

## Victory in the New Moon

Happy Sabbath, and Blessed New Moon, to all. And thank you, Bro. Luke for that appropriate prayer. That is, essentially what I wish to address tonight, a matter that is basic enough for those new to the CSDA faith, and yet of benefit to those of us who have been with the Church for some time.

It is an event that occurs once every few months, in which the New Moon and Sabbath Day fall on the same date. And it is a somewhat unique time in terms of its spiritual significance, since the Sabbath is a day for rest and rejoicing, while the New Moon is a day for examination and cleansing.

As it turns out, however, if these principles are rightly understood, there is really no conflict at all.

As we know, the Sabbath is more than just a symbol of physical, or even mental, rest. It is a representation of spiritual restfulness as well, a resting “in Christ,” so that the work of salvation is accomplished in us in a way beyond the abilities of human effort. We cannot, by good works, earn salvation, but the “work” of salvation is accepting the sacrifice of Christ on our behalf, and letting His life be manifest in our mortal flesh. This brings forth an everlasting life.

Since we cannot “work” for Salvation, we must learn to “rest” for Salvation, to “be still, and know that [Yahweh] is God,” (Psa 46:10) and to let His perfect work be accomplished within us, “For it is Yah which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.” (Phil 2:13) In that sense, the Sabbath day becomes a type, a foreshadowing, of the entire plan of Salvation, and the victory over sin that this plan produces in our lives.

If the New Moon, then, is in harmony with this idea, then it must be the case that the New Moon also teaches us something about the victory doctrine – about righteousness by faith.

It would not be an exaggeration, in fact, to make the statement that every true, and every Heavenly doctrine, is a doctrine that teaches us about victory over sin. It is impossible to really focus too much on this teaching. Escaping the inheritance of Adam, and taking on the nature of Christ Yahshua, that is the key concept at the heart of the Gospel, the great message that Christ, through His Church, brings to mankind. It is the effect of His life in us, and therefore all that our Father has revealed to us, for our good, either leads up to this doctrine, or expands on how it may be applied to our lives.

So, what does the New Moon tell us about victory over sin?

To begin answering that question, it may be good to review what the New Moon means.

First, on a purely physical level, the moon is a “dead” body. It moves, it follows its circuit around the earth, but it is neither alive, nor does it support any life. In spite of this, the moon allows people to see at night, because it reflects the light of the sun onto the earth. In fact, it is only so effective a mirror because it has no life on it. Trees and oceans would only absorb the energy of the sun, and scatter it, rendering moonlight much dimmer than it currently is.

Because of these factors, the moon is an excellent symbol of the sanctified life. As Paul writes, “reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Rom 6:11) In addition to being dead unto “sin,” we also read, “And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.” (Gal 5:24) So then, we see that both “sin” and “the flesh” must be

considered dead, and the connection between these is that the flesh is the means by which temptations take hold of the individual, and corrupt the soul.

Ordinarily, death is associated with darkness, and silence, even in certain passages of the Bible. For the redeemed, however, who die “in Christ,” a very different picture unfolds. Of such we read, “And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever.” (Dan 12:3) “That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.” (Phil 2:15)

That passage from Daniel is particularly significant. It says that those who shall be wise (and we know that this is connected to respect of Yahweh) will shine in the firmament. This calls to mind the creation of the physical universe as recorded in Genesis 1, reading for example, “And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: He made the stars also.” (Gen 1:16) There are three sources of light in the firmament – the sun, the moon, and the stars. In Revelation, we find the Bride of Christ, the earthly Church, being illuminated by all these three sources, standing “clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.” (Rev 12:1)

The Church, brethren, represents all the “light” that the earth receives in its spiritual darkness. We could make a sermon out of this with regard to independent ministries and isolated atoms, who believe that Yah has sent them forth to shed light on the earth separate from this unified image of the Woman, but for now we are focusing on the fact that she is standing on the moon. It is her foundation, her place of rest, her position within the universe.

In addition to the moon representing the sanctified life, in that it is absent its own life, but reflecting the energy of another, the moon also represents, biologically, a periodic cleansing of the woman’s body.

Until the woman brings forth the man-child, (Rev 12:5, 13) until Christ is perfected within His people, the New Moon continues to point forward to that great and final maturation. This is the reason why New Moons were to be free from secular work, (Ezek 46:1) and has been historically used as a time to “cleanse the camp” of Israel. (Ezra 10:17, Ezek 45:18)

Thereafter, as the prophet records, it will be an everlasting statute in Eternity to commemorate the sanctification of Yahweh’s people.

There is yet another reason for this monthly sacred occasion. We read in Revelation that, once a month, the Tree of Life, which is a representation of Christ, brings forth fruit for the healing of the nations. (Rev 22:2) This “partaking” of Christ is a clear allusion to the Last Supper, and to the events on which the Savior said, “I am the living bread which came down from Heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.” (John 6:51)

So far as I know, the CSDA Church is the only one on earth that has a monthly communion, that understands this intimate connection between the Tree of Life, Christ, and His people. And really, this should be no surprise, since only it is the only one truly preparing for the society of Heaven.

So, how do these things tell us about victory?

Consider the 10 Commandments, the basis of the Law of Yahweh for human beings. We are given a full accounting of the commandments themselves on at least two occasions. They are included in discussions of righteousness from the first book to the last. Furthermore, the Israelites were instructed, “And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.” (Deu 6:6-9)

Clearly, we are to speak often about heavenly things. We were told to discuss, and to talk about the law, a great deal. But why? They are the same 10 Commandments they always were, and if it was merely for the purpose of memorization, we might speak of something once a week, or even once a day, and remember. But here, we are told to be constantly thinking about, and talking about, the Law. The reason for this is because we are supposed to bring forth new light.

The Gospel, the principles of Heaven, and the Law of Yah, these things should be stated in as many true ways as possible. Even between Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy, the wording of the Decalogue changes slightly, and this is neither a mistake nor a meaningless rearranging of words.

Things that are true in the Spirit cannot be expressed fully in a human language, at least not in just one way. Things of the Spirit must be spiritually discerned – they must be understood by the heart, and not just by the mind through the ears. The heart must grasp the truth of Yahshua’s love, of His holiness, of His glory, and then only can we truly appreciate the sinfulness of sin, to die to it and to be born free from its compulsions.

Because of this, the Bible expresses the Gospel in many different ways. It uses direct speech, doctrinal discourses, parables, prophecies, and the system of types and antitypes. We hear these things with our ears, and read them with our eyes, and the Spirit impresses them upon our hearts so that we truly understand. So then, as Yah’s people, we are to speak of these things often, and differently, so that those who do not “get it” one way will maybe come to get it another. For the sake of the brethren, and edification of the Body, and the world we seek to evangelize, we should speak as often as we can about important things so we educate ourselves, and one another, and maybe say something in a way never said before that causes someone struggling with one point or another to say, “Ah, yes... now I get it.”

So then, if we were to look at the victory in a way differently than we have commonly done before, one valid statement might be: The heart of victory is “dependency.” This is what I mean:

Christ Yahshua came to earth in sinful flesh, and He was truly tempted just as we are. Do not let word “likeness” mislead you, as in “the likeness of sinful flesh.” That phrase does not mean “in appearance only.” But Christ was in the flesh truly, as said in John, “the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.” (John 1:14) With regard to the flesh of Christ, meaning the organs, the skin, the bones, the hormones and chemicals, there was nothing at all special or unique about these. All that was human in Christ biologically He received from His human mother, of whom there was also nothing particularly sacred, except for her faith, which may be present in any of us.

You see, brethren, the more closely we look at the doctrine of Christ, and His divinity, and His humanity, the more clear the truth becomes, and the easier it is to avoid the errors of those Churches that have been taken captive by pagan fables about Christ's nature, his mother's nature, and what they mean to us. There are Churches believing that there was something divine about Mary. I have spoken with individuals, formerly of the Adventist Church, who believe that Christ was omniscient even in His limited human form. There are those who believe that we cannot please Yahweh in the flesh, as if Enoch and Elijah were somehow different from us, just as Christ was somehow different from us.

The truth is that Christ was, for all biological and physical purposes, human. What he did, we can all do. What he did, we must all do, so that we can be with Him in eternity, and so that we can overcome "even as He overcame," meaning both in the same way, and to the same degree. We have been cautioned, in Adventist writings, about making the mistake of considering Yahshua as "just a man." Indeed, He was the Son of Yahweh, and thus far more – but what more He was, He restrained for our sakes, so that He should have no advantage over us with regard to the Law and righteousness.

He was our example, so that we could overcome to the same degree, and in the same way, that He overcame sin.

What it means that we must overcome "to the same degree" should be obvious. We are to be "more than conquerors." (Rom 8:37) We are to overcome completely, entirely, and without compromise or excuse.

But what about "in the same way?" How did Christ overcome sin? He told us. He said, "The Son can do nothing of Himself; but what He seeth the Father do, for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise." (John 5:19) Yahshua relied upon Father entirely for all that He accomplished, and what authority He yet possessed He deliberately restrained Himself from employing on His own behalf.

The work of completing His ministry for mankind, which is what Victory meant for Him, depended upon considering Himself powerless, and letting the Father lead Him, and guide Him.

What victory means for us, rejecting sin in all its forms, depends on the same. We may imagine we have some power, some strength to resist evil, but the history of our lives should reveal this to be an illusion based on pride. All we have, if we are born again, is the power of the Father in us, and we have access to this power through Christ and His Holy Spirit. But the ability to employ this power is based entirely on our dependency, on our sense of helplessness, on our "deadness," like the nature of the moon.

The New Moon day reminds us of our lifelessness. We ought to embrace it with solemnity as we consider our lives in relation to the matchless purity of Yahshua's character, but also with peace, and contentment – the same kind that comes from a proper understanding of the Sabbath. Herein lies the connection. Just as we rest in the Sabbath peace, so we "rest" in our spiritual graves on the New Moon day, acknowledging that "the wages of Sin is death," and reflecting on the fact that "in Adam, all die." And being thus dead already, we have no power but what the Father gives us, and no life but the life of the Son.

But in this, Satan has no more power over us either, no claim on our lives, no strength to force us to transgress the laws of our Father, for we have already submitted to the authority of the Law. In fact, we have already submitted ourselves to the PENALTY of the Law, if we are truly "dead to self," and the requirements of the law are satisfied.

Of course this does not mean, as some have come to believe, that being thus “executed” by the penalty of the Law, we are no longer committed to the observance of its requirements. No, certainly not, for if someone is convicted of a crime and pays its penalty, he is not free to commit that crime after he has been released. The law is everlasting, and for our best good.

So the moon, being dead, continues to reflect the light of the Sun, the same sun that produces that light. We, being reflectors of the light of Yahshua, are – like Him – in harmony with that selfsame Law that stripped us of ordinary, mortal lives, and shines through us unto eternity.

Because of this, the New Moon ought not to be thought of as a “CSDA doctrine,” as if it were a recent innovation developed by the Church. The New Moon is an integral, and vital, part of the plan of salvation. It is a reminder of the victory, just as the Sabbath is a symbol of the victory, that while we remain dead to sin, and self, and the flesh, just to that degree do we have power over the temptations that Satan would use against us. This is a cause, even in its solemnity, for thanksgiving to the Father, and a reason to assemble before Him in worship from now into eternity.