers may go no higher than the roof. Those who are asking, and not receiving, must examine themselves...to see if they are meeting the requirements that I began the study by

describing. Solomon's prayer speaks of those who will return to Yah with their full hearts, and then ask what it is that they desire. We cannot be an intercessor for others if we are not, like Christ, standing in the Father's presence.

Kim: Right. I'm also wondering if Yah would delay the deliverance for some reason.

Zahakiel: I could not speculate on that, but the simplest explanation is often best.

Kim: I should probably reread everything. I think you are saying He really wouldn't.

Zahakiel: If you have not read the entire study, then yes, that would be my advice, and we can speak afterwards if you like.

Kim: Thank you 😊

Elyna: As Bro David shared with us, we must persevere in prayer, even if we do not receive the answer in the time frame we expected. But the importance is to keep praying.

Zahakiel: Well, let me reinforce...we do not want to use, "He is delaying" as an excuse either. Yah is not slow to deliver His promises, the Scriptures tell us. That is our faith.