

One Way

Happy Sabbath to all.

Tonight, the title of our study is “One Way,” and it is the subject I would have presented last week, had Yah not impressed upon me a more immediate topic. Based on the fact that this is a potentially “polarizing” title, and can raise strong emotions for those who are religiously inclined – yet still “in the flesh” – I will rely a little more heavily than usual on Bible verses. I want to support every statement I make tonight by the Scriptures, with as little interpretation as possible, because it is necessary to understand this as a Biblical doctrine from beginning to end.

The title for tonight is “One Way,” but I am going to use it in four different, though related, contexts. We will begin very simply, very generally, but then end with a very specific point. So let’s get started with these:

a) There is “One Way” to Everlasting Life

From a perspective of “goals,” there are two when it comes to the purpose of the Scriptures. The first is found here: “Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the Word and doctrine.” (1 Tim 5:17)

And then there is this connected idea: “And He gave some, apostles, and some, prophets, and some, evangelists, and some, pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, ‘till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine,

“by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:” (Eph 4:11 – 15)

That is one, very long, sentence... but it tells us, without much need for interpretative thought, what the goal is on a personal level. The Scriptures equip the teachers to bring about a certain result in those who hear them, that is, the perfection of character. Specifically, it is the maturation of the converted character into complete Christ-like-ness.

The other goal might appear to be more “external,” and it is this: “But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.” (Rom 6:22)

The second “end” or the result, of learning about Yah through the Word, is “everlasting life.” In reality, however, these two goals are the same. Paul says that because we are “made free from sin,” the fruit – what is brought forth – is holiness, and the result is everlasting life. But what is

it that truly overcomes sin? It is the grace and life of Yahshua. Therefore, if we develop the character of Christ, we also receive the inheritance of Christ, which is everlasting life.

Now, every religion promises its people everlasting life, to one degree or another. Even atheism, when it concerns itself with matters outside the “self,” speaks of finding one’s place, and leaving a good legacy for future generations. In other words, even if there is no life after death, the works that we do live on, and this is how we “live forever.”

There is also reincarnation in some religions, and in others one becomes a spirit to guide one’s descendants, or to live with God in a “spiritual form.”

In the Bible, however, everlasting life is a reality as tangible as the flesh we currently inhabit. Also, there is only one way to that everlasting life, and that is to perfect the character of Yahshua and be free from sin in THIS life, and then the Father will raise us up to – or translate us into – the next.

Now, the Son is called the Savior, but it is the Father who generally raises. We see that in a few places:

“Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death; that, like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” (Rom 6:4)

“Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Yahshua the Messiah, and Yahweh the Father, who raised Him from the dead)...” (Gal 1:1)

Now, in some verses the Son says, “I will raise him up at the last day,” (John 6:40, 54) but we read that it is the Father’s will that accomplishes this, (John 6:39) through sending the Son for that purpose. Technically, Both are able to do this, showing the divine nature of both Father and Son: “For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom He will.” (John 5:21)

Both the Father and Son raise the sleeping saints to life, but the Father raised up the Son, and it is the Father’s will that raises the dead, whether it is through Himself or through the actions of the Son.

Thus, for this first, and simplest, part, we might say that there is One Way to everlasting life, and it is through the Father.

b) There is “One Way” to The Father

We, who already know something of the Word, need not spend a lot of time here. We all know the verses that point this out:

“Yahshua saith unto him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.’” (John 14:6)

“No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.” (John 1:18)

“All things are delivered to me of my Father, and no man knoweth who the Son is but the Father, and who the Father is but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him.” (Luke 10:22)

Now, in some places it seems to be saying the opposite. We might read, for example, “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him; and I will raise him up at the last day.” (John 6:44) Notice, though, that these are not the same thing. The Father “draws” those who are seeking truth to the Son, but they are not in unity with the Father at that point in order to find the Son... this is just a drawing, a calling. It is not yet true conversion. But once one finds the Son, then there must be unity, and then the convert is brought into “one-ness” with the Father.

In other words, the Father draws the sinner unto Himself through Christ, in whom the sinner dies and is born again as a saint, one capable of such unity. This is the Gospel expressed most simply. And here we get the resolution to this second context. There is One Way to the Father who grants everlasting life, and it is through unity with the Son.

c) There is “One Way” to Unity with The Son

Here is where, as I mentioned, it gets “polarizing.” Yahshua cannot be found without the Church. Just as there is “one way” to the Father; that is, through the Son, so there is only one way to be in unity with the Son: to be united with His Body on earth. Now this may sound elitist, divisive, but the Son did say, “Think not that I am come to send peace on earth. I came not to send peace, but a sword.” (Mat 10:34)

It may sound (again) contradictory, that One who is called the “Prince of Peace” brings a sword, but this is not a carnal war. It is a sword of separation, a line drawn in the sand. As Moses said, so Yahshua says, “Who is on Yahweh’s side? Let him come unto me.” (Exo 32:26) There are divisions, there are differences, between those who serve Yah and those who do not.

Similarly, there is a difference between those who read the Scriptures and see the truth behind the following verses, and those who do not. Those verses are such as these:

“For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” (Gal 3:27)

“Now this I say, that every one of you saith, ‘I am of Paul,’ and ‘I of Apollos,’ and ‘I of Cephas,’ and ‘I of Christ,’ Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?” (1Cor 1:12, 13)

“Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.” (Acts 2:41:42)

“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Yahshua the Messiah, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” (1Cor 1:10)

“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.” (1 Cor 12:13)

I have made this point before, but it bears repeating as we take the Gospel to the world – that one is not merely baptized into Christ. Yes, salvation has an individual component. Yet, when one is baptized into the “Body” of Christ, that statement means much. There are 10 commandments, and they are not boiled down into one great principle, but two. There is love for the Father, and then there is love for one’s fellow man, one’s neighbor. Similarly, the covenant of salvation is not with the Father and Son only, but with the rest of the Brethren as well. We may speak of exceptions like the thief on the cross and a man trapped on an island; but these are not the “plan” of salvation, merely extensions of mercy in extraordinary circumstances.

Returning to one of the first verses I posted tonight: “And He gave some, apostles, and some, prophets, and some, evangelists, and some, pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ...”

This is the Sword Yahshua brings, and we cannot shrink from the sword any more than we can shrink from the cross, or the love, for to reject one part of Yahshua, or His Message, is to reject Him entirely, and to leave ourselves open for all manner of deception. We must have all of the Savior, or we will have none. We must have the Savior not only in Himself, but as He lives, and speaks, and teaches us, through our brothers and sisters.

Those who say, “I am baptized into Christ,” and feel no burning drive to membership, fellowship, and covenant-responsibility one to another, are very much the kind of people Paul was addressing when He asked, “Is Christ divided?” One cannot say, “I am baptized into Christ” and sit alone waiting for the Second Advent. One cannot be filled with the Spirit, and yet be content to be separate from others who make the same claims in sincerity. If one says, “I accept your teachings about the Gospel, and the godhead, and the feasts, and the New Moon, etc.,” but then does not feel a powerful desire to be “one” with me, then what can I say about the quality of that agreement?

The Bible asks, “Can two walk together, except they be agreed?” (Amos 3:3) But we might ask the obvious counterpart to that question: “Can two be agreed, and yet not walk together?” If it is true what Paul has said in his previous verses, the answer must be “No.” If there is actually one Spirit, and I am baptized through the power of that Spirit, and YOU are baptized through the power of that Spirit, then you and I have a one-ness that cannot help but be expressed through covenant, through mutual belonging. That, by the way, reminds me of what Bro. Luke said in our meeting earlier today.

Some say, like the Peter, “Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.” (John 6:68) But remember, Peter was not yet settled into the truth so securely that he could not be moved. There is an even better way than this, and it is to say, to draw upon the principles of another verse, “because [I] belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, [I] shall not lose [my] reward.” (Mark 9:41) Those who understand “Family,” who understand “Church,” who agree with Paul’s verses from 1 Corinthians and other places, these are the ones who truly know the Father and Son through their Spirit. They belong to the Father and Son, and they belong also to one another. “So we, being many, are one Body in Christ, and every one members one of another.” (Rom 12:5)

So then, there is One Way to unity with the Son, and that is through the Church, the brethren in whom Christ lives, in conjunction with the personal, spiritual connection we have directly with the Savior.

Now, there is one final section to this study, and that is: d) There is “One Way” to Find and Understand “The Church.”

That is, however, a topic I’d like to give more time and space than I could add here. This is where we will tie together the fairly simple, basic ideas we have looked at tonight. I will, therefore, devote the entirety of next week’s study to our examination of this final point. I will mention that it is going to draw heavily from a pair of verses that Sis. Jody referenced during her presentation for the recent Feast, and from which this (now) two-part study obtained its name, and it is this: “And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me forever, for the good of them, and of their children after them. And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.” (Jer 32:39:40)

There is much truth in that verse that we would be blessed to understand, and means much to the CSDA Church this day.

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