

Zahakiel: Pastor, please offer an opening prayer.

Pastor Chick: Dear Father in heaven. We are blessed to come before Your Presence to worship in Spirit and in Truth. May our hearts be enriched by the Spirit's refreshing in Yahshua's holy name, amen.

Adriel7777: Amen

Zahakiel: Amen.

Barb: Amen

Naraiel: Amen.

Lucan: Amen

Elyna1: Amen

Marie-kadeth: Amen

Gloria: Amen.

Kimber: Amen

Zahakiel: Happy Sabbath to everyone. Tonight's study is called "Nothing In-Between."

CSDAs have long held the prayer of Christ in John 17 as something equivalent to a Church "creed." I put the word in quotation marks, because we know that true creeds – documents other than the Bible used to test the orthodoxy of beliefs – are not compatible with the Protestant mindset. Nevertheless, certain passages of the Bible itself present themselves as critical characteristics of what a faithful Church is, and we are blessed when we hold these up to the world and say, "This is being fulfilled over here."

One interesting aspect of John 17 that I don't think we've really examined before is that it contains the entirety of the Three Angels' Message as laid out in Revelation 14. In a number of studies over the years, we have shown that these three messages are present in a number of places, such as Peter's sermon in Acts 2 and various passages of Paul's writings.

One might begin to suspect, and rightly so, that whenever salvation is being discussed, one will find the Three Angels' Message embedded in what is being said. What this means is that these messages, which may be expressed as principles (Victory, Purity, and Unity), testimonies (Repentance, Faith, and Baptism) or instructions (Come Forth, Come Out, and Come Here) were laid at the foundation of the world. Our Father knew that once humanity fell into sin, they would require these three elements to be restored... and every human being that passes through the gates of the Great City will have passed through the equivalent of each angel's essential message. This is not a CSDA teaching, nor even an SDA one; rather, it is the very core of what may be found through an examination of Christ's work in the Old Testament, and thereafter His earthly ministry, death, and resurrection. It is, indeed, the Eternal and "Ever-lasting" Gospel.

In John 17:3, a very powerful verse, we read, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Yahshua the Christ, whom thou hast sent." The first angel says, "Fear Yah, and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment is come; and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters."

Here we find two aspects of the relationship the Redeemed will have with Yah; there is holy fear, and there is worship. Yahshua said to the Samaritan woman who called Him a prophet, "Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews." (John 4:22) Post-crucifixion, we would say that "salvation is of the Christians," and post-reformation, we would say that "salvation is of the Adventists." In each generation, there are a people who are called to faithfulness, and who may give an honest testimony, "We know what we worship, for salvation is ours."

Adriel7777: Amen

In John 17, Yahshua is calling a people to worship the Father and Son in Spirit and in truth, knowing Them as They are to be known, for this knowledge, that results in reverence and worship, is what leads to everlasting life. This is the first angel, for to "know" the Father and Son is to invite Them to dwell within, where they, in us, are the "hope of glory." (Col 1:27)

In John 17, we read, "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." (Verses 9, 15, 16)

Christ separates His people from the world. Babylon, the confusion of false religion and secularism, is the natural state of humanity. In the heart of the believer, however, there is a Throne – and on that Throne sit the Father and Son. Because the Father and Son are in perfect unity, and we have fellowship with Them in the Spirit, we are not confused. We have the worship of the Father and the faith and testimony of Yahshua, our joyful obedience bearing witness.

It is the Second Angel that says, because you worship the Father, you are not of the world. Christ said, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." (John 15:19)

When people think like the world, they resist and oppose this message. They flourish in the confusion of Babylon, and long for the benefits of Egypt, even if it means living in slavery. They find reasons, oft-times absurd ones, to escape the conviction that the Spirit bears with it when one hears the Angels speak through Yah's messengers. They

work at cross-purposes with the Gospel workers, for they have no peace within themselves to let others walk past them into salvation; because of this "the world hateth you" if you love the Second Angel's message, and rejoice in the fall of Babylon.

In John 17, again, we read, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me. And the glory which thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me." (Verses 20 - 23)

We have examined aspects of this passage in some detail before, seeing that it is the glory that makes us one, and that the purpose of that one-ness – among other things – is so that the world may know that Yahshua was sent by the Father. Taken in its totality, we see a "come here" message. We see that we are not called only to be hated by the world, but to stand together against the world and its power, as ultimately manifest in the Mark of The Beast in the last days.

This is the Third Angel's Message in verity, for the Mark of The Beast is exactly this: the hatred of the world against the Christian. Specifically, the Mark of The Beast is the sign of ownership that Satan has upon his servants, and he, through these servants that oppose the truth, enacts laws and decrees in an attempt to brand even those who would be Christ's with this mark. All who rely on Christ have everything they need to be perfected, but that "everything" includes the support, encouragement, correction, and fellowship of other saints. Some say, "Since I have Christ, I do not need anyone else," but those who have Christ know that they have been called to unity, and through unity they have the gifts that Yah has given them to identify, avoid, and testify against the Beast and his Image.

Unity cannot be separated from truth, or from love. Consider that passage I posted earlier, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."

But now, let us include the two verses that come just before: "These things I command you, that ye love one another. If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." (John 15:17-19)

There is no separation between these ideas; it is all one message. In the contrast between love for one another and the hatred of the world, we see the difference between the Kingdom of Yah and the kingdom of Satan. The unity of the saints is based upon love. There is nothing between them in this matter, no barrier to that

agape, just as there is nothing between the Father and Son. Every doctrine that we accept, and teach, is based on the love of Yah that manifests itself in victory, purity, and unity.

In other words, as we consider any doctrine, if the Three Angels' Message cannot be found in it, it did not originate with our Father. If any doctrine does not lead (directly or indirectly) to repentance, separation from evil, and unity with the saints, it is not a part of the Gospel. I will give two quick examples to demonstrate this idea, one that I wished to discuss during the recent Feast of Unleavened Bread, and one that occurred to me while I was collecting these notes.

The one that arose just today is the issue of tithing. We hold that CSDA members are (not should be, or must be, but are) faithful in their tithe and generous in their offerings. And why? Is it because the Bible says that we have to? The Scriptures do indicate that those who withhold tithes and offerings are committing robbery against Yah, (Mal 3:8) but this is found in a passage rebuking those who were falling short.

Do we, the saints, commit to faithful observance of tithing merely in order to be obedient? The Scriptures say this, "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common." (Acts 4:32)

This is unity of purpose, and a commitment to the same goal. In this unity, there was a desire to give freely to those who had need, to take care of one another as Family does... and it is in this spirit that we become cheerful givers. (2Cor 9:7)

We can easily see the Three Angels' Message in the doctrine of tithing. In giving of one's substance, we forget "self," and sacrifice for the good of the Gospel work. It is a victory over sin and the flesh to give freely to the labor of teaching the world of salvation. In supporting the ministry, we establish that Babylon has fallen, for we say, "There is a People who are teaching the truth, and their labor is worthy of the hire." Through this ministry, the borders of confusion are pressed back, and light is permitted to shine upon the earth. The Third Angel is likewise obvious, for as I have said, we see that in tithing we follow the example of the early converts, having common purpose, common goals, and a common desire to see the ministers funded with all that they need to push forward.

The other issue is the matter of the Godhead. While Trinitarianism, or non-Trinitarianism is not a test of fellowship for the Church, most of us hold the understanding that the traditional conception of the Tri-une nature of God is a faulty one. We believe every Scripture that speaks of the Father, and the Son, and Their Holy Spirit, but we see that there has been significant attempts to read between the lines regarding the nature of the Spirit in particular. We believe that the Spirit is the life of the Son without the limitations of humanity, and that it proceeds forth from the Father

as the reality of His invisible presence. The Father and Son work on the consciences of humanity through Their Spirit, awakening conviction when the sinner hears the Gospel, and guiding the saint in making decisions. Through the Spirit the redeemed know the words to say when testifying before the world, and by the Spirit miracles are worked when faith makes a request of the Almighty. It is the Spirit that leads people into truth, and comforts the wounded, but in all this we do not enthrone the Spirit in our hearts, nor do we make requests of it. We ask the Father and Son to send the Spirit to accomplish Their purpose because that is how They would have us pray... and because we are in unity with Them, Their Spirit is our Spirit, for in this way we are "made perfect in one."

Can we find the Three Angels' Message in this understanding of the Godhead? It is there. The First Angel calls us to victorious worship of the Creator. This can only be accomplished when Christ dwells in the heart. We believe that Christ Himself dwells in the heart of the believer, spiritually, but not merely symbolically.

To explain that distinction very briefly, spiritually means that it is true in a literal sense, but invisibly and through divine means. Symbolically means that is not actually true, but that something true is represented by it. For example, in symbolic prophecy, the Book of Revelation says that a Beast will arise from the dry land. Because this is symbolically true, we know that a single, beastly creature, will not suddenly appear one day... but some literal and true thing, which acts as a beast would, has.

On the other hand, when Christ says, "I am the Resurrection and the Life," He is speaking spiritually, and not merely symbolically. The resurrection as an act was not a symbol; it was something that happened literally for Christ, and happens spiritually for us. It does not merely represent what the new birth is like, but it actually happens in an invisible, miraculous sense to everyone that accepts Him. My testimony is not, "I am symbolically raised with Christ," as if that represented something else; rather, I am truly raised up with Christ, and because of that I live.

What that means with regard to the Godhead is this: A Trinitarian will have the Spirit, as a separate Person, dwelling in the believer's heart as a symbol and representative of another: Christ. A non-Trinitarian with a proper understanding of Salvation has the very Person of Christ dwelling within, and this by means of the Holy Spirit, His invisible, divine presence. This in-dwelling is what gives the Victory; it is because Christ does not commit sin that He, dwelling within us, keeps us ever from it. We rest, we Sabbath, in His perfect work of obedience to all that the Father desires.

The Second Angel declares the fall of Babylon. We could say, "The Trinitarian understanding of God originated in spiritual Babylon," and be done with identifying the Second Angel in this doctrine. But there is more to it than that. The religion of Babylon is a religion of separation. It places things between the soul and the soul's Creator. In Babylon the system of priesthood developed contrary to the conception of what a

"priest" is in the Hebrew religion. The priest represented a layer between God and man, but not a layer to draw near... rather a layer designed to separate. To the priest must confession be made. Through the priests would blessings come to the people. We see this method of interacting with Yahweh alive and kicking in Roman Catholicism, and perhaps most explicitly there, but while Protestants have cast off the barriers of the patron saints and the idea of Mary as a co-redeemer, unfortunately many have retained the Holy Spirit as a layer between.

I read this verse, for example, very differently than a Trinitarian would: "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." (Rom 8:26)

Interestingly, this verse preserves the proper meaning of the pronouns by saying, "the Spirit itself," but those who consider the Spirit to be an independent Person of the Godhead now have another mediator than Christ who must stand between them and the Throne, fixing their prayers and making their intercession acceptable. But those who know the Father and Son have let go of the confusion that is in harmony with the doctrine of Babylon. The Spirit that the Father and Son have shared with us works within us, not outside of us between Heaven and earth, to refine the character and purify the thoughts.

As Adventists know, the day comes when we will stand before the Father without a High Priest... but if one in this circumstance believes that he must have the Holy Spirit as a separate Person to make his prayers appear holy to the Father, then his prayers, his intents and purposes, have never, themselves, become holy. He has not perfected sanctification, because he believes that he remains filthy, while the Spirit cleanses his utterances in some external process.

Finally, the Third Angel calls us to be in unity with the Father and Son as They are in unity with One Another. It says, "Come here," but to what kind of a relationship are we being called? The Bible uses symbolic language to describe the relationship at several points... a husband and wife, Christ and His Church, a Father to children. I have asked Trinitarians at times what role, specifically, the Spirit plays in these parabolic statements, and they have difficulty answering. Some have said, "The Holy Spirit is like a mother," and others have said, "It's not like any of the given examples, because the Spirit isn't like anything we can symbolize." These are interesting attempts, but both of them undermine what inspiration has recorded for our understanding.

The closest thing to a spiritual mother we have is New Jerusalem, the Great City. (Gal 4:26) If the union between Yahweh and men could not properly be represented as a Father-to-child relationship or the marriage covenant, He who created them would not have made them that way... or at the very least, would not have used an imperfect symbol in the Scriptures.

I won't press the point too deeply, but I think the principle is expressed clearly enough. The Three Angels' Message is that which leads us to perfect sanctification. It, as the Everlasting Gospel, is an effective means of evaluating any doctrine or claim regarding spiritual matters.

As we walk in harmony with these Angels, we are led through the plan that our Father created for us from the beginning, and we are provided with everything we require to understand the steps in front of us, so that we may walk securely and never stumble. When we have knowledge of the Father and Son, and are as one with Them, we have a common Spirit, with no barriers between. We share with Them the very glory that the Father shared with the Son, and nothing is impossible for us that the Father bids us do.

Are there any questions or comments about the study tonight?

Adriel7777: Amen. C

Zahakiel_: Go ahead.

Adriel7777: I praise Yah for this study. I was just speaking with someone about our understanding of the 3 Angel's messages, so will be sharing this with them. End.

Zahakiel_: Are there any others? All right, then I will ask Bro. Luke to offer a closing prayer.

Lucan: Dear heavenly Father. We thank you for the blessing of clear principles throughout your Word, which we may find time and again. We are blessed to walk in unity with you and your Son through your Spirit, and thus, with one another. May your Spirit guide our worship and meditations through the remainder of the sacred New Moon and Sabbath hours. In Yahshua's name we pray, amen.

Pastor Chick: Amen.

Adriel7777: Amen

Zahakiel_: Amen.

Elyna1: Amen.

Barb: Amen

daphna: Amen

Marie-kadeth: Amen

Gloria: Amen.

Kimber: Amen