

The Gift of Understanding

Happy Sabbath to all.

We have just come from the Feast of Unleavened Bread, meeting with the brethren daily all across the world through the Internet. I was particularly blessed that, instead of having one “teacher,” each of us led a session, each of us participated in guiding a meeting, and I truly believe that this is how all our feasts must be from this point forward.

There is time to learn doctrine, but the feasts are also a time of blessing, rejoicing and outreach, and they are a time of training, to prepare us for the evangelism that must take place in full force before the end shall come.

I was blessed by the feast in a number of ways, actually, and I would like to apply the things that I learned, or that I realized, to our weekly meetings. As I mentioned, and I pray that it works out as it was intended, the Friday night meetings are open to any member to lead. While I will have something prepared in the event that I receive no notice, I will weekly look forward to hearing someone say, “I would like to address the Church with something I have been learning.”

In addition, whereas before I would ask if anyone has comments or questions, what I would like to do, in addition to that, is suggest a question myself if nobody has one, so that we can always benefit from at least a brief discussion of the subject, or some related principles.

But what we need, brethren, is a deeper level of understanding. That is what I want to talk about tonight.

Continuing on where we left off before the feast began, I did go over the sixth Letter to Rachel this week, at least the first part of it for they are getting rather lengthy.

Now, in this sixth letter, I began by saying that, once Christ has defeated Satan for our sakes on the cross, it is the role of the living to “choose sides,” to decide between righteousness and sin, life and death, faith or destruction.

Instead of taking a “historical” approach to the Bible, as I had in the previous few letters, I now begin to introduce the teachings that Yahshua left us with through His doctrines, including those that exist now only within the Adventist understanding.

I explained that, with the “history” behind us, of the conflict in Heaven, the Old Testament, and the Gospels, we can now put into proper context the Bible’s teachings – the way it is applied to our lives.

This is actually quite important, and the Bible itself is set up that way. It begins with history and genealogies, but it ends with teachings and prophecies, although there is quite a bit of overlap by necessity.

The history exists to tell us “why” the teachings exist. Consider, Paul asks in one of his doctrinal epistles, “Wherefore then serveth the Law?” Why does the Law exist?

The Law does not make anyone righteous by its existence or by our obedience to its precepts. The Law does not forgive us for our past sins, or prevent us from committing future transgressions. The Law does not provide us with any spiritual blessings beyond the direct effects of its causes (e.g., if you don’t steal, you won’t go to jail). Those who rely on the Law, thinking that by it they will gain favor with Yahweh, are “cursed.” (Gal 3:10)

So why do we have a Law? What good are lawful works if indeed “the just shall live by faith?” (Verse 11) Paul immediately gives the answer and it is based on the “history” that came before the teaching: “Wherefore then serveth the Law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.” (Gal 3:19)

This is something we ought to learn, if we are to become effective last-day evangelists. Why serve the Law? It is because the Law tells us what transgressions are. The Law tells us what righteousness is, and until Christ came, to write the will of His Father on our hearts, that was the way that the difference between the holy and unholy was revealed to mankind.

It is still the case that the Law can correct our perceptions, and guide our consciences. This is the “lawful” use of the Law that Paul declares to be “good.” (1Tim 1:8)

But the point here is that the only reason the doctrines of Christianity, and the teachings of the Church, have any real value and purpose is because of our history. We were created in the image of Yahweh to be “like” Him in some fundamental ways. Sin corrupted our individual selves, mankind as a whole, and even the nature of our planet. Yahweh raised up a people to prepare themselves for His Son, and when that Son came, He was rejected, abused, and slain, taking upon Himself the weight of our sins.

Because of all this, the things that we teach, of righteousness by faith, of victory over sin, of keeping days holy, of keeping the body under subjection with regard to appetite, of having honesty, integrity, open communication, unity, and all those wonderful topics that we reviewed during our feast meetings... The only reason these things have value is because of what Yahweh has done for us in the past, therefore – more important than the individual doctrines themselves – the most important thing is to “know” the Father and Son, for this is everlasting life, as John records the Master Himself as declaring.

Some individuals have difficulty understanding doctrines, and the principles behind them. Some, even of members, have had difficulty grasping concepts that lead to good judgment, prudent speech, a commitment to agreement before actions that affect the Body, and so on. But it is not, despite the common reasoning, because of a lack of study of doctrine.

In the sixth letter to Rachel, I begin to show her that, because of what Yah has shown us in the past, of Himself, and of ourselves, the Bible’s doctrines make sense: the Sabbath, the state of the dead, etc.

But it is not critically important, for this purpose, to memorize the Scriptures, or to be able to quote from them at length. These are good disciplines, and potentially useful to practice, but like any “work” they do not justify the soul, or lead to everlasting life.

What is important is understanding. An individual with “understanding” after the Biblical order does not need to study the Bible for hours on end for righteousness’ sake. I am not saying the individual won’t do this, but it will be to see the “hidden treasures,” not to learn the basics over and over again.

There is a misunderstanding in some Christianity that the act of reading the Bible enough, or often, will make one a better Christian. As we who teach victory know, there is no such creature as a “better” or “worse” Christian. This is a works-based religion, and a falsehood.

The Bible is one of the ways that an individual comes to know, and fall in love with, and accept, the Father and Son. This may also occur through the victorious testimony of another person, for many were converted, such as in the first centuries, who never saw a Bible or held the holy scrolls.

Now that we have it, it is an invaluable gift, but consider why it is that we study it. Someone who has “understanding” only has to be told the truth once. Let me say that again. Someone with no understanding, no knowledge of the Father and Son, may study the same things, the same verses, the same chapters, time and again, each time (perhaps) hoping to “really learn it.”

But someone with understanding only needs to read it once, and they will say, “Ah, that is how it is.” And then it becomes a part of them... forever.

Studying, of course, will refresh us on the details, and perhaps make clear something that was missed the first time... revealing new light, as we say, but the principles of the Word are already inside us.

Let me also say THAT again, because it is perhaps the most important thing I want to say tonight. We do not read the Scriptures in order to gain the principles of our faith. If we are born again, every principle in the Word, every principle that could ever be learned from it, or calculated or figured out from its words, is already inside of us. This is, to me, an exciting truth.

The learning that comes through personal study, group studies such as this, sermons and teachings... this learning is designed to awaken something that already exists in you from the moment you are born of the Spirit – the details, the specifics, of your life, the perfect life of Christ.

Remember, the seed that is planted by the Son of Man is perfect at every stage of development, even as it matures. If you accept that by faith, if you know that to be true, then, you will become a teacher of others, as the Word tells us we are. You will not always be trying to “learn the truth.” You will know the truth, and the Word becomes a support for what your spirit already understands because of our relationship with the Father through the Savior.

This is what is meant, when we say that the studies can only do so much, we must “walk the faith.” We must step out on what we know, and let the world teach us through its response to our love.

When I began to present the doctrines to Rachel in these letters, which I hope will shortly be presented to the world again through the recordings, it is not just a matter of, “Let me convince you that the dead know nothing,” or “let me prove to you that the Sabbath is really from Friday at sunset to Saturday at sunset.”

These things are important, of course, but they are only important, they are only relevant, because of what they say about our Father, and our relationship to Him.

The doctrine of the state of the dead is important BECAUSE Yahweh has appointed a time for judgment. Dead relatives do not try to guide us to the truth from beyond the grave, and even the most wicked mortal soul does not burn forever in everlasting torment.

These are all statements of doctrine, but they are also statements about the character of our Father in Heaven, which, if that very same character is not replicated in us, will do us no everlasting good.

The doctrine of the Sabbath is important, not because it is very important to Yahweh that we not buy or sell during a certain point of darkness and light... but because He has set aside that time to give special, necessary, blessings to His people, and to build a life-saving relationship between humanity and divinity.

The doctrine of the Godhead is important, because if one has a faulty understanding of the Holy Spirit, one cannot truly appreciate the born-again experience, and how faith and works are balanced. We are not possessed by a Spirit Person that forces us to righteousness, but rather (as we discussed during the latter sessions of the feast) the Spirit in us gives us righteous motivations, and the power of the divine, so that WE – by faith – accomplish perfect righteousness on the earth. There is a cooperation, not a taking-over, by those who are Spirit-led, and Spirit-filled.

So then, brethren, study the Word, and pray, but above all, pray for understanding. Pray that you will recognize truth when you see it and that, having seen it once, it becomes a permanent part of who you are in Christ Yahshua.

What you “understand” you will never need to “learn again.” Pray for wisdom, and as you pray, act wisely. The Law, and the Word, tell you what wisdom is, but do not think, “If I read enough, I will be wise.” The Bible says, “The fear of Yahweh is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.” (Proverbs 9:10)

Never be content to let ignorance be an excuse for error. We have the opportunity to know all righteousness, and a Holy Spirit to convict our consciences of truth.

Let us speak this truth as a part of our invincible testimony: “I know the Father and Son, and I do always those things that please Them, for I understand who They are.” A more powerful statement of unity, of victory, of purity, there cannot be, and it is the word that comes out of our mouth that will defeat all the enemies of the Gospel that we bear.

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