

The Work of The Resurrected

Happy Sabbath to everyone.

Last week, we had a bit of a detour from the Letters to Rachel series. The week before that, however, we spoke about the first half of the fifth letter.

To refresh you on the topic, this portion focused on the suffering of Christ Yahshua in the hours leading up to His crucifixion. Although this was the path to His ultimate victory over Satan, and over all sin on behalf of mankind, it was not a path that was apparently glorious. It was filled with physical and spiritual pain, with the betrayal and misunderstanding of His disciples, and with the mockery and abuse of both His persecutors and the worldly-minded onlookers. Like the experiences of Job, this record was preserved for our comfort. Though it represents a time of great trouble for our Savior, it reveals that what is truly valuable with our Heavenly Father, what is truly victorious, may not be understood by the masses, and those who are actually doing His perfect will are scarcely popular or praised for their efforts. Even among those claiming to be Christians, the truth is rarely embraced with any warmth.

Creation Seventh Day Adventists tell the world and the Churches that the Faith of Yahshua overcomes the world, and not only in some theoretical, “spiritual” sense, but in actuality. The result of being born again is that, in the real and practical world, the converted individual ceases to commit sin. What is already known to be evil is avoided, and what is discovered to be evil brings us to repentance, to be put away once and for ever after.

This is the effect of the Gospel –this is the effect of coming to know the Father through the ministry and sacrifice of the Son. But this is not taught in the Churches... and those who bear this message are thus frequently rejected.

But the Gospel record does not end with the crucifixion of Christ. If it had, we would still have sufficient information to understand the mass conversions and the mighty works of the disciples in the Book of Acts. But before they close, each of the Gospels spends some time telling us what happened in the days following Yahshua’s trial and death.

Of course, the most dramatic of these is the resurrection of the Son of Yahweh. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, even He who felt most powerfully what it means to be separated from the Father, was restored, and then He was glorified.

We read in the Gospels, and in the second part of the fifth letter, of Yahshua being able to pass unnoticed among human beings, or in disguise, blinding them to His true identity. We read John’s description of His spiritual appearance: “His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and His eyes were as a flame of fire; and His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and His voice as the sound of many waters. And He had in His right hand seven stars: and out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.” (Rev 1:14-16)

His return, to draw His faithful unto Himself, will be even more glorious, as even He has said, “And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.” (Mark 13:26)

“And I saw Heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written, that no man knew but He Himself. And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.” (Rev 19:11-13)

The resurrection of Yahshua was not merely a return to life. It was a validation of His ministry, and a vindication before men and angels of the character of Yahweh. The Law was proven to be unbreakable, unchangeable, and yet – despite this – mankind who had violated the Law could nevertheless be redeemed. The resurrection of Yahshua was a glorification of the Savior, and this was reflected in His appearance and His works even in the days before He ascended to the Father.

But there is a difference between these things, His appearance and the works He did on earth before He departed. The appearance of Yahshua in His glory is not something that was revealed immediately after He was raised. These aspects were not known until after He had presented Himself before the Throne, “officially” presenting Himself as a substitute for sinful man. Until that time, He appeared as an ordinary man, being confused for a traveler by one group of followers, and for a gardener by Mary. Why did He do this? Why did He not immediately go to Heaven, and later send word by an angel that His ministry had been accepted, and that He was now at the right hand of the Father, interceding on our behalf? Let us look at some of the things that Yahshua did between His resurrection and His ascension.

“And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself.” (Luke 24:27)

“And after eight days again His disciples were within, and Thomas with them; then came Yahshua, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, ‘Peace be unto you.’ Then saith he to Thomas, ‘Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.’” (John 20:26-27)

“So when they had dined, Yahshua saith to Simon Peter, ‘Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?’ He saith unto him, ‘Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee.’ He saith unto him, ‘Feed my lambs.’” (John 21:15)

Following the apostles’ own “Great Disappointment,” there was much confusion, much sorrow, and none were certain how to proceed. While Yahshua had promised to send them the Holy Spirit, because His followers were not “in one accord,” and had not yet fully been converted to the Way, they were not yet prepared to receive It. They could not lead the Gospel work, because they had not yet learned to follow the Master perfectly; and this, combined with the shock of seeing Him taken by worldly powers and crucified, would have been sufficient to accomplish the Enemy’s aim. Christianity would have been wiped out before it had even begun.

But Yahshua had a purpose for His bride, and as He does this very day, in that first Church Age He defended His people. He did so very simply. On most occasions He merely appeared to them, and He offered comfort, encouragement, and evidence of His living state. In yet another passage we read,

“Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Yahshua and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, ‘Peace be unto you.’ And when He had so said, he shewed unto them His hands and His side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. “Then said Jesus to them again, ‘Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, ‘Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.’” (John 20:19-23)

So then, Yahshua’s appearances after His resurrection were to comfort and encourage His disciples. They were also to testify to the Power of Yah over life and death. They were also to provide a direction to His apostles, to give them authority, and to share with them His Holy Spirit, so that they would go forward with power. There are great lessons in this.

Yahshua, having received life again from the Father, and risen from the grave, could have gone into Jerusalem and stood before the Temple. He could have called together the multitude, and said, “Here I am!” No doubt, this would have caused the greatest of stirs, and regained Him many of the disciples that had departed when He began to give the deeper, spiritual lessons. Yet Yahshua well knew that this would not accomplish an enduring legacy. Those who had followed Him for the loaves and fishes before might have come flocking back, but their hearts would have been unchanged from the days of His pre-crucifixion ministry. They would have returned, in awe of the great power displayed by the Master, and hoping to receive everlasting life... but they would be seeking a reward without making themselves the kinds of people who could receive that reward.

The apostles, encouraged by Yahshua’s return, continued to endure trials. They knew the world would not accept their witness yet, and so they clung together, putting away all their differences, confessing their remaining sins, seeing where they could have been of greater comfort or use to Yahshua during His final trials... and in this time, they prepared themselves for the outpouring of the Spirit.

No such events could have transpired if Yahshua had shown Himself to the multitudes after the cross. The Gospel writers, from their standpoint of earth, do not really speak about what happened after the Savior’s ascension. This was left to Paul and others to conclude through inspiration and study of the Old Testament prophecies.

Instead, those who wrote the Books of Testimony, including Acts, show how Yahshua, after His resurrection, worked in relatively ordinary ways, doing ordinary things, to strengthen His followers for the work ahead.

Just as there are things to learn from the way in which Yahshua comforted and strengthened His

Bride, so there is an application for us in all this. We, who are born again, are not only going “to be” like the Master when He shall appear again in glory. All who are truly converted, truly born of the Spirit, ARE as Yahshua was after He was raised from the dead. We do not become Yahshua, but we follow in His path to Heaven, going from an earthly life, through a grave, and finally upward to glory.

The believer begins as a sinner but, when drawn by the Father, he begins to believe in everlasting life, not only in Heaven or the renewed earth, but also here on this earth, as we walk among others. When we realize that we need a Savior, that our sins make us worthy of death, and that we are without hope because of our guilt, this is a personal Gethsemane. We feel the separation from the Father that Yahshua had begun to experience as He took the weight of our sins, but which for us had existed since the beginning, when we inherited the sinful nature from Adam. When the “sinfulness of sin” comes home to us, we enter a sorrow as Yahshua did, and the repentant soul prays for release.

In the spirit, we know the sentence of Heaven that “the wages of sin is death,” but then, we have a choice. We can, like the criminal Barabbas, be set free. The people of the world wanted the sinner to go free, to escape the judgment of the cross, because they were not in harmony with Heaven’s principles. They hated righteousness and loved darkness, and their decision that day spoke plainly about the state of their souls.

On the other hand, we can, like Yahshua, submit to the penalty, and as Paul writes, “I was alive without the Law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.” (Romans 7:9-12)

Creation Seventh Day Adventists are those who have taken this second option. Many Churches will encourage people to claim to be subject to the cross, when the fact is that they have “escaped.” They have never been “crucified with Christ,” because when asked if they are “dead to sin and self,” they cannot answer that question with an honest “Yes” once they understand what this truly means.

But only those who have truly died can be truly resurrected. Think about that... Yahweh cannot raise anyone from the dead if they are not in the grave. Those who say, “I am a Christian,” but have not died to self – so that there is no longer any factor to cause us to sin – have not followed Christ, because the Way of Christ Yahshua goes only up to the cross and then through the grave. That is the strait and narrow Way. But when we have gone through our Gethsemane, and then surrendered to the cross, so that the power of sin (which is guilt and death) revives, and we die, then the Faith of Yahshua raises us back to life.

Now, we are not yet glorified. We have not yet ascended unto the Father to witness His glory, and to hear Him publicly – before men and angels – receive us. As with Yahshua, there is a time between resurrection and glorification. Before He ascended, Yahshua had a work to do on the earth. Before we ascend, we have a work to do... and it is the very same work, the work of the resurrected.

When Yahshua was raised from the dead, His ministry involved blessing, strengthening, and preparing His disciples. It was strictly a social ministry. By that I mean, we do not hear of Him going up unto mountaintops to pray all night. We do not hear of Him going apart by Himself. Now, I am not saying that there was not something like this taking place, because we only have a record of a few isolated appearances over the course of fifty days...and WE certainly continue to need these seasons of prayer and solitary meditation...but the incidents that we do have recorded are strictly social in nature.

For the resurrected, our work is not merely to study the word, awaiting Yahshua's return. We are not to draw apart from others...character is not wholly perfected on top of a mountain, but in serving others. We who are the resurrected have a social work to do, a work of gathering, of encouraging, of strengthening, and of testifying to the power of our Father, who has indeed raised us from the dead.

Remember that in the perfect world before sin, the perfect man, Adam, was set a task – to labor in and guard the vineyard. In this generation, the redeemed, who are restored to that state of freedom before sin, and who are partakers of the divine nature to keep us from falling, are given a similar task.

The world is the field. The vines represent the Church (Yahshua is the main stem, and we are the branches) and thus the Savior's connection to the world. We are given the same task Adam was given, to dress and keep the garden. This involves finding the believers who are willing to submit to the true significance and full effect of the cross...and then, like Yahshua, we show them the way unto life everlasting.

Only those who are willing to do this, and then set out to accomplish it, show that they are truly following in the path of Yahshua, who worked among His disciples to prepare them after the Father raised Him to life, and had appointed Him to glory.

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