

The Author and Finisher

Happy Sabbath to everyone.

For the last few weeks, while on the surface it has appeared that we have been speaking about a series of elements of the Christian life, such as Church Membership, Brotherly Love, and our role within the Body, what we have actually been doing is examining topics central to who it is that Yahshua is to His people.

All things of salvation, and of sanctification, go back ultimately to the character of Yahshua. Because of who He is, things are as they are. Because of what He has done, we have life, and hope. Last week in particular, we saw that Yahshua was made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. (1Cor 1:30) We also saw that He is our unity, receiving Oneness with the Father FROM the Father, and then sharing it with us so that we have become One with Them through Their unique glory. (John 17:22)

I also gave a word of caution regarding this “unity” however; for just as not all who call upon the name of the Lord will ultimately be saved, (Mat 7:21) giving only lip-service and not heart-service, so not all who claim to be His are truly His in Spirit and in truth. Not all, then, who say, “We are in unity” are truly in unity, although it is certain that all who ARE truly in unity will openly declare it. It cannot be otherwise, for there is no secret unity, but rather an open testimony. As Paul said to a Church he raised, “Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men.” (2 Cor 3:2)

Those who are truly one, who are truly “brethren” as we were examining earlier, declare it, and show it with their words and actions, so that the world knows (without being told, necessarily) that we and they all belong to one Father, through one Savior, and with one Spirit.

But there are so many more things that Yahshua is to us, and one of the verses that has been the subject of my thoughts is this one, which reads that He is “the Author and Finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the Throne of Yah.” (Heb 12:2)

These two aspects demand our close attention, because we speak of “the Faith of Yahshua” as THE central pillar of our existence, which we as CSDAs may describe in a number of ways:

1) The Faith of Yahshua is the faith He founded, to which we submit by following His teachings. As it is written, “[Yahshua] hath Yah exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey Him.” (Acts 5:31, 32)

2) The Faith of Yahshua is the faith that He inspires, which we accept by receiving Him as our Savior. As it is written of this, “that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Yahshua, and

shalt believe in thine heart that Yahweh hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” (Rom 10:9, 10) Here we see the word (the testimony) and the righteousness (the actions) that reveal faith to the world, and it is based on our acceptance of Yahshua as our substitute, and then our renewed life in the Father.

3) The Faith of Yahshua is the faith He possessed, which we obtain by accepting what He Himself accepted as true. This was a “new” teaching to me when I was converted from mainstream Adventism; I had not seen those words this way before, and yet they are so simple, and so obviously true, that we who are His people should believe as He believed, so that we may “walk, even as he walked...” (1 John 2:6) This teaching is spirit, and it is life... and even this simple idea continues to shed new light on our path.

Last week I introduced what was – at least to me – a very new aspect of the Faith of Yahshua under this meaning, that is, one of the things that Yahshua believes is that His people are saved. This is not just “His people” as a mass of anonymous individuals, but “His people” as in you, and as in me. Because Yahshua believes that I am saved, and I know that His thoughts are true, and that His prayers to the Father are always fulfilled perfectly, this is the foundation for my own invincible testimony, my own confidence in Him.

I can speak with perfect boldness, which the world may take as arrogance because of its own sickness, because it is Yahshua’s faith, and Yahshua’s sinless life, and Yahshua’s perfect obedience, that I am merely displaying to the world. There is nothing in me worthy of any praise, but in Yahshua I accomplish the praiseworthy, because the life that I now live is the life of Yahshua, manifest into the world through my body and individual expression of His personality. In other words, it is “Christ in [me], the hope of glory,” (Col 1:27) and yet, by a great miracle, I am not absent or consumed by the Consuming Fire. (Heb 12:29) True Christians, like the burning bush of Moses, burn but are not consumed. (Exo 3:2) All this is because of the Faith of Yahshua.

Now, we may just about end there, in our examination of faith, for I think that these three aspects represent very well what the Faith of Yahshua means, but based on that verse from Hebrews 12, we may add two additional items to our list. The more angles from which we examine the Faith of Yahshua, the more our own grasp of that Faith deepens, and this will – if we permit it – strengthen us in word, in thought, and in action to do the works of Heaven. As we think of Yahshua, and His Faith, more, we think of “self” less, until nothing becomes impossible for us. Like Peter, at least at first, we will not even notice the strangeness of walking on water, for we are caught up in the appearance of our Savior.

So from the first part, we may add:

4) The Faith of Yahshua is the Faith that Yahshua authored, or created.

Some may say, “Isn’t the faith of Yahshua created by the Father?” Here we could speak about the One-ness that They share, and the unity of purpose... we could become very theological here, but for practical purposes, it is better to receive and examine the words of inspiration, which indicate that it is the Son who has created the Faith that we hold.

Although all was done in fulfillment of the will of the Father, who loved us and sent us His Son, it was the Son who decided to come down and be our Sacrifice. It is the Son who spoke with perfect authority on matters such as the creation, the Law, and the redemption and justification of Sinners.

It is the Son who says to us, “You are healed, go and sin no more.” It is the Son who said, to the consternation of the Pharisees, “Your sins are forgiven you.” They knew that by making these statements the Son was making a claim to divinity, to deity, to Godhood; and for those who could not accept this as absolute truth, it was blasphemy.

But Yahshua had all authority to make such judgments, because the faith by which these things could be accomplished was uniquely His; He had authored it. Unto Him the Father has given the authorship of saving faith, as He has with the judgment of mankind, because Yahshua was made unto us a Man, and Satan could not reason away the righteousness of this course. If the fallen angel should say, “Who is a Spirit to judge a man?” thus making the Law seem unfair, we are witnesses that Yahshua – in the likeness of our flesh – was in all points tempted as we are, and yet He remains without sin. The Law is just, and perfect, and in Yahshua we live by that Law.

Because Yahshua lived out the faith that He authored before the universe, He showed that that faith, that particular faith that speaks invincibly, and does not allow for the consideration of failure, and that resists the devil with “it is written,” and that overcomes discouragement, bitterness, and wrath, that is the faith that leads to resurrection, or translation. That faith authored by Yahshua leads to life everlasting.

5) The Faith of Yahshua is the Faith that Yahshua finished.

Yahshua is the “finisher” of our Faith. On the cross He said, “It is finished.” But what has passed away? The Law is still the Law, which “is good, if a man use it lawfully.” (1 Tim 1:8) The Sacrifice of blood is still necessary to cover sins, except that Yahshua’s Sacrifice is once and for always. The Covenant between Yahweh and Israel is still valid, and the invitation of Gentiles to this Covenant only makes it stronger, confirming that Yah is the God of all the world.

As Adventists, we have long known, and taught, that the “finishing” that was accomplished on the cross was not the passing away of something, but the perfecting of something. If a man should make a painting, or build a house, he would not say, “It is finished” if the work was destroyed. It is when the work is done, when the result may be witnessed, then the work is “finished.”

So it is with the plan of salvation. Like a house with many “rooms,” it was established at the cross. In the course of His present Heavenly Ministry, Yahshua is “preparing” the place for us... but it is already built on the Rock that is Himself. But this does not mean that we who receive this salvation have nothing to do to inhabit it. Once a house has been built, even a perfect house, it benefits nobody, and shelters no one, unless we go to shelter within it.

Yahshua finished our Faith, our salvation, on the cross, but now we must inhabit that salvation; we must dwell in it moment-by-moment, and conduct ourselves as responsible citizens of our new community.

In the finishing of our faith, Yahshua made all things that we need to attain everlasting life perfect, and available to us. Nothing needs to be added. Nothing will ever be taken away. It can be trusted perfectly, as a child falls asleep in its mother’s arms, and more securely than even this, for Yah says, “Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.” (Isa 49:15)

This is a picture to inspire perfect trust, perfect Sabbath rest. Children know the Sabbath, until the world teaches them otherwise. They may be born with a sinful nature, but in their parents they can find rest without a care... and unless we have this trust, as little children before our Father in Heaven, we cannot fully call ourselves commandment-keepers.

But we may choose this peace, this safety, even on this Sabbath day. We may be Sabbath-keepers indeed, Seventh-day Adventists in deed.

Let us, then, rejoice and find rest in this faith, this faith of Yahshua with its various aspects, which is displayed before the world in its perfection, and which will be seen in our testimonies to the world as we have made that faith our own.

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