

Zahakiel: Ok, let's get started 😊 Pastor, please offer an opening prayer.

Pastor Chick: Dear Father in Heaven, we come before your presence with thanksgiving for a full week of accomplishments and blessings. As we come to worship you in spirit and truth we seek a fresh baptism of your spirit. In Yahshua's holy name, Amen.

Zahakiel: Amen

Elyna: Amen.

Adriel777: Amen

daphna dee: Amen

Naraiel: Amen

Lucan: Amen

gadriel: Amen

Barb: Amen

Zahakiel: Happy Sabbath to everyone. Tonight's study is called "Who is A Savior?" and it deals with the subject of intercessory prayer.

A few weeks ago, I gave a study entitled 'Receiving the blessing.' It was about having faith in Yah's promises, and not limiting (by doubts or unsanctified reasoning) our Father's ability to provide us with gifts that He intends for us to have. Without going over its specifics again, it discusses the importance of "knowing" the truth rather than merely feeling it, and of understanding the conditions that best allow Yah to work for us by His providence. There must be repentance from sin, faith in His Word, and yes, baptism into His Body and entrance into His Covenant, if we would truly receive the blessings that the Creator intends for His people.

We do read that Yah's blessings, many of them, fall on both the righteous and the unrighteous. Yah is Love, as the Scriptures tell us, and even those who rebel against Him are nevertheless subject to His care, to the extent that they do not place themselves in danger or fall victim to the Enemy's plans. The holy angels are unable to do much for such people, unless Yah's Covenant explicitly preserves them, and the Bible promises specific blessings to those who become One with the Father and Son.

This week, I want to look at some specific ways in which those who ought to receive Yah's blessings may be actively, even if unconsciously, preventing themselves from doing so. In a sense, then, it is a companion study to the one about receiving the blessings. That was about how we may actively do so... this week, it is about what to avoid.

The passage I was reading when this topic came up was this one: "So Abraham prayed unto Elohim, and Elohim healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his maidservants; and they bare children." (Gen 20:17)

This is a typical verse that may be used to show that intercessory prayer, that is, praying on behalf of others, works. There is a key word there, however, that is easy to overlook. It is the first word: "So." This word is significant, because it tells us why Abraham prayed for Abimelech, and why his prayer was successfully answered. In other words, the events described in this verse are the direct result of something that came immediately before, and so if we wish to understand why this particular prayer was granted in such an open way, we must read the verses that come before it. Here is a summary of that passage, which really spans the entirety of Genesis 20:

Abraham and Sarah his wife are travelling through a country known as Gerar. While there, Abraham decides to tell those whom he meets that Sarah is his sister since he fears that, if it is known that they are married, he might be slain on account of her great beauty, and taken to be another man's wife. When Abimelech, the king of Gerar, hears of this, he indeed takes Sarah to be his wife, thinking that she is unmarried. In a somewhat unusual turn of events, Yahweh appears to Abimelech in a dream, and warns him that Sarah is, in fact, Abraham's wife, and so he does not touch her. Instead, he calls Abraham before him and says, "What hast thou done unto us? And what have I offended thee, that thou hast brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? Thou hast done deeds unto me that ought not to be done." (Gen 20:9) Abraham confesses, and the two resolve the matter peacefully. Abimelech grants Abraham the right to travel throughout his land, and gives him gifts. As a reward for his faith, both in believing Yah's message and in his integrity to refrain from another man's wife, Abimelech receives blessings, and the restoration of his household's fertility. Abraham's prayer is the means by which this is accomplished, but the groundwork was laid by the King of Gerar's faith, and this is why the verse at the beginning of our study opens with the word "so." "So," or "because of," the King's faith, Abraham prayed successfully for Abimelech. Because the king of Gerar had integrity, and because he performed all the righteousness he knew, he was able to receive the benefits of intercessory prayer.

As priests and servants of Yahweh, we His people often receive requests from various people to pray for them. The reasons are many, from health concerns to financial troubles, to family members in crisis. Of course, Yah has all such matters well in hand, but He will permit those who are His, and those who are in the circle OF those who are His to come under trial, so that they may turn to Him.

The relationship between Yahshua and Satan with regard to individual souls can be a complicated one. We know that Yahweh does not intend to "test" anyone. Of Himself, He brings no trials, and desires no temptation to cross the path of His People. As any loving Father, He desires His children to be at peace, and joyful, preparing for their service to Him and to one another in eternity.

Because of transgression, however, and because there is an Enemy of souls, the path to Heaven has been sprinkled with many obstacles. Yah has permitted this, because He understands the seductive qualities of sin, and will give life, responsibility and power only to those who will never, in all of eternity, follow in the footsteps of Satan.

We have these records, and we have these examples, before us, so that we may learn from them. And yet, learning about sin and righteousness can never be a merely theoretical exercise. We must not only learn righteousness, and do righteous acts, but we must, ourselves, in spirit and in character, be righteous altogether. This comes with choices, and with the experience of overcoming trials and temptations through our faith in the Father and Son.

We who are in Covenant with Yahweh have sealed our faith to Him, and thus we are "free" to receive all blessings pertaining to life and godliness. We are being refined as well, and so this journey is not without its challenges, but what of those who are not yet even within the covenant?

We have spoken before, in previous studies, about the limitations that Yah has placed upon His people for intercessory prayer. We have seen examples of blessings granted to those who would misuse Yah's goodness, for the sake of a prayer of faith. There are things Yah will permit that are not His primary will, and not even in the best interest of His people, because He is faithful to His promises, and because He is giving us space to learn for ourselves what is best.

Abimelech was not in the Abrahamic Covenant, which was the equivalent of "Church Membership" in that generation. He was not, so far as we know, circumcised, nor is he ever recorded as offering sacrifices to Yahweh. We see that he had a strong sense of right and wrong, and that Yah considered him significant enough to appear to him in a dream, but he had no formal agreement with the Creator regarding his spiritual life. Abimelech appears in the sacred record only because of his encounter with Abraham.

In just such a way, we who are Yah's people may be the only contact that those around us have with holy matters. This is a great and heavy responsibility, and one about which we ought always to be mindful. We would never be found setting a poor example for those around us, but as we approach the perfection of Christ's character, the mis-steps may be harder to detect at the outset.

The nature of the spirit is that often even those actions and words offered with the best of intentions turn out to be harmful, and many of us only learned about the sin of officiousness (for example) after encountering the CSDA message. It is possible to be officious, to be over-helpful, in prayer just as easily as with physical actions. Even in

responding to requests for intercession, we who are faithful must ensure that this is handled in such a way as to bring eternal, spiritual blessings upon those around us, even if it is at the expense of more earthly benefits. This is not a matter of being impolite, or mean, any more than it is for Yah to remain silent at times even in response to earnest prayer.

One of the best ways to do this is not to merely agree to pray for someone, but to investigate the matter about which we are being asked to pray. This is not officiousness, because the individual is actively seeking help from Yahweh... and sometimes, that help arrives, not in the form of some supernatural miracle, but in them being helped to realize the well-understood Adventist principle that nine-tenths of our troubles arise from our own decisions. If one in trouble learns to reason from cause-to-effect, in matters such as, "I am ill because I smoke," or "I am behind on my bills because I am careless with my finances," then this education will mean far more to them in the long run than if Yahweh should rescue them from one hole only to see them stumble into another right beside it.

Goodness, and Agape from which it arises, is always interested in the ultimate best good for those involved. This is not always easy to see, especially in this generation of open sin and commonly-accepted wickedness. Those who stand for righteousness may be seen as narrow in their views, and uncompromising, simply because they know those things that lead to true happiness, both in this world and the next.

Let me tell you this, and I hope you hear it, understand it, and share it with others. Those who seek Yahweh for help will always receive His help. Those who purpose in their heart to appeal to the Creator for aid in their time of trouble will always receive His response in love. Sometimes, that response is not a miracle, but a suggestion, or even a command: "Stop what you are doing, and do this instead."

We have heard from those who know of the Gospel, and do not live it. We receive requests for prayer from those who are familiar with the sanctified life, but do not walk it. What can we do for such people? Personally, I have been asked to pray for various people over the years, and some requests I receive with joy, and for others, while I want to offer the prayer, at times the Spirit gives me pause. I set out to pray, and then... I am inspired to wait. In such cases in particular, I will ask, "Why do you want me to pray about this?" or at times, "You already know how to deal with the situation in which you find yourself." It is not that I am jealously guarding the blessings of Yahweh, as if there were only a limited amount of them reserved for those in the Covenant. I am not the "older brother" of the parable that we discussed a few weeks ago. I want everyone to be blessed by Yah in this life... but I would rather have a brother or sister in affliction, one faithful to Yah even in trials, than I would have well-satisfied friends as the world considers people friends. I would like it to be the case that everyone I know is healthy, happy, and well-off,

but I would rather have sanctifying relationships, in which we can support one another with prayer, rather than a circle of acquaintances for which I cannot effectively pray, because their own words and actions prevent them from receiving the very blessings they are asking me to call down.

Who is a Savior? Who is a true intercessor? The true savior, the true Intercessor, is the one who connects a man or a woman with the Father, with the One who is life, light, and love. Yes, this can be through prayers offered, and prayers granted, but sometimes that connection must first be made on a far more "ordinary" level. Let them read, or otherwise learn, the Word of Yahweh and DO it, then they shall know Him indeed. Then the one who said to them, "I cannot pray for your healing, for your lifestyle invites disease," has become a true intercessor, because they have been the answer to the prayer that was never even offered... a change of the life that gives blessings, not only for the short period of time on this earth, but one that carries over into endless ages.

Let those who seek Yah's answers be educated that, if nine-tenths of their troubles are of their own devising, then nine-tenths of their solutions may also come from their own decisions. If, after that, and if they have done their best, and if they have come into unity with the Father and Son, they are still experiencing that 10% of misfortunes that is truly out of control, then of course, let prayer be offered, and let it be expected that Yah will answer with His richest blessings.

I should add that it is not forbidden to offer prayers for those who are not yet of the Covenant. It may even be that their witnessing our true love and concern for them expressed as a prayer draws them closer to where they need to be spiritually speaking. But this cannot be the end of the matter either. They cannot come to the servant and receive a prayer as if the prayer itself is a treatment for their condition. They must also be told that the Gospel is the true remedy to every human need, and indeed daily – daily – we pray for the world and its people. These are they who are not in Yah's covenant, and may not even know that such a relationship is possible, that they are invited to unity, to an eternal home.

It is our work, as types of Christ, as saviors and intercessors for the world, to draw them near, through prayer, and through teaching the Word of Yah, so that they will no longer prevent (with their actions and choices) the very blessings that they are seeking with their lips. It is our divine responsibility and great privilege to be the representatives of Yah's character to the world, and so shall we grow the Kingdom of Heaven.

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

Adriel777: Amen

Lucan: C

Zahakiel: Go ahead.

Lucan: "Prayer" is often used as a cover for laziness and love of sin by those who do not believe Yahweh will truly act and speak. It is frequently requested by those who are unwilling to examine or change their lives, and offered by those who are unwilling to do the heart work required to ask, discover, and testify to this. I am reminded of a non-Scriptural proverb; "give a man a fish and he will eat for a day; teach a man to fish and he will eat for a lifetime..." In this generation, those who are willing to learn to fish are rare; most will demand a fish and throw the rod in your face. Of those we read, "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you." (Matt. 7:6)

The temptation may be to stop offering to teach, or cease reaching out to the hearts of others because of this oft repeated experience. "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." (Matt. 24:12) I appreciate the message tonight, and all other admonishments against such a waxing away of true, selfless love. <End.>

Adriel777: Amen

Zahakiel: Thank you for sharing that. Yes, that parable you mention was certainly in mind as I prepared the notes for this week. As I say above, the answer to prayer WILL always come, but it may not be in the form of sudden deliverance...it may be that the intercessor will speak for Yah, and offer to teach you how to fish. Like many of nature's processes, it is slower, but more effective, and with fewer side-effects.

Are there any others with thoughts to share? If not, then I will ask Bro. Luke to offer a closing prayer.

Lucan: Dear heavenly Father. We thank you that, after having taught us to fish and feeding us plentifully, you have made us fishers of men. May the sanctification you have given us ever be for the blessing of those around us, in both practice and preaching. As we intercede for those around us, we thank you for the intercession of your Spirit on our behalf. We may not know always what we ought to pray for, but are blessed to be represented by the perfect advocate of your Son. As we pray for the things we do know, we thank you for granting them according to your will, and hearing us according to your Word. In Yahshua's name we pray, amen.

Zahakiel: Amen.

6-16-2017 Who is a Savior?

Adriel777: Amen

Elyna: Amen.

Barb: Amen

gadriel: Amen

Naraiel: Amen

daphna dee: Amen