

**Lucan:** It's time to begin; Bro. David, will you please offer the opening prayer?

**Zahakiel:** Dear Father in Heaven, We give you thanks for the many joys of this week, as well as the many opportunities for sanctification in both great and little matters. May the spirit of your peace rest upon us during these sacred hours, and may our minds be attuned to your glory for the lesson presented by your servant tonight. May each receive the blessing prepared for us from the foundation of the world by your infinite grace, for we ask this in Yahshua's name. Amen.

**Lucan:** Amen

**daphna:** Amen

**Adriel7777:** Amen

**Elyna1:** Amen

**Kim:** Amen

**Peter Jr 18:** Amen.

**Marie:** Amen

**Lucan:** Tonight's study is called "Smite the ground," and our opening prayer regarding "great and little matters" is quite appropriate to what we will be looking at tonight. I would like to open with a question for reflection:

If a prophet of Yahweh told you to strike the ground, how would you respond?

While you are considering, we may read an account of how Joash, king of Israel reacted to such an instruction:

"And Elisha said unto him, Take bow and arrows. And he took unto him bow and arrows. And he said to the king of Israel, Put thine hand upon the bow. And he put his hand [upon it]: and Elisha put his hands upon the king's hands. And he said, Open the window eastward. And he opened [it]. Then Elisha said, Shoot. And he shot. And he said, The arrow of the LORD'S deliverance, and the arrow of deliverance from Syria: for thou shalt smite the Syrians in Aphek, till thou have consumed [them]. And he said, Take the arrows. And he took [them]. And he said unto the king of Israel, Smite upon the ground. And he smote thrice, and stayed." (2 Kings 13:15-18) (LMK)

**Zahakiel:** Finished.

**daphna:** F

**Adriel7777:** F

**Pastor Chick:** F

**Barb:** F

**Kim:** F

**Lucan:** Now, some might be inclined to say "I would probably ask why." Others might be inclined to say, "I would do as told, and strike the ground." Some may even do as Joash did, and strike the ground a couple of extra times for good measure. It is worth noting that Joash was not told in advance what this instruction would mean, what the symbol

was to be, or anything beyond simply "smite the ground." Now, here is where we may find instruction for ourselves:

"And the man of God was wroth with him, and said, Thou shouldest have smitten five or six times; then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed [it]: whereas now thou shalt smite Syria [but] thrice." (2 Kings 13:19)

Joash did not disobey the instruction; he did as commanded. He did not debate the matter as Moses at the bush, nor did he recoil at the inconvenience of doing so, as Naaman before the Jordan. He obeyed, but did not obey with enthusiasm. He did what was required, but did not put his entire heart into the instruction, as though it were from Yahweh and for his benefit. He shot the ground, but did not continue shooting til there were no more arrows left.

Mrs. White offers this commentary on the incident:

"The lesson is for all in positions of trust. When God opens the way for the accomplishment of a certain work and gives assurance of success, the chosen instrumentality must do all in his power to bring about the promised result. In proportion to the enthusiasm and perseverance with which the work is carried forward will be the success given. God can work miracles for His people only as they act their part with untiring energy. He calls for men of devotion to His work, men of moral courage, with ardent love for souls, and with a zeal that never flags. Such workers will find no task too arduous, no prospect too hopeless; they will labor on, undaunted, until apparent defeat is turned into glorious victory. Not even prison walls nor the martyr's stake beyond, will cause them to swerve from their purpose of laboring together with God for the upbuilding of His kingdom." [PK 263] (LMK)

**daphna:** F

**Zahakiel:** Finished.

**Adriel7777:** F

**Elyna1:** F

**Pastor Chick:** F

**Ruthline:** Finished.

**Peter\_Jr\_18:** F

**Barb:** F

**Kim:** F

**Lucan:** This is a truth that is for our benefit in both our evangelism and our personal lives. The work we are called to do as a people is the highest ever committed to mortals; the attainments we are called to reach are higher than any previous generation. Equal to the promises is the diligence required to see their fulfillment, and the promises are exceedingly great.

As it is written, "And whatsoever ye do, do [it] heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ." (Col. 3:23, 24)

And again, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might;" (Ecc. 9:10)

There is a principle of tenacity here; a thorough application of one's self to the work before us, and the instructions committed to us. There are no half measures in the work of Yahweh; we cannot maintain a blessing without meeting the stated conditions.

Said in another way:

"And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." (Luke 9:62)

Naaman, who was instructed to bathe seven times in the Jordan to cure his leprosy, would not have been healed had he bathed six times and given up. Joash did not pursue Syria with any more fervor than with the arrows, and they continued to plague Israel through future generations. When Yahweh gives you an instruction, whether it be for your health, your healing, your ministry, or reasons unknown, it is to be pursued not only diligently, but thoroughly.

"For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have [sufficient] to finish [it]? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish [it], all that behold [it] begin to mock him, Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. Salt [is] good: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; [but] men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." (Luke 14:28-35) (LMK)

**Zahakiel:** Finished

**Barb:** F

**Pastor Chick:** F

**Peter\_Jr\_18:** F

**Ruthline:** F

**Adriel7777:** F

**daphna:** F

**Elyna1:** F

**Lucan:** There are two principles in this passage that are relevant to our study tonight; the first is to finish what is started, and the second is to count the cost before starting to

begin with. Commitments must be considered carefully, for once they are made, they are "binding" as our word.

Said another way, "When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for [he hath] no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. Better [is it] that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay." (Ecc. 5:4, 5)

Yahweh holds us to our words, even as He holds Himself to His Word. It would be better to never commit to making a change, than to make a change and stop halfway. It would be better for one to live in sin than to be half-righteous. It would be better for one to have chemotherapy than to half-change the diet from junk food to healing foods. It would be better to stay in Sodom than to flee and look back.

As Yahshua says:

"When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out. And when he cometh, he findeth [it] swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh [to him] seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last [state] of that man is worse than the first." (Luke 11:24-26)

Many of us have received miracles of healing, both spiritual and physical. Some of us have had occasion to have unclean spirits cast out, and have undertaken the work of cleaning out false thoughts to prevent their return. Some of us have had words of instruction given us by prophets with the intent to heal illness and promote health, or to prevent a condition from developing. We cannot safely regard these gifts lightly; we cannot with safety do even as Joash. A half-hearted obedience is not a heartfelt obedience. As it is written, "A double minded man [is] unstable in all his ways." (James 1:8)

We may read another of Yahshua's instructions:

"Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed. In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back. Remember Lot's wife." (Luke 17:30-32)

Let us take a moment tonight to fulfill this instruction, and to "remember Lot's wife." We read in the proceeding verses a description of the days of Lot and his wife:

"Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed [them] all." (Luke 17:28-29)

We may also read in Genesis of the instruction given to Lot and to his wife:

"And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city. And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed." (Gen. 19:15, 17)

"Look not behind thee" is the instruction; "escape for thy life," and "neither stay AT ALL in the plain." A full work is here enjoined upon Lot and his family in no uncertain terms. Completely were they to flee, and completely were they to find refuge in the mountains, separate, distant, and distinct from the thing they were fleeing.

"Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven; And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground. But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt." (Genesis 19:24-26)

This is the only account of Lot's wife given in the Scripture; it is therefore the one we are called to remember. And what was it that caused Lot's wife to look back? We might say love of comfort, an attachment to worldly possessions, the cares of this life, family, or many others.

Ultimately, however, one looks where they wish to go; the eyes follow the heart, and the feet follow the eyes. Lot's wife looked back because she desired Sodom, not deliverance from it. She certainly did not desire to share in its judgment, but she had no hatred for the sins that had brought it about. When Yahshua tells us to "remember Lot's wife," it is in the context of abandoning everything in order to obey the instruction to flee. It is worse to flee and look back than to disregard the call to flee. It is worse to undertake a work halfway than to reject it outright, as it is worse to be lukewarm than to be cold. Yahshua says this also:

"But what think ye? A [certain] man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I [go], sir: and went not. Whether of them twain did the will of [his] father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you." (Matthew 21:28-31)

We are blessed to be reflected in neither son; we may be among those who say "I go, sir" and then commence the work in full, bringing it to its completion. We may do this as we fulfill the conditions:

"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true [riches]? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?" (Luke 16:10-12)

The matters of this life are the training ground for eternity; the characters we develop now are the ones that will fit or unfit us for service and governance in the Kingdom soon to be revealed.

Committed to our trust are the "true riches," the character and Spirit of Christ. Committed to our trust is "much," the work of protesting the image of the beast and completing the work of the third and fourth angels. May we be faithful in that which is least as well as the great things; may our commitments be considered carefully and pursued diligently in the common as well as the sacred. Whether it be inspiration to pursue the work of Yahweh to its close in the earth, the commitments we make to one another, or instruction for the health of the bodies he has lent us, may we "smite the ground" til there are no arrows remaining, and the work is brought to completion.

We may do this as we turn our eyes, not backwards, but towards the expected end, the desired place of completion, the "vision of excellence" it has been called. By focusing on the expected end by faith, we more clearly discern the steps necessary to arrive at that destination. Thus it was written of Yahshua, and we who bear His Spirit and testimony:

"He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law." (Isaiah 42:4)

And again, "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper [in the thing] whereto I sent it." (Isaiah 55:11)

Yahshua, the Word, accomplishes that which His Father pleases, prospers in the thing He sets to do, and does not fail nor become discouraged. May we exemplify the mind of Christ in these areas before the onlooking universe, as Yahshua's Spirit reveals them through us.

I would like to close with an inspired quote:

"A close connection with Heaven will give the right tone to your fidelity and will be the ground of your success. Your feeling of dependence will drive you to prayer and your sense of duty summon you to effort. Prayer and effort, effort and prayer, will be the business of your life. You must pray as though the efficiency and praise were all due to God, and labor as though duty were all your own. If you want power you may have it, as it is awaiting your draft upon it. Only believe in God, take Him at His word, act by faith, and blessings will come." [Counsels on Health pg. 367] E.G. White

Are there any comments on the study tonight?

**Adriel7777**: Amen

**Lucan**: If there are none, I'll ask Pastor to offer the closing prayer.

**Elyna1:** Amen.

**Pastor Chick:** Dear Father in heaven, we are blessed to be called as co-workers with You in the last message of Mercy to the world. We have made various commitments, plans, vows, and professions. Some have made a good start and stalled thereafter. Some have agreed to begin a work and failed to launch forward. We need a New Start... not only in health... but in enthusiasm, in honoring Your name, in supporting Your work, in hungering and thirsting after righteousness. We need a renewed Vision of Excellence, and more than the vision. We need to smite the ground with every arrow in our quiver. Give us all that we ask and we thank You in advance for answering all we ask in the blessed and holy name of Yahshua, Amen.

**Elyna1:** Amen and Amen! HalleluYah!

**Adriel7777:** Amen

**Naraiel:** Amen

**Lucan:** Amen

**Barb:** Amen

**daphna:** Amen

**Peter\_Jr\_18:** Amen.

**Adriel7777:** 😊

**Zahakiel:** Amen.

**Ruthline:** Amen

**Kim:** Amen