

**Zahakiel:** It's time to begin. Pastor, please offer an opening prayer.

**Pastor Chick:** Dear Father in Heaven. We request Your Presence with us for this sacred hour during which we receive a baptism of your Spirit afresh. We thank You for hearing and answering our every prayer. In Yahshua's holy name, Amen.

**daphna dee:** Amen

**Zahakiel:** Amen.

**Lucan:** Amen

**Naraiel:** Amen

**Adriel777:** Amen

**Elyna:** Amen.

**Zahakiel:** Happy Sabbath to everyone. Tonight's study is called "Accusing the Pharisees," and it is the first of two parts.

To begin, I want to share with you something of a practice that I have adopted lately. Whenever I am considering the finer points of some doctrine, or some light that is new to me, or that I am seeing it in a new way, I sometimes encounter a temporary obstacle reconciling it with existing light, or at least my understanding of present truth.

Similarly, when I have considered differences of opinion among the brethren, at times it has seemed difficult to grasp the breadth of freedom that we have in Christ, to be individuals indeed, while still being "one" in Spirit and purpose. When such thoughts become available to process, one of the ways I go about doing so is to imagine that I am speaking to a newly converted CSDA, explaining our viewpoints through the lens of the Gospel, and occasionally the writings of more recent inspiration. In essence, I am explaining the matter to myself, and I find that this helps me to adopt a fresh perspective on what I am thinking about, and it is an interesting exercise to consider how someone new to the Bible's truths would view the beliefs and practices of our fellowship as we prepare for Yahshua's soon return.

As I have considered these things, I was reminded of the way that Yahshua spoke to His disciples. He had little time, relatively speaking, to prepare them for His death and departure. While the Spirit would be supplied thereafter to lead them into all truth, He made use of the time He had with them in the flesh to impart certain critical teachings, warnings, and instructions.

One of the most applicable, both then and now, was the way that Yahshua described the difference between Himself, and therefore His new movement, and the religious leaders of His day. We know that He had detailed discourses with them at times, because we read that on at least one occasion, "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself." (Luke 24:27) There were also times when He spoke more succinctly, saying, "Do this," or "Do not do that," "Practice this," or "Avoid that."

What did these instructions sound like to His disciples, who – despite their traditional religion – were new to the faith He was demonstrating?

What did they hear, for example, when He said to them on more than one occasion, “Beware the leaven of the Pharisees?”

It may be useful for us to consider the teachings of Yahshua, not from the perspective of Bible scholars, or individuals who have been Church members for years and years. We are encouraged to come to Yahshua as children, with an innocent trust, and eyes that wonder anew at the sights with which we are presented. We are to take Him at His word, and not always to ask, as the sceptics do, “This is what He said, but what did He mean?”

Tonight, I would like for us to take a look – specifically – at the things about which Yahshua took the time to criticize the Sadducees, Pharisees, Scribes, and religious Lawyers. Laying aside what we have come to know of the New Testament since that time, what was the fundamental difference, in Yahshua’s own words, between the spirits of Christianity and Judaism while He was still among us in the likeness of humanity?

This need not be a lengthy exercise, but it may reveal to us some of the “roots” of our subsequent doctrines, for as we say, everything we believe and teach springs forth from the character of Christ as our Savior, and the face of Yahweh as revealed in His Law. Just as all the commandments in the Law hang on love for the Father in Heaven and love for one another, so all the things that separate the Creation Seventh Day Adventist Church, as the latter-day Bride of Christ, from the various religions in the world, hang on the difference between the original, pristine Church delivered from the hand of Christ, and the apostate religion whose oracles He had nevertheless come to fulfill.

What was it that Christ told His followers to avoid that they beheld in the words and actions of the religious leaders of His day?

Let us look at a few examples, and how they remain relevant to our day.

We begin:

“The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired Him that He would shew them a sign from Heaven. He answered and said unto them, ‘When it is evening, ye say it will be fair weather, for the sky is red. And in the morning, it will be foul weather to day, for the sky is red and lowering. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times? A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas.’ And He left them, and departed.” (Mat 16:1-4)

The Faith of Yahshua is about trust in the unseen. We have evidence of Yah’s faithfulness because of His Spirit within us, because of our familiarity with His character, and because of the history of His dealings with humanity. To all who have entered into a covenant with

Yah, and faithfully fulfilled its requirements, He has given success in all matters of eternal importance, and the assurance of a place in the world to come.

While the Father and Son will occasionally give signs to the world, and at times through the prayers and work of His servants, the servants themselves need no additional convincing. They know that they have ceased from sin. They know that they have done the impossible, dying to self, and rising to a new and holy life. What fire from heaven, or what movements of a mountain, could make their assurance of salvation more conclusive?

Some churches live in fear that they will not "pass the test" in the Day of Judgment, and fill the gaps in their sanctification with what they perceive as good works. Others convince themselves that no matter what the state of their faith or their works, once they have claimed Christ as their Savior with their lips, they cannot fall short. Still others ignore the issue almost entirely, and push the return of Christ so far into the future that it is not a practical, daily consideration at all.

Only the Bride of Christ can discern the signs of the times, to know that the Great Day is even "at the door," and stand in the light with confidence and trust, as they await its appearing.

We read of another incident:

"The same day came to him the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection, and asked Him, saying, 'Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and, having no issue, left his wife unto his brother: Likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh. And last of all the woman died also. Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her.' Yahshua answered and said unto them, 'Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.'" (Mat 22:32)

Let me know when you've read this passage.

**Lucan:** F

**Kim:** F

**Naraiel:** F

**Pastor Chick:** F

**Adriel777:** F

**Elyna:** F

**Nattie:** F

**daphna dee:** F

**Peter:** f

**Zahakiel:** Like the Sadducees of old, many modern Churches live for today. They build earthly kingdoms. They seek earthly power. As a result, even Heaven is seen from a limited, human perspective, and they cannot imagine how the Heavenly life can be ours even while here on earth.

For the saints of Yah, the life which we now live in Christ, is very like the life we will live in Heaven. There is still marriage and labor – the blessings and challenges of the life lived in an earthly body – but the substance of our life is that of redeemed humanity, and we are indeed “as the angels of God in Heaven,” because we are His messengers, bearing final notes of warning and invitation to the world and to those apostate churches that, like these Sadducees, are earthly in thought and reasoning.

We continue:

“And it came to pass, as Yahshua sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto His disciples, ‘Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?’ But when Yahshua heard that, He said unto them, ‘They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth: I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.’” (Mat 9:10-13)

The Pharisees and their converts placed a great deal of emphasis on the outward appearance. If one was wealthy, and well-respected in society, then of course, Yahweh must be blessing them. There is a grain of truth to the reasoning, for those who are obedient to Yah will reap both the temporal and spiritual benefits of obedience; however, this is not a law that is always manifest immediately, and there are numerous counterexamples. Many rich men are evil, and many poor men are righteous, as even the Bible records. This was a new idea to Christ’s disciples, who marvelled at His teaching that it is difficult for those with material wealth to develop a character suited to service in Heaven. (Mat 19:24)

So pervasive was the idea, largely imported from Judaism, that the wealthy were necessarily blessed, that James had to warn the early Church, “If there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, ‘Sit thou here in a good place,’ and say to the poor, ‘Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool!’ are ye not then partial in yourselves, and become judges of evil thoughts?” (James 2:2-4)

Modern Churches will, naturally, claim that they are not partial in their treatment of human beings, and among them are individuals who sincerely serve both the rich and the poor, the well-connected and the outcast. However, the nature of the organizations themselves often differ. They will court the wealthy. They will take pride in their numbers, and the

"quality" of those who make up their ranks, while the little flock – largely unnoticed – prepares the way for the coming of Messiah.

We next read:

"Then came to Him the disciples of John, saying, 'Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?' And Yahshua said unto them, 'Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.'" (Mat 9:14-15)

Creation Seventh Day Adventists understand that we are in a Day of Atonement. We are in a period of solemn soul-searching, even affliction, as our High Priest performs the final activities of the cleansing work in the Most Holy Place of Yahweh's tabernacle. Nevertheless, we know what the results of this cleansing will be. We know that we shall be found blameless in the sight of a Holy God, for Yahshua has forgiven us of all our sins... AND has cleansed us "from all unrighteousness." (1John 1:9)

We neither mourn nor celebrate, for we would be false friends if we did the former, and presumptuously premature if we did the latter. We are at Sabbath rest: joyful, peaceful, victorious, and content, as we await the Wedding Feast to which we have been invited; here we stand, balanced in thought and spirit, while the world and its religions are found at one end or the other of the emotional spectrum.

Here is a brief one:

"As they went out, behold, they brought to [Yahshua] a dumb man possessed with a devil. And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, 'It was never so seen in Israel.' But the Pharisees said, 'He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils.'" (Mat 9:32-34)

Those who know us, and have received our testimony cannot deny our joy, or peace, or our victory. Because they have not accepted it for themselves, however, they must attribute it to deception. "One cannot REALLY be free from sin before Christ returns," they reason, "And so your joy, and your confidence, can only be the result of some error in doctrine or false understanding of the Bible's promises."

But no, what the world sees in our testimony is the reality, and the power of the Gospel. We have cast out the devils that have plagued us when we were in the world. We have the power to cast the devils out of every repentant sinner by the One to whom we introduce them and we offer this healing to all who seek after righteousness, and say to the Father in whose name we heal, "Deliver me from this guilt and death. What must I do to be saved?"

Here is a well-known one:

"[The Pharisees said] unto Him, 'Why did Moses then command [a husband] to give a writing of divorcement [to an unwanted wife], and to put her away?' He saith unto them, 'Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.'" (Mat 19:7-9)

Here we see the nature of Yah's permissiveness of His people, newly liberated from slavery. This is also what has made it necessary for us to understand the principle of "progressive revelation." For various reasons, Yah has not seen fit to reveal all His truth to humanity at once. As a result of unbelief, some like the Pharisees have become "hardened" at a certain point in the timeline of His revelation. They stop, they cease to progress, and they form a creed, a means to test the "true faith" apart from the actual and living Word that is presented to us in the Scriptures.

Often, Yahshua was heard to say, "You have heard it said by Moses, but I say to you..." These were never a contradiction of the Old Testament, rather an expansion of its meaning, as the light of Yah's character was revealed more and more clearly through the Son's earthly ministry and beyond.

In this generation, the light has never been brighter, and as in Yahshua's day, we encounter those who have come to a resting point, a false Sabbath as it were, with regard to light from Heaven. The true disciple of Yahshua follows a living Messiah, who often has more to reveal to His people, and it is by faith, and not leaning on our own understanding, that we follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.

There are other passages we may examine, in which Yahshua places a distinction between Himself and those with the spirit of the world. Next week, we will continue to look at some of them; however, it should be apparent what the principles here indicate. What separated the original form of Christianity from apostate religions is what separates the final form of Christianity from apostate religions. This is only natural, because Creation Seventh Day Adventism is the very message and understanding that the Savior taught generations ago...obedience to the Law, and therefore righteousness, by faith in the Father and Son.

Similarly, the world's Churches are the faithfully reproduced descendants of ancient apostasies, conveniently packaged for modern sensibilities by the enemy of all our souls. Because we know the Father and Son, we are cleansed from sin, and this – and only this – fixes an infinite divide between the recipients of the genuine Gospel... and those who have received the various counterfeits that have been produced by derelict reasoning, a perversion, or dilution, of the truth.

Let us rejoice in the family-bond we have with Yahweh and Yahshua, so perfect and enduring, and in the spiritual family on earth into which we have been welcomed. Let us have sympathy for those who have yet to experience this kindred fellowship; we have no cause for pride or exultation over anyone else, as it is only the undeserved mercy of Christ

that has taken us from the world, sheltered us from divine justice, and purged away our guilt.

As we continue in the second part to examine the difference in spirit and purpose between the Church of Christ and the other spiritual "women" of the world represented by the Pharisees of Yahshua's day, may we pray for and receive wisdom for the presentation of the Gospel to those who will take hold of life, and join us in the unity of the Holy Spirit.

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

**Adriel777:** Amen

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

**Lucan:** Dear Father in heaven. We thank you for the perfect example and offering of your Son. As we have partaken of His death, you have made us partakers of His life. As we consider the words He spoke to those that loved sin under a pretense of holiness, may we be blessed and emboldened. We thank you for putting a perfect hatred of sin in our hearts, and the hearts of all who will receive you. May your Spirit be with us through the remainder of the Sabbath hours and beyond. In Yahshua's name we pray, amen.

**Pastor Chick:** Amen.

**Barb:** Amen

**Zahakiel:** Amen.

**Adriel777:** Amen

**Elyna:** Amen.

**daphna dee:** Amen

**Peter:** amen

**Kim:** Amen.

**Nattie:** Amen.

