

The Covenant of the Third Angel

Happy Sabbath to everyone.

This week, I would like us to examine a particular characteristic of our Heavenly Father's personality, and in particular as it is applied to the topic of Christian Unity.

These are two very central themes to Christianity, and therefore to Creation Seventh Day Adventists, because they are both "goals" of sanctification. As members of the Church of the 144,000, we have as our primary goal the perfect reproduction of the character of Yahshua, both corporately, and as individuals. And as an intermediate goal, we claim the promise inherent in the instruction, "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." (1 Cor 1:10)

I say it is an "intermediate" goal, because this is the means by which the primary goal is attained; that is, we can never perfect the character of Yahshua, unless we are in agreement as His People. I also called it a "promise inherent in the instruction," which means that the promise is within the instruction, because as we have been studying recently, there is Power in the Word, and power in our words. If the Scriptures give us an instruction, even if it seems impossible, contained within that instruction is the power to accomplish it. Further, when we claim that promise, then the power in the Word agrees with the power in our words, and it is then that, though Yahshua, "all things are possible to him that believeth." (Mark 9:23)

The characteristic of Yahweh that I would like to consider tonight is His "non arbitrary nature." We know that as Protestants we believe in two main foundational pillars; those are, 1) We reject the intrusion of civil powers into the realm of religious experiences and observances, and 2) We reject the arbitrary authority of the Church with regard to matters of individual conscience.

Now, the Church, as Yahshua's earthly representation, does have divine authority. In fact, it has the same authority as the Throne of Heaven, therefore the authority it does exercise must be of the same kind that the Father and Son exercise. Therefore, if we do not accept that the rightly-exercised authority of the Church is not arbitrary, then it cannot be the case that Yah's authority over us is arbitrary either.

We can, of course, confirm this from the Scriptures by such verses as:

"O taste and see that Yahweh is good; blessed is the man that trusteth in Him." (Psa 34:8)

"He hath made the earth by His power, He hath established the world by His wisdom, and hath stretched out the heaven by His understanding." (Jer 51:5)

“O my people, what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? Testify against me.” (Mic 6:3)

“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.” (James 1:5)

Yahweh is not arbitrary; He is not careless in His actions, nor does He perform acts (or ask US to perform acts) without wisdom, understanding, and reasoning. If one man should say to another, “Go and do this,” and the other says, “Why?” The first might explain the reason, or may say, “Do it because I have instructed you.” The second response is an “arbitrary” one; it transmits no wisdom, no logic, and is simply an instruction based on authority.

While our Father certainly has the right to command us in this way, as the verses above indicate... for those who are His People and, even more intimately, His “friends,” (Exo 33:11, James 2:23, John 15:15) He invites us to examine His wisdom. It is above us; let us not think that we can comprehend the mind of the Almighty... but with regard to what He has instructed humanity to do in His name, “those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.” (Deu 29:29)

What Yah commands us to do, He commands us with good reason, and we are expected to respond in kind, for He seeks to receive our “reasonable service.” (Rom 12:1)

So when we consider that verse from 1 Cor 1:10, and when we (as Adventists) consider other inspired quotes such as the following:

“God is leading out a people, not a few separate individuals here and there, one believing this thing, another that. Angels of God are doing the work committed to their trust. The third angel is leading out and purifying a people, and they should move with him unitedly.” [*Testimonies for the Church Volume One*, p. 207]

When we see the agreement between Biblical and latter-day inspiration, and read that from the days of the Old Testament, Yahweh has taken great care to distinguish His People from all others upon the earth... we may trust that there is a good reason for it.

We have looked at the importance of Unity, and Church Membership, and Baptism into a People, and the uniqueness of the Remnant Church before, yes... and there is always more to say about these matters, for they are as despised in the religious world today as the Sabbath... but tonight I want to go a little into the reason why the instructions, these inspired statements (and the power to accomplish them), exist at all.

We can know for certain, for it is a clear Biblical doctrine, and supported by countless, unambiguous, later statements of commentary, that Yahweh does not want His people worshipping in isolation, or in little diverse groups. Of course, there are allowances made for those who are, because of emergencies or extreme situations, isolated for a time, but that is not

the divine plan. None who favor independent or diverse ministries have ever, at any point, been able to defend themselves from these powerful statements. All they can do is point to the problems of established Churches such as the mainstream SDA Church and say, "We cannot be a part of that."

This is, of course, a faulty argument. The fact that most Churches are corrupt is to be expected, because the Bible teaches that there is only one Bride. Naturally, then, if there are many pretenders to the Throne of the Bride, only one will be found true, and the others will be false. Unfortunately, this has caused many to "give up the fight" in terms of searching for and finding the Bride of Christ, and they say, "We shall establish our own Bride. We will teach the righteousness of Christ, and His doctrines as best we understand it. We will put away the known errors of the false brides, but we will no longer seek where, perhaps, the Creator has already established His People, rejoicing in salvation and humbly putting away sin in preparation for the return of the Savior."

Generally, they are not so clear in their statements to that effect. They are usually much shorter, in the order of, "We don't believe there is any one true Church," or "My group meets all my needs," or "God will honor those who serve Him according to the best of their knowledge and abilities," or "We do not need to join any particular group to be saved," or various others. Some simply ignore the issue altogether, but few actually acknowledge the Wisdom of Yahweh in these writings, and admit, "Yes, it does say these things. Yes, it is clearly an issue of sanctification, of salvation, therefore my everlasting destiny depends on my following these instructions." None can afford to be so careless with his soul as to ignore or justify rebellion against the Word, but many indeed do so, because Satan has "burned" them, discouraged them from continuing to seek the Truth and where It may be found on earth today.

There is, of course, a grain of truth in most if not all of those statements of justification; but a grain of truth is not the Truth as it is in Yahshua, who prayed, as did Paul, as did the Old Testament prophets, as did Seventh-day Adventist writers throughout the Church's history, as do we this very hour, that Yah's people should be "One" even (to the same degree) as the Father and Son are One. (John 17:22)

There is a reason why Yah has called His People to be One, with "no divisions," who all say "the same thing" with regard to spiritual truths, who are not collected according to a few separate individuals here and there, believing diverse doctrines. It is clear from what we are reading, and nobody has ever been able to provide an alternative interpretation, that these independent ministries, speakers, and various denominations, are contrary to the leading of the Holy Spirit... beyond any reasonable controversy. The question is, "Why?" Why has Yahweh set it up this way? Let us look at some of these revealed purposes.

1) Yahweh is a God of order. He cannot be worshipped according to human devising, and diverse human lines of reasoning. One of the justifying statements above was, "God will honor

those who serve Him according to the best of their knowledge and abilities,” and this has some truth to it, of course. But Yahweh will not respect willful ignorance. As James wrote, if any man lack wisdom, let him pray, and Yah will give it to him. This is not the same as saying, “Well, I don’t know where the truth is, so what I am doing must be good enough for Him.” If there is a Way, and last week we looked at the Way in which Yah would have us walk, then it is our responsibility to seek it out. We are promised, “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.” (Mat 5:6) To ignore this blessing, and the instruction it implies, is the same – worse, in fact – than the argument of Cain, who thought His best work would satisfy the desire of the Almighty.

We must recognize that our righteousness is as filthy rags before the Most High, and only in following (perfectly!) the path that Yahshua desires us to walk may we present His righteousness before the Father for our sakes. Can we do this? Yes, for He gives us the power to do so. But we must surrender all, including the burden of an ignorant conscience, and respect the Order of Yah. Different groups, teaching diverse things, are responsible for souls being lost due to confusion, not saved because of unity, strength, and wisdom. Those who have believed themselves to be divinely-commissioned messengers, while not following the Holy Spirit’s instruction to “Unify, unify, unify” with the Remnant Church shall have the loss of many on their hands in that Great and Terrible Day. This is true for those on great councils and conferences, and those who go place to place without the message of Victory, Repentance, and Unity.

2) It is the Third Gospel Angel that directs Christian Unity in the last days. This is a somewhat uniquely Adventist take on the last days, but there is no reason why it should be. Directly from the Bible we have the Three Gospel Angels of Revelation 14 telling us how to overcome the Beast and his Image, and that is by “the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony.” (Rev 12:11)

The Third Angel shows a people with a uniform testimony, with a uniform faith, and one that they were willing to die to maintain. Waiting for Christian Unity to happen, or hoping for it to happen, is not enough to bring forth this testimony. The unity of Yahshua’s Church is not of man, but of God, and it is He who has gathered His People unto Himself. By no human effort is unity achieved; however, it is left to human choice whether or not we will be in unity with those saints identified by the Third Angels’ Message, a protests against unions of Church and state, against the arbitrary intrusion of civil powers into religions matters, and against the idea that the Church, like Its Creator, is an arbitrary authority over man.

And why is it the Third, not the First or Second Angels, that drive this unity? It is because the Mark of The Beast, the enemy of Yah’s people in the form of policy, changes based on the Tempter’s final, desperate movements. While the Mark may change, whether it is murder, a Sunday Law, or a Trademark Law, the people who resist it are of a uniform character. They maintain their knowledge of where they are to place their efforts in resistance to this Mark only through the wisdom that comes from the Third Angel, which reveals what the Mark is. This

unifying cause is easy to miss; it takes spiritual discernment, and humility before Yah and His Message, therefore it is possible to fall behind in one's understanding of inspiration (for example, thinking that it will continue to be a Sunday Law that tests Yah's people, even though the SDA Church has fallen into apostasy). It is also possible to apparently jump ahead, considering this or that independent interpretation of prophecy, and going on into confusion.

But Yah's people will be in unity, and therefore overcome the Mark. This is what the Scriptures tell us. Those in diverse groups will be deceived, no matter how many doctrines they have right. Believing in the non-Trinity nature of the Godhead will not save a single soul from destruction. Keeping New Moons and feast days will not save anyone. Using sacred names will not bring a sinner one step closer to everlasting life. It is Yahshua who saves, because of His goodness and mercy; and WHEN He saves, He gives truth, and light, and doctrine, and glory, unto His people. Then, when they are blessings to the covenanted saints, then they will sanctify them unto perfection. That is the truth, and the truth of "truth;" and it is only known in its full, sanctifying significance by those who are in step with the Third Gospel Angel.

3) The Bible teaches that sanctification occurs in community. This one is obvious. We have studied the purpose of the gift of Church structure before; therefore, we need not spend any great amount of time here. Sanctification unto perfection of character does not occur in isolation (Eph 4:10-13). Adventist writings rightly indicate that those who are in exceptional circumstances may receive a special dispensation of grace if it is absolutely impossible for them to fellowship with the community of saints, but none of us, and few if any whom we have ever encountered, fall into such a category.

Our message is one of love, of inclusion, of fellowship, which does not eliminate the teaching of Yahshua's perfect character as the goal and standard of Christian faith and practice. There is balance, but it is a balance without compromise of principles, and there are lessons that can only be learned from the Holy Spirit, but through the pastors, elders, teachers, prophets, brothers, and sisters, that have united in the common purpose of sanctification unto Yahshua's full stature.

4) Speaking of principles, there is the Principle of Earthly Unity. Some believe that we will all be in perfect, Christian Unity... when the Son of Man returns. But those who await this will be disappointed to realize that they have fallen short of what was required to participate. It is written, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth." (Luke 11:2) This is a prayer; it is a request of the earnest soul, that Yah's Kingdom should come, and that His will should be done on earth as in Heaven. In short, those who cannot find unity with the saints before the close of probation will have NO opportunity to align their purposes and sympathies with the redeemed after the Holy Spirit is withdrawn, and grace no longer pleads for the sinful and erring.

Shall we wait until we have no Intercessor before the Father to be brought into unity with the Church? Who will intercede for us and draw us near? It is the ignorant soul that waits for Yah to do yet more work for them to be drawn into unity, to be given victory over sin, and to receive the latter rain. They say, "When God does X, then I will do Y." Or some say, "You believe this, and I'll believe that, but when Christ comes, He will show us who is right." The Father looks over these deceived ones and says, "What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?" (Isa 5:4)

This is not about intolerance or exclusivity, though Satan would cast the truth in such a light. This is about the character of Yahshua. Christians are quite tolerant of each individual to have the right to believe whatsoever they wish... we love and respect each soul, and the freedom of choice that the Father and Son gave all to preserve; but we also have the duty to say, "The Father has revealed this Way for those who will inherit everlasting life. Walk in it, and be saved."

5) Finally, and most importantly, the Covenant of the Third Angel, walking in unity with the saints, demonstrates divine love. Yahshua said, "For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Mat 5:46-48)

Why do people congregate into little, independent groups? Why do they become satisfied with local unity, and fail to seek out the Bride of Christ? Why do they even ignore the Word, and the testimonies of divine inspiration, if it runs contrary to their settled opinions? It is because they find some who accept just what they believe, they find some with whom they share a large commonality of doctrine, and they conclude, "These, who agree with me, are my brethren." They will not "rock the boat" any further, but the Word of Yah is clear; we cannot just love our "little groups;" that is a barrier to perfection. We are a part of a Royal Nation, a Holy Priesthood, and if we do not learn to love our neighbor according to all righteousness, then our spirits have not been prepared for what we have been called to do, either here on earth in the last days, or in Heaven for eternity.

I believe that we, who claim to be teachers of the truth, must learn to express this message in such a way as to reach even the trouble-burned heart. We, who are messengers for Yahshua, speak healing, and hope, that there IS a People here, awake, learning, growing Heavenward, that receive the seeking souls. We teach that it is everlasting life to know the Father and Son, (John 17:3) and that He has sent us Three Angels in this last generation, to awaken the sinners, to set them on the right path, and then to draw them into a unity that brings us, as a sanctified Nation, before the Holy Throne of Yah where we shall rejoice forevermore.

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