

Into All Truth

Happy Sabbath to everyone.

I am blessed this Sabbath to present to you a study that I've been thinking about for several days. This topic is something that I believe we can all benefit from hearing... but especially those who are engaged in a battle for the soul either of one's self, or that of another.

Let me begin by describing a familiar scenario. Anyone who has done evangelism as a member of the Adventist Church has probably either had this happen to them, or heard about it happening to another. We are speaking about the Scriptures, and explaining that the Law of Yah is everlasting, and not set aside by the death of Yahshua. We speak about the Sabbath, clean vs. unclean animals, and generally seem to make some headway. But then we get to the importance of baptism and Church membership, and encounter a wall. The individual says something like, "I don't see why I need to leave my Church... the Bible doesn't say anything about that. Even if I am convinced of the Sabbath, I can keep that and stay where I am. In any case, you can't show me the name 'Seventh Day Adventist' in the Bible, so you cannot even prove you are the true Church."

As Adventists we know, because we have been instructed through various means, that whenever we are considering a new doctrine, a new teaching, we are to "demand a plain 'thus saith the Lord.'" However we also know, from our own experiences, that sometimes the truth is NOT plainly written down, cannot be easily "proof-texted," and therefore requires a somewhat different approach.

We know that the Bible is the standard, the root of every true principle, and contains the essence of every valid doctrine... but what do we, as Yah's people, do if the Word does not give a specific instruction?

We have come to accept a number of things for which we have not demanded, and could not demand, a "Thus saith the Lord" from the words of the Bible. Does this mean the Spirit of Prophecy, in which this instruction was found, is in error? No, not at all... it is just that the Lord "saith" things in more ways than some are comfortable accepting, and while the Scriptures are the foundation of every true doctrine, some are explained and expanded through other means.

For example:

The Scriptures tell us to "remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy," but it does not give us many specific instructions regarding how to do that beyond avoiding work and monetary transactions.

The Scriptures tell us to remember the feast days, the appointed times, but many of its detailed instructions are only applicable to an agricultural society that is different from our own.

The Scriptures tell us to honor Yahweh in our food and drink, and in whatsoever we do, but contain no specific exhortations to avoid (all) alcohol, caffeine, tobacco, and so on.

The Scriptures tell us to observe the New Moon as members of spiritual Israel, but like the Sabbath does not tell us exactly how; nor, indeed, does It describe how to even determine when the New Moon falls.

The Scriptures tell us there will be a remnant people who endure the time of Jacob's trouble, but it does not tell us that these people will be called "Creation Seventh Day Adventists."

Those coming out from the Adventist Church, after honestly realizing just how fallen a body it has become, might decide to cast off the good with the bad, and say (as the Sunday-keepers have been telling them all along), "It's not written anywhere that we need to even keep the name 'Adventist.'"

I could provide several more examples, but the idea here should be clear. Some might feel justified in saying, "I will not follow this or that group in these matters, because they cannot prove – directly – from the Scriptures that their beliefs and practices on the details of these things are correct."

Yet if they were to examine their own beliefs closely, they would find that they did not apply the same level of scrutiny to those things that they have already come to accept as true, and perhaps to hold in such a high degree of conviction that life itself would not be too high a price to pay for maintaining those beliefs. So what is the correct approach?

Inspiration tells us we are to demand evidence that our Father has given the instructions we are considering accepting. It does not tell us, however, that there will always be an "It is written." That would be best, of course, in general... but Yah has reserved some things for His people to know and declare directly.

We know already the verses that tell us these things. The name of this study is taken from one such passage: "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth; for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak, and He will shew you things to come." (John 16:13)

Were this a study about the Trinity, we would discuss how the word "He" there is really a general pronoun that can even be applied to objects, but for our purposes tonight, we focus on the fact that it is the Holy Spirit directly that must lead us into "all truth." All truth is found in the Bible, to be sure, but Yahshua has sent us His Spirit to guide us there. There are other passages as well that echo this idea:

"And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood, and these three agree in one." (1 John 5:8)

Another verse from John 16, from just above our first quote, has Yahshua saying, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." (John 16:12)

We read, "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holy day, or of the New Moon, or of the Sabbath, which are a shadow of things to come, but the Body of Christ." (Col 2:16, 17)

The King James' translators, and some others, have added extraneous words to those two verses above, making them read differently, but what this reads without them is that it is the Body of Christ (which is led by the Holy Spirit) that determines the manner of these matters. In this, Paul was not by any means limiting or diminishing the authority of the written Word over the believers, but merely explaining that it is the Church that has been given wisdom to decide in those things that are not clearly written.

As I mentioned, those who do not understand the high and holy role of the Church on earth may feel uncomfortable with this idea, but we may demand a "Thus saith the Lord" from His Bride. Like the Spirit, She does not testify of Herself; but whatsoever She hears, that She speaks, showing us both the things to come and their shadows.

Now, some have disputed this (true-to-text) reading of Colossians 2, but even if they disregard that reading, a second witness cannot be so denied. We read in the last book of the Bible, at the very end of the written Record, "I, Yahshua, have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the Churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning Star. And the Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come.' And let him that heareth say, 'Come.' And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." (Rev 22:16, 17) Note where the messenger angel testifies; note who, together, say: "Come."

As a third witness, seven times, a significant number, seven times, the Book of Revelation reads, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches." It is not "what the Spirit saith unto this or that individual," there is no life in that... but hear what is said unto "the Churches," the word used for the individual congregations of the single, united Church Body. Some may like and be blessed by my studies, and by Pastor "Chick's" preaching, and that is good... but if these are viewed outside of the context of both the Spirit AND the "Bride," then there is no life in that. We would just be self-sent messengers with no true connection to the Savior. What we say, we say because we are of the Bride.

We are told not to lean on our own understanding. We are told twice, "in the multitude of counselors there is safety." (Pro 11:14, 24:6) If those counselors are born-again, victorious, Spirit-filled servants of the Most High, there is safety indeed in their words. The question is, "Where are these servants?" Are those who are seeking the truth willing to give an honest look?

The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." Thus saith the Lord. Those who will be saved will hear what the Spirit says to the Churches, to the congregations of the Bride. They will not lean on

their own understanding. They will follow no independent ministries, Covenant-less messengers, or private interpretations of even those doctrines that are not clearly spelled out in the Bible. They who hath ears will know the truth, because they will know Him who is Truth; and they will know that they know Him... they hear the voice of the Shepherd, and they hear the voice of His Bride, with whom He is “one Spirit” even as man and his wife are “one flesh.”

They will have a sure word of prophecy to guide them, and that sure word did not end with the good labors of Ellen G. White. It is true that some in the past (and in our day) have abused religious authority, calling disciples after themselves and into perdition. It is true that false messengers have arisen and said, “Follow me, for I know the will of God!” But these are not just lies, they are counterfeits; in other words, they are false copies of something that is actually true, something that is real – and promised, for the Savior did indeed say to us, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” (Mat 28:20)

And truly, only those who believe this promise... only those who overcome the deceptions and follow both the Spirit AND the Bride will be among the company of the Redeemed. This is a “heavy” statement, considering that salvation is an individual matter, and that “the Church does not save us.” Nevertheless, it is a true statement. We are justified as individuals, as we have examined before, but it IS written that we are sealed as Tribes, (Rev 7:5 – 8) and glorified as a single, united Nation: the Blessed Israel whose Capital is the New Jerusalem from Heaven. (Rev 21:2)

We know that in order to perfect character, especially in this wicked generation, we must take advantage of EVERY gift, of every tool, or we will surely miss the mark. Every talent must be refined for Yah’s service, every faculty bent to His soul-saving work, and this we do as the Spirit AND the Bride lead. Those who say, “I read that the Church is given to us as a gift, designed to perfect the saints, but I can make it to Heaven without this,” will miss the very blessings that they needed to attain their high calling.

With regard to messengers, some say, “I hear the voice of the Spirit.” If they say this without acknowledging the voice of the Bride, they are liars and the truth is not in them. Others say, “Believe me, because I am a member of the true Church, and I can prove to you all my doctrines.” If they say this without the voice of the Spirit, which leads men into “all truth,” into victory over all sin, they are deceivers, and self-deceived. Do not hear them.

But when the Spirit and the Bride together say, “Come,” then you have heard what the Father and Son have said to the Church, and your demand for the truth is satisfied. The Scriptures tell us, as Adventists have shown others, “Believe in Yahweh your Almighty One, so shall ye be established; believe His prophets, so shall ye prosper.” (2 Chronicles 20:20)

Believe the Word, and also listen to His messengers. Test the spirits, and know who His servants are, because there are many who claim the gift of inspiration... many who come with various doctrines (called, in this day, “reforms”)... but this is why we have the Word, and the principles

It contains. This is why we have the test of the true faith, that it kills sin in the heart. This is why we have the gift of self-awareness, so that we can fulfill the Scripture, “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves.” (2Cor 13:5)

Those who are seeking the truth have two sets of things to examine. The first are the spirits and teachings of those who claim to be Yah’s messengers. But the second is for them to examine themselves, to see if they are really seeking the truth, and if they are willing to accept it regardless of the cost to their positions, families, standing in the community, cherished opinions, and perhaps even their livelihoods and lives.

If they find these things to be true – that the word they are hearing is the Father’s voice – then they do not need to fear being deceived. They do not need to fear being led captive by those who abuse the Scriptures, inventing religions for their own carnal ends. If they find these things to be true, then they are honest seekers of righteousness, then they may claim the promises, “But if from thence thou shalt seek Yahweh thy God, thou shalt find Him, if thou seek Him with all thy heart and with all thy soul. Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.” (Deu 4:29, Mat 7:7)

As Yahshua said, so says His Bride, “If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of Yah, or whether I speak of myself.” (John 7:17)

What is written is written, and none may go against it. But where it is not written, we are not left in darkness or ignorance. There is knowledge, and it is the Spirit that has been sent to bring it to us. But the Spirit is not sent to this place and that place, bearing messages diverse in meaning and importance. We need not endure a burden to unravel the “mystery” of these many voices all claiming to be the Bride’s. Yah has given us a lamp unto our feet, and the Spirit has said things to the Church for His people to know.

Let no man judge you; but the Body of Christ is given to us as a guide. It is not that humans have the authority to determine these things of ourselves, but Yah has been pleased to reveal Himself through the Spirit of Prophecy, the Testimony of Yahshua the Messiah without which not one shall see the Father.

Does the word that the Bride speaks harmonize with the Scriptures whenever the Word touches on those teachings? Does the message that the Bride speaks kill sin in the heart, and prepare the soul for everlasting service in Heaven? Do the beliefs and practices that the Bride espouses refine the character into the likeness of Christ Yahshua?

If these things are so, then we surely know how to keep the Sabbath holy. We surely know what our Father would have us do on His appointed times. We surely know what the New Moon means, and when our Father calls us to remember our dependence upon Him – that without His holy light we are darkness entirely. We know to do the best for our bodies, minds and spirits, thus honoring Him in all aspects of our lives. We know the name He has given to His remnant

people: Creation Seventh Day Adventists; and we are blessed to bear this controversial, divine, perfectly fitting name, upon us until the close of human probation. “Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Of His own will begat He us with the Word of Truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures.” (James 1:16-18) Thus saith the Lord.

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