

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

Barb: PC: Dear Father in Heaven. Thank you for this season of refreshing as we expect your spirit to teach us vital truths. We gather now for the Sabbath blessing, thanking you for every blessing, as You restore Your image in us. In Yahshua's Holy name, amen.

Adriel777: Amen

Zahakiel: Amen.

Lucan: Amen

Barb: B: Amen

Elyna: Amen.

Zahakiel: Happy Sabbath to everyone. Tonight's study is called "A Testimony in Fine Print."

As most of you know, for the Feast of Tabernacles, Giselle and I have been meeting with Bro. Jaime, Sis. Maria, Victoria, and a friend from Colombia that Giselle invited to attend. She is also posting the recordings so that other Spanish-speakers can have access to our discussion of the first half of The Two Temples. There are seven chapters in each half, but there are eight days of the feast, so on the first day I spent the time speaking about the appointed times in general, beginning with the significance of the Sabbath for our bodies, our minds and our spirits, and then moving on to the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the Feast of Pentecost.

For each of these, I pointed out, there is a historically based meaning, and then a larger, spiritual one. The Sabbath, for example, was used in Deuteronomy as a symbol of the "rest" that the Israelites received by being rescued from Egypt. However, there is a larger, spiritual meaning that connects the seventh day directly to the Creation, and was provided "for man" according to Yahshua, down through the generations.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread was created as a memorial of the departure from Egypt. The Passover lamb was slain and its blood was used to ward off the angel of death. Later on, the Israelites fled the country of their bondage quickly, and needed to prepare their bread in haste, thus leaving it unleavened. There is also, however, a larger, spiritual significance, in that the Israelites were to put away all the leaven from their homes for that time, for it is a sign of corruption, and in the New Testament the occasion is a symbol of our pure, "unleavened" lives after becoming one with Christ. The Last Supper specifically connects the unleavened bread to His body, and so we see the symbolism made complete in the Son of Yahweh.

I also mentioned that the fulfilment of the symbols of each of these appointed times actually took place at the precise day that Yah had written into these practices. Christ Yahshua, our Passover Lamb, (1Cor 5:7) was slain on the literal Passover. The Apostles received the Holy Spirit on the actual day of Pentecost. The Day of Atonement, as

Adventists understand it, actually took place on the tenth day of the seventh Hebrew month in the year of its prophesied fulfilment.

Thus, even though "there should be time no longer," (Rev 10:6) and we do not know the appointed year, we may be confident that the Feast of Tabernacles, which represents the return of Christ and the "harvest" of the faithful from the earth, will follow this same unailing pattern.

We have reasons to do as both the Old Testament faithful and the disciples of Christ in the New Testament have done, (Exo 23:15, 1Cor 5:8, Acts 18:21, etc.) and observe these occasions, receiving the blessings from the times that Yah has declared to be saved, and preparing – especially with regard to the Feast of Tabernacles – for the completion of these encoded prophecies of which they are both an obvious and a declared foreshadowing. (Col 2:17)

As I spoke of these things, the significance of the Feast days to the New Testament Christians, I reminisced a bit about the camp meetings that we held when more of us were located in the Unites States. These were week-long meetings with Bible studies in the mornings and evenings. We had the opportunity to spend time in one another's presence, enjoying close fellowship, shared meals, and unique lessons.

One of these lessons, in fact, brought to mind a study that Bro. Luke gave some weeks ago, in which he mentioned the care that Yahshua took with folding His burial garments upon His resurrection. This seemingly small gesture caught the attention of the Gospel writer enough for him to mention it, and there has been a lesson in faithfulness in the "small" things for the world to behold ever since. On perhaps the most important day in the Universe's history, when love conquered sin, and death was swallowed up in life's victory, and redemption was confirmed for every human being that has fallen short of Yah's glory, the King of Kings folded a strip of cloth and laid it aside with obvious care.

He gave us a testimony in fine print. He used the small things, the apparently unimportant things, to tell us of the depths of the divine nature. What do these two things, our Feast days in Tennessee, and Yahshua's folding of His grave clothing, have to do with one another? For me, they have quite a lot in common.

Except for the very first few Feasts I attended, I usually had a pretty good idea of the doctrinal aspects of the studies we would be having. In fact, I facilitated many of them. And yet, I believe I learned a great deal from that time we spent together. I remember in the mornings before our first Bible studies, we would have "announcements." These announcements would come from Pastor Chick, or Sis. Barb, or even one of the children, and would remind us to keep the camp grounds clean, to be careful with the implements in the kitchen, to leave the restrooms neat for the next person who needed them.

My initial reaction to these occasions was the thought, "Why are we spending time talking about these little, unimportant matters?" The truth is, I had some very important things to learn about being organized, tidy, and courteous to others. Being new in the faith, and having come from a religious background very different from the CSDA Church (although, I suppose any religious background would be very different from the environment of Yah's true people) I had no foundation from which I could relate to these statements.

Perhaps these were routine for some of the other attendees, but for me, it was new light, and over time I began to appreciate this attention to detail that had been so unlike any other Church's way of doing things. And it is certainly the case that other Churches have given studies, and taught sermons, about tidiness and order. Perhaps they even used the example of Christ's post-resurrection activities to illustrate their points – but there is something different about combining practical advice with a commitment to perfect righteousness in all things.

This, brethren, is what sets the CSDA message apart from the messages of other Churches, even when we are apparently saying similar things. Because of the Victory – this is really the key to every single aspect of the Gospel – promises, commitments, and attempts at character-building (that is, sanctification) are unfailingly successful.

The definition of the word "sin" in the Bible, the Greek word for sin, is "missing the mark." The mark may be Yah's Law and His righteousness, of course, but human beings in the flesh are always "sinning" against themselves, to use the literal definition of the Biblical term, because they fail to meet even the goals that they set for themselves.

For the born-again believer, it is not within us, it is not a part of our faith, to miss any mark, whether that which Yah has explicitly set for us, or that which we set for ourselves. It is left to us, as it turns out, to identify and overcome our defects of Character. Of course, our brethren might give us advice as they themselves are led by the Spirit, but it is up to us to recognize an error in our thinking, and to replace a false thought with a true one.

This was the case with me early in my experience with the Church – it was not a sermon or study that had the deepest and most lasting impact from those initial camp meetings. It was the attention to little details, and the recognition that "This, too, is Christ-likeness," that gave me a new life in this regard. I became more sensitive to the effect of my words and actions on others. I became a more courteous person. My roommates at the time, for I was in college then, noticed the changes I was making in little things. I kept our apartment spotless, and for me it was a joy. In fact, it was a parable.

Every Friday afternoon, as I vacuumed and dusted, I thought of the state of my soul, and I thought, "I must do a thorough job cleaning these rooms, for they are a representation of my spiritual state." With that in mind, you might imagine, I was extremely thorough. Every speck of dirt took on a symbolic meaning, and those around me benefited from this

testimony in the ordinary things of life. And so, for me, the announcements about keeping the bathrooms of the camp site clean were as valuable to me as any sermon I've ever heard preached. It was what I needed at that stage in my spiritual life, and I am grateful every day for the care that Yah has shown me, and for the facilitators, my brethren the Church members.

I also want to share something I learned about cleaning, both physically cleaning things, and spiritually cleansing ourselves from unrighteousness. The way that cleaning is done by "routine" is that it follows a pattern. Imagine that you are washing the dishes, and your next item is a plate. You most likely follow a set series of steps when going about washing a plate. You run water over it, you rub it with a soapy sponge a few times, you rinse it off, and then you set it in the tray to dry. But... is it clean? What does the feedback say? By that I mean, you might go through all the "right" steps to washing a plate, but if you don't take a look at it before putting it away to dry, you might miss a spot. Sometimes things stick to plates, and there might be some extra scrubbing required. If you fall into a routine and just go through the motions, you're bound to leave a spot or two on your cups, plates and utensils from time to time. A critical part of doing a good job when washing the dishes is to look at the work you have done before thinking you have completed the task. This is the "feedback cycle," which is another name that I considered for this week's study. Even if you've done the steps correctly, the work is not over until the result has been examined.

In a sense, this is what Yah does with His people. He has given us "all things that pertain unto life and godliness." He has sent us His Son, recorded His ministry, death, and resurrection in the Gospels, and followed up with gifts of prophecy, teaching, and various others. And yet, even if we accept these things, there is nevertheless a time of Judgment during which we are held up to the on-looking universe and revealed as an example of the results of Yah's Law and His Love. Even before this, Paul tells us, "let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another." (Gal 6:4)

What does it mean to rejoice in one's self alone? The apostle is not talking about pride here, but about faith and confidence. We do not rely on others for our sanctification; but we may "know" that we know the Father and Son, and that we have everlasting life. We do not need anyone to tell us, "You have been set free from sin," because we can prove our own work. We can bear witness to the death of sin in our hearts, and the results that this has on our thoughts, words, and actions.

We can examine the dishes that we are washing, and see that they are without spot before we put them away, and even if we have done the right steps, and as well as we thought necessary, if there's still a spot, we must wash that plate until it is clean.

I speak here about plates, in the letter, because I have seen plates put away with spots on them. But I speak also about the spirit. Just as the apartment I cleaned on Friday afternoons in college was a symbol for my soul, so everything we do is a representation of

the state of our faith. Rightly has the apostle written, "whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." (1Cor 10:31)

Let everything be done with excellence, with courtesy, with neatness. Let nothing be too small a matter for us to commit time to improving, and perfecting. Let us learn to examine the work we have done, to have each of us commit to "prove" the work of our own hands, using our senses for their intended purpose – inasmuch as they are to be trusted, they may guide our decisions. Do not think that following a pattern of "correct behavior" is sufficient. Examine the results of your choices. Reason from cause to effect. Accept that "wisdom is justified of all her children," (Luke 7:35) that is, that results indicate the rightness or wrongness of the efforts that went into achieving them.

Finally, brethren, during this Feast of Tabernacles, keep looking up. Salvation comes to us from Heaven, and the Tabernacles remind us that our place here is a temporary one. We have little time in this present form, before the Son of Yah comes and restores to us the inheritance that we lost in Adam. We anticipate with wonder the things that cannot even be described to us in their full glory. While we are here, because the Spirit of Yah dwells within us, we walk worthy of that great Kingdom to which we go, in both the grand activities in which we participate, and the small things, the "fine print" of our lives, perhaps noticed by only a few, and perhaps only by Yahweh Himself. "And thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly." (Mat 6:6)

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

Adriel777: Amen

Lucan: C

Zahakiel: Go ahead.

Lucan: I recall when I first moved to Tennessee, in a similar vein to bathroom cleaning, Pastor took me out to collect trash on the nearby local roads. We got quite a bit of it; I think there's a picture somewhere of a trailer filled up. I recall being a bit puzzled what this had to do with evangelism, or why we were picking up trash that other people had left behind. Of course, much like your lesson, that became evidently clear. Yah often uses the small tasks that seem menial to teach us. If we accept the thought that a task is beneath us, we're certain to be required to do it until we appreciate it. I was given to pick up trash for other's negligence, where Yahshua was given to die for other's negligence and all other sins. I was given to clean up a road, where Yahshua was given to fold a cloth that, presumably, was still soaked in His blood. If we believe something is beneath us, we think more of ourselves than Yahshua, the creator of the universe, did...

I have had the opportunity to wash many plates over the years, both literal and spiritual. And, sometimes I've even been tasked with teaching others how to wash plates. Routine has often been a large part of that process. Daniel "purposed in his heart" beforehand

what he would do when the test came. When we "purpose in our heart" beforehand what we will do, and how we will do it in the best possible way, we are blessed. But, the routine itself can become the focus. We are tempted to be distracted by legalism, by past mistakes, by the cares of this life. When the instructions become the focus, then the Spirit is lacking. The Jewish church erred here; the Adventist church errs here continually.

I pray we will all inspect our plates carefully, in confidence towards Yah. The test of "oil vs empty lamp" is essentially that of "routine vs. spirit," "church vs. truth," "beast vs. Yahweh..."

I appreciated the thrust of the study tonight. If it is followed diligently, we know the promises given to us of the "cleanest plates" in earth's history:

"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." (Rev. 14:4, 5) <End.>

Zahakiel: Thank you for sharing your own testimony in this regard, and the insightful comments thereafter. Are there any others with thoughts to share? All right, then Bro. Luke, please offer a closing prayer.

Lucan: Dear heavenly Father. We thank you for the lessons you have brought to each of us, perfectly tailored to our needs and the needs of those around us. We are blessed with the opportunity to bring every care, perplexity, and desire before your Throne. We know that you have loved us, and have given us to love one another. May the love you have shown and placed within us be a light to those around us. As we seek to remove every defect that would prevent your character shining through clearly, we ask for the discernment of your Spirit. And we thank you, knowing it is your pleasure to grant us our desires. In the name of Yahshua we pray, amen.

Barb: Amen

Pastor Chick: Amen

Adriel777: Amen

Elyna: Amen.

Zahakiel: Amen.