

Guest_Zahakiel : *Pastor, please offer an opening prayer. Well, he seems to be away, so I will pray.*

Father in Heaven, We thank you for these sacred Sabbath hours. We thank you for this time of rest, of rejoicing in you, and of drawing near in mind and spirit to your perfect character. Bless us with open hearts, and open eyes, to know your will, that we may be worthy servants in these last, dark, days. We ask this in the name of Yahshua, your dear Son, Amen.

Guest_Lucan : Amen

Guest_Adriel : Amen

Guest_Naraiel : Amen

Guest_Zahakiel10101 : AMEN, amen

Guest_Peter : Amen,

Guest_Zahakiel : *Happy Sabbath to everyone. I had another topic in mind to present today, but I was inspired this morning to postpone that one, and speak instead more directly about the nature and character of our Father in Heaven, and about the nature of love.*

The First Commandment states, in the language of the New Testament, “And thou shalt love Yahweh thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength; this is the first commandment.” (Mark 12:30)

Now, if we read it in the original passage, it sounds a little different: “Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” (Exo 20:5)

Despite the wording, these two are the same commandment; however, the language given to Israel originally indicates – to a people who presumably knew less about divine love – what that love should look like. It is not merely sympathetic feelings, or claims of loyalty, as we have examined before. It is actual devotion, a putting away of all other “gods,” of all other forces or factors that might come “before” Yahweh in the minds and affections of His people.

As I have said in a previous study, it is not sufficient in this generation to speak about “love,” because most people do not understand the word as the Bible uses it, as born-again believers understand it. Goodness and righteousness are often mis-perceived by the carnal mind, and so when our Father gives a commandment, and that commandment involves love, He is sure to explain it in most practical terms. This is why there ARE ten, rather than merely the two basic principles as discussed by Yahshua.

Love for Yahweh directly involves the first four commandments, a devotion to Him above all else, a rejection of idols that would interfere with our worship, a reverence for His holiness as expressed in the respectful use of His name, and a keeping sacred a day that has been declared blessed and dedicated to Him.

The First commandment, the one I wish to use as the primary example for the moment, is that we are to “love Yahweh.”

Now, imagine if you were completely unfamiliar with the Bible, and knew nothing significant about religion. Your first question might be, “Who is this ‘Yahweh?’” How would you find out? Who would know who Yahweh is? I can think of only three possible sources, stemming from only two witnesses. As in many scriptures it is “two or three,” as they are linked tightly together. The two witnesses are Yahweh Himself, and those who know Him. In other words, we can learn about Yahweh either through His direct revelation, or through the revelations given to others.

Yah can speak of Himself through dreams and visions, although these are the less common cases. Others who are chosen can speak of Him, and this produces sources two and three: either through the Word, written by inspired men as a testimony of Yahweh, or through the ongoing revealing of His will through the Church and its teachings. What is most important, by any witness, or by means of any source, is that our understanding of Yahweh the Creator be accurate.

The First Commandment, and by extension any service or worship we may offer Him, presupposes we will either know His nature, or seek to discover it either through contact with the Body, or reading His testimony of Himself, that is, His Word. His very name declares the conditions for acceptable worship of Yahweh. He says, “I am that I am.” (Exo 3:14) He says, “My glory will I not give to another.” (Isa 42:8) He is who He declares Himself to be, not anything else, and He is as He is described by those whom He has specifically chosen. There can be no conflict between two valid sources. After all, if the witnesses do not agree among themselves, then at least one must be a false witness.

Yahweh declares Himself by means of the various sources above to be several things. He calls Himself the Creator – but not all believe in the Biblical creation. He calls Himself Light – but some call light darkness and darkness light. He calls Himself Just – but few understand the difference between justice and punishment, and fewer know the balance between justice and mercy. He calls Himself love – but few indeed know love as He declares it to be.

Every claim the Father makes about Himself, Satan disputes, and raises up a multitude of opposing voices. This is bad enough, but it is far worse when those who claim to be His people, His servants, do not speak properly of Him. Those who should know Him, those who claim to know Him, and yet do not speak and act according to holiness... it is they who do the most damage to mankind, and consequently are beaten with “many stripes.” (Luke 12:47)

Now, I have spent this time establishing that there IS such a thing as a proper view of Yahweh, and it is the view that is revealed through His Word and other valid witnesses. There is an objective “truth” as even we humans may understand it, to the degree that we can offer acceptable worship, being born again by the spirit and sanctified in holiness.

And yet, there are some who, while claiming to be Yah's people, oppose the Bible's teachings that are supposed to be representations of His will. They will dispute His testimony of creation. They will dispute His testimony of weekly worship. They will dispute His testimony of what He can do for the repentant sinner, and how completely He can heal from sin. They will dispute His testimony of freedom in religion. They will dispute (if you have been watching the news today) His testimony of His will for human marriage.

That last one may be the "hot topic" of the hour, but do not mistake it for a new problem. This is the oldest of human problems, the very first, accepting the voice of another saying, "Yeah, hath God said...?" "Did Yahweh really say...?" And I say "His testimony," because what is at issue is the authority of His Word.

As Adventists, we claim to be the people of "the Book." Historically, we have been students of, and defenders of, what Yahweh has actually said... not what others "say" He said, or what He "meant" by what He said. And so often in discussing matters such as Sabbath worship, those with whom I am speaking, those who claim to be Yah's servants, and have something to teach me... will simply not know what the Word says. We show them, from the Bible, the New Testament witness of Christians keeping the Sabbath holy in Luke (a Gentile's) Gospel. We show them what the Son says about the Father's commandments... and in light of this, even professional, even lifelong evangelists of other religions, such as the Mormon evangelists I mentioned a few weeks ago, will look like "deer caught in headlights."

But we can hardly rejoice in "winning" the argument, because even the revelation of what the Bible says does little to convert their hearts from error. And why is this? It is because of the issue of Biblical authority. The traditions, the ways they have learned, the opinions they hold – often the opinions of the world – are more important in their estimation than the authority of the Word of Yah. It is just not "worth it" to change their minds about these matters, because they will lose much that is of comfort to the flesh – respect, fellowship, security, credibility, etc.

As evangelists, as CSDA evangelists, our work must, must involve teaching the authority of the Scriptures. Some Churches say, "We venerate statues of the saints, but we worship the same God." The Muslim religion will say, "We also believe in Jesus, and the things that He truly taught." The Baha'i will say, "We worship the same God you do." You may add to that the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Mormons, and so on. More recently, homosexual groups – even in Adventism, such as Kinship International – will say, "We worship the same God, a God of inclusive love." But how do we define "God?" Is it by the titles: God, Elohim? Is

it by even the sound of the name, “Yahweh?” Is it by invoking a word, “love,” that seems to be freely re-defined to suit various purposes?

The only way we can know we are worshipping the true God, and not an invention of our imagination, or one created by popular culture, is to go back to the authority of the Scriptures.... and seeing what He says of His own Person, by seeing His revealed nature, and the instructions He has given to mankind to draw near to Him.

But Satan knows this well enough, and has brought it to the point that agreeing with the Bible, the ultimate testimony of divine love, means one will not be perceived as loving, merciful, accepting, or even intelligent.

As a Church, we have recently had discussions about how we would relate to representatives of other Churches bearing unusual requests. There will, of course, always be shades of distinction between how individuals will react to different circumstances, but the underlying principle that comes through is that we would do what we thought best to properly represent the character of our Heavenly Father. That is our primary concern, to act and speak according to what we understand of His will. But, consider these various other groups, claiming to have a religion with much in common with us... our character is to love them deeply, to do what is best for them according to the truth of “Love,” though at the same time, we are often led to point out the inconsistency, the contradiction, between the god of their worship, and the God of self-revelation – the God Yahweh that is who and what He claims to be.

Now, as at many times in history, great and terrible things are being done, and they are justified by claiming them as a promotion and manifestation of love. This manner of justification is something about which I have some personal knowledge.

Before I became a genuine Christian, before I became a born-again believer, I did things that were contrary to the Word of Yahweh. My relationships were not according to the Biblical order, but rather of fornication and adultery, yet I justified my actions by saying that they were “for love.” The problem should be clear to all assembled here. At that time, my definition of love was not the Bible’s definition of love. You see, the Bible says that love “rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth.” (1Cor 13:6) Love and iniquity cannot exist in the same place, and the word “iniquity” is not a common secular word. It is a word that we get from spirituality, from religion; it is not easily subject to man’s re-interpretation. Iniquity still means wickedness, perversion, ethical and moral confusion, sin. Love, true and Biblical love, cannot exist where any of these things are accepted, praised, or celebrated. In fact, we are specifically told, “because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.” (Mat 24:12) They are opposing principles, love and iniquity. It was not until I

accepted that, despite the persistent protests of the flesh, that I could become a true child of Yahweh.

Guest_Adriel : Amen

Guest_Zahakiel : Those whom we seek today are the ones capable of also making that choice, willing to make that choice.

A few weeks ago, we spoke about defining love. We spoke about Agape and Philadelphia. But some say, "The God of the Bible is not always loving." They point to plagues, and judgments. They show the violence of the Old Testament, and the direct and often brutal penalty for sin. They highlight the supposed exclusivity of Yah's congregations, who speak out against popular sins and common transgressions. Nevertheless, there are reasons for each of these, well-documented reasons that we have covered in our own studies here, and elsewhere, about what sin truly is, and how far it must be removed from the worship of the Creator.

It is necessary to consolidate ALL that Yahweh has said about Himself, and all that inspired writers have said of Him, otherwise we do not truly know, and cannot completely love, the God of the Bible, but rather a "graven" image that is as I mentioned, a product of our imagination.

The god of many is one that has been cobbled together using "some" from the Bible, "some" from popular culture, "some" from paganism and mythology, "some" from misused, corrupt traditions, and "some" from their own desires. Those who are deceived, especially those that do not wish to be educated about the true Creator and Savior, are to be pitied, not subject to any human judgment or mistreatment... but Satan will certainly use the deceived to cause great destruction.

For our part, prayer, standing firm to principle, this is what reveals Him. But the days may be dark upon those who do this. Modern Christians have much opposing them. As Adventists we have had to deal with the suspicions and disdain of many within (Sunday keeping) Christianity. As the specific Bride of Christ, we have been oppressed by the Trademark Law and the misuse of human courts of justice. More generally, the current state of Protestantism is not favorable to victory over sin, the true nature of the Godhead, the Biblical position on homosexuality at an increasing rate, and so on.

But our work is to reveal the Father as He is, for none other saves, and none other but the Son redeems from sin. Humanity cannot survive outside an atmosphere of holiness in eternity, and it cannot survive within one now. This is the reason people push against the truth, because it burns them. But rather than sacrifice the flesh and live in the spirit, they would rather sacrifice the spirit and live in the flesh. They would rather put away the spiritual and settle into the carnal, and Satan can have even Christians do this. And how does he turn even those who claim to be servants of Yahweh into his own assets? It is by deceiving Christians into thinking like the world. We spoke about this a

little during the last Feast. It is by having the professed believers' thoughts and sympathies so caught up in the opinions and causes of non-believers that they would distort the Word of Yahweh to accept instead the judgments and rulings of man. Has this not happened within Adventism? Is it not happening right now with issue after issue, that human judgments, and courts, are seen as the authority rather than the Bible – and yes, even for Christians who well ought to know better? Professed Christians will, in many cases, take up causes, and put their effort into works, that are directly opposed to Yahweh's revealed will. And they will say, in many cases, "It is for the greater good," or "It is for love." And what should be the CSDA response to these things?

It is to testify to our Father's nature. It is to speak His words, His warnings – that pride leads to destruction, that casting away the Scriptural Creator for the god of illusions, opinions, and imagination, will cause devastation that the ungodly cannot anticipate.

We, though few, and fewer than ever before, must speak the truth in love, of necessity defining both "truth" and "love" for those who will listen. This is a dark time, and it grows ever-darker. But we must remember, and not be discouraged, for He who said "Let there be light," has not lost power since that first day. He holds all within His hands, though it may be hard to see for the carnal flesh,

Guest_Adriel : Amen

Guest_Zahakiel : as He is letting the universe come to a final realization of what a world without Him looks like... and we must bear witness to this darkness, before the angels bearing His judgment appear, before He releases the cleansing fire that is Himself, finally to set things right.

A sustaining thought for the people of Yah is this: "Let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." (Gal 6:9) And a second time, Paul says to those going through little times of trouble, "But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing." (2Th 3:13)

The work is one which must go through difficult times, and contrary to the spirit of the world. Last week, we spoke about different times of trouble, which may come in different forms, maybe physical or spiritual or mental, but in each case, in every version, it is a sifting and a refining of Yah's people. Yah has people on earth that are yet to be found. If there were no souls left to find, probation should have been closed, and Yahshua would have come. The winds of strife are held back until the servants are sealed, so then... the servants are not yet sealed. We are some of those servants, but there are servants yet to be called as well. It is this knowledge, this hope that keeps us reaching out for the open and willing. It is this hope that keeps us encouraged in the work of our Father in Heaven. Let us seek, therefore, with little lanterns in the darkness, those who will come into the safety of the spiritual ark before that Day of revelation. Iniquity abounds, and grows greater by the day; therefore the

love of many grows cold, and false versions of love – that are not contrary to “iniquity” – are promoted as truth.

Darkness covers us on every side... and yet in all this, we are about our Father's business, secure in the knowledge that ultimately His character and nature will be revealed to the universe. All will know love, as He who IS love, declares it. All will see Him as He is. That is a day that is rightly described as both “great” and “terrible,” for so it is.

Let us be ready, by faith, by prayer, by diligent service, and let us help others also to be ready. Are there any comments or questions about tonight's study?

Guest_Adriel : C

Guest_Adriel2494 : c

Guest_Zahakiel : ***Go ahead***

Guest_Adriel2494 : This is Daphna

Guest_Zahakiel : ***Yes, I thought so 😊 Jody had a comment, and then you can go.***

Guest_Adriel : I praise Yahweh for another inspired meaningful study, and for your prayerful diligence to speak for Him to us each week. Thank-you 😊 End

Guest_Adriel2494 : I was talking to a cousin of mine who is well educated and... sorry I will wait.

Guest_Zahakiel : ***Jody is done, so you can go ahead.***

Guest_Adriel2494 : ok

Guest_Zahakiel4786 : (I am translating for my mom who is visiting. I will be very behind.)

Guest_Lucan : *(That's Giselle, I assume?)*

Guest_Adriel2494 : very mannerly and polite but it surprised me when he said that because hogs were not fed garbage and they ate corn that made them of clean to eat.

Guest_Naraiel : (I have not written anything.) (I am not sure how that appeared.)

Guest_Adriel2494 : Then someone of the same character said it does not matter which day we keep for the sabbath, we can just pick a day. I am surprised that they are so dense in their way of thinking and knowing of Yahweh. End

Guest_Zahakiel : *It is because they have been taught certain things about the Bible... things that we would seek to correct, that it really means what it says. Any others?*

Guest_Adriel : C

Guest_Pastor_Chick : C/Q

Guest_Zahakiel : ***Go ahead.***

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Guest_Adriel : I agree. Our only safety is in knowing and obeying what the word of Yah says. End

Guest_Zahakiel : ***Go ahead, Pastor.***

Guest_Barb : Amen

Guest_Pastor_Chick : Things are what they are by way of creation or choice. Pigs are "unclean" by creation OR by YAH's definition. Sabbath is blessed and sanctified as holy because of creation AND YAH's definition. We are HOLY by creation as the result of our choice. Question: Does everyone know about the US Supreme Court's ruling on same-sex marriage? END.

Guest_Adriel : A

Guest_Zahakiel : ***Go ahead.***

Guest_Adriel : Dean said the Supreme court determined it was legal. End

Guest_Lucan : A

Guest_Zahakiel : ***Go ahead.***

Guest_Lucan : *Yes, I've read about it. <End.>*

Guest_Barb : A

Guest_Zahakiel : ***Go ahead.***

Guest_Barb : *I do. <End>*

Guest_Peter : A,

Guest_Zahakiel : ***Go ahead.***

Guest_Peter : *Yes end.*

Guest_Pastor_Chick : *(The discussions are heating up on social media.)*

Guest_Zahakiel : ***Any other comments or questions?***

Guest_Lucan : *C/Q*

Guest_Zahakiel : ***Go ahead.***

Guest_Lucan : *I have a suggestion / question for chat protocols I'd like to bring up for review... I don't suspect it would take long, but it's not directly tied to the study. Would this be an appropriate time to raise it? <End.>*

Guest_Zahakiel : ***Perhaps we should close the study first, then... and you can bring it up for discussion. It doesn't seem anyone has anything further to add, so please go ahead and close with a prayer, and then you can talk about that concern.***

Guest_Lucan : *Dear heavenly Father...*

Guest_Zahakiel4786 : *(Oh this was me Guerline sending a message that I was translating for my mom)*

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Guest_Lucan : *We thank you for this time of discussion and reflection. As we depart from this meeting, we ask that your Spirit guide our words and actions through the coming days. We find that as darkness grows, lights become fewer and dimmer; we pray that your light within us will shine all the brighter, and draw your people near. In Yahshua's name we pray, amen.*

Guest_Pastor_Chick : **Amen.**

Guest_Barb : Amen

Guest_Adriel : Amen

Guest_Peter : Amen,'

Guest_Adriel2494 : Amen

Guest_Naraiel : Amen

Guest_Zahakiel : **Amen**

Guest_Zahakiel10101 : Amen, Amen

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