

Topic is: Brimstone

Happy Sabbath! Please see our room information at <http://93.88.247.151/chat.html>

Zahakiel : ***Let's get started. Pastor, please offer an opening prayer.***

Barbli : ***PC: Dear Father in Heaven. Thank you for this time You have set aside for us to gather and to worship You. We ask for Your Sabbath blessing and for the inspiration of Your Spirit. In Yahshua's Name, Amen.***

Barbli : ***Amen***

Zahakiel : ***Amen.***

Lucan : ***Amen***

Guest_Naraiel13136 : Amen

Guest_Elyna_Family : Amen

Guest_Daphna : Amen

Zahakiel : ***Happy Sabbath to all. A few weeks ago, while we were discussing issues of divine judgment, someone asked about the use of the word "brimstone" in the Bible. Scientifically, it seems that this term is used interchangeably with sulfur as a flammable material, but there is some spiritual significance as well, in regard to where it appears in the Scriptures. Before we talk about the specifics, this is actually a good opportunity for us to discuss a larger issue; that is, Yahweh's judgment in general.***

Although the Gospel is "good news," the Gospel message for the people of the last generation begins with a declaration of judgment in Revelation 14. This seems, to a great many people, to be counterintuitive. It doesn't seem to make sense to the natural man that judgment, which involves the identification and punishment of sin, should be good news. This is due entirely to the fact that the natural man – that is, mankind in its natural state – is a sinner. He is not a sinner because he commits sin; rather, he commits sin because he is a sinner.

The Scriptures ask, "Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? Either a vine, figs?" (James 3:12) In his question, James is rebuking those who believe that they can live a double life, one that is holy in some aspects, and worldly in others. The world calls this "compartmentalization." You separate your life into distinct sections, compartments, and you can be a Christian some of the time, and something else at other times.

The issues raised by the Supreme Court's decision about homosexual marriage in the United States continues to be relevant, as we discuss certain individuals who find themselves caught between their religious beliefs and their vocational obligations – the demands of their jobs. Within these discussions, we find people separating into one of two groups. These two groups have been given various labels over the past few weeks, but it seems clear to me what the factor is that separates them.

There are some who believe that there are limits to the authority and application of Yahweh's Law, and there are those who do not. Now bear in mind, this does not mean that either side wishes to re-establish a theocracy before Yahshua's return. Humanity is not equipped to survive in such an environment without a Perfect King on the Throne;

however, this does not prevent us from individually acting as good and faithful citizens of this coming Kingdom.

Those who believe that the Law should be limited propose that Christians “compartmentalize;” that is, they can believe and worship in any way they choose... however, when they are working in a secular setting, their beliefs must have little-to-no influence on their decisions and actions.

This is the carnal mind; this is the mind of the flesh, which says we can separate ourselves into different “people” for different situations. It is quite similar, in fact, to those who say of our Church that we can believe and worship in any way we see fit...except for the matter of our name.

Whenever human-created limits are imposed on divine principles, there we see error and tragedy. Whenever the Law is allowed to both permit and limit human behavior, there we see holiness and joy. The Spirit-filled Christian is just that: “filled.” He is not partially filled, or filled in some areas. While his behavior and actions may certainly change in order to be appropriate to certain situations, the principles that govern his decision making will be rigidly embraced.

Now, the word “rigid” has a negative connotation, because it seems cold, unforgiving...but it also has meanings associated with strength, with persistence. We must rigidly cling to love. We must be uncompromising, unwavering, in our commitment to one another and to those in the world who cannot yet appreciate the work of the evangelist in the world, of which each of us is one.

But going back to James’ statement, the apostle says that there is no compartmentalization with regard to the principles of the Christian life. If we are a fig tree, we will produce figs. If one is a sinner, he will produce sins. If we are saints, we will produce acts of righteousness.

Those who do not understand the Gospel, those who – despite their claims – believe in salvation by works, will try very hard to “do” the things of Christianity, to impress the human onlookers, to soothe the conscience. Yet none of these address the problem, that sinners commit sins by their very nature.

The Gospel, the Good News, is that Yahshua has not come to change our actions, but rather to change mankind’s nature, and then the actions will be good. As He said directly, “Cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.” (Mat 23:26)

But how is this done? How do we cleanse what is inside the cup and the platter? We do so by means of judgment. Now we see the connection. In order for an individual’s nature to be changed, and thus for that individual to be saved, there must be a cleansing. There must be a purification, and this can never happen without the individual’s desire and agreement, for it is written that only those who hunger and thirst for righteousness will be filled. Only those who are sincerely seeking Christ’s character will attain it; so clearly, although the work is Yahweh’s in us, we must open the door and permit it. In order for us to agree, we must know. We must know the sin, that we may voluntarily surrender it. We must know the sin, and therefore we must invite Yahweh’s decision-making-process, Yahweh’s sin-revealing-process; that is, again, Yah’s judgment.

Many associate judgment with anger, because that is how the carnal man judges. He attacks that which is different, unknown, because of fear. He is not secure in his own safety, and therefore he lashes out against the dark things that cannot clearly be seen.

But Yahshua's messenger says, "Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober." (1Th 5:5, 6)

Those who run from Yah's judgment, they shall never be cleansed. They will face His Wrath, because they did not endure His judgment. Wrath is the destruction that takes place when judgment has failed. It needs to be understood that these are two entirely different processes for our Father, even though one has much to do with the other when the flesh is involved. Let us read the truth about our "Judgmental" Father:

"For His anger endureth but a moment; in His favour is life. Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." (Psa. 30:5)

"In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith Yahweh thy Redeemer." (Isa 54:8)

"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." (2Cor 4:17)

There is a recurring theme; Yah's blessings are everlasting, and His wrath, the hiding of His face, is brief. Now, look at this verse, which uses a very similar phrase to several of the passages we have just read:

"The lip of truth shall be established forever, but a lying tongue is but for a moment." (Pro 12:19)

Here is another:

"For the punishment of the iniquity of the daughter of my people is greater than the punishment of the sin of Sodom, that was overthrown as in a moment, and no hands stayed on her." (Lamentations 4:6)

We shall speak more of Sodom in a moment, as it is a most relevant topic to a discussion of brimstone; but the idea here is that the thing that takes a "moment" is the destruction of sin. Yah's wrath is brief, momentary, because it lasts only exactly long enough for sin to be vanquished.

Yah loves even His most rebellious children, and should they be redeemed, should they turn from their sin and repent, His anger toward them would evaporate in just the time it took for their hearts to change. Our Father does not hold grudges, and it is written of even the worst sinner who is sanctified for the Heavenly Kingdom,

"They shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them," saith Yahweh, 'for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.'" (Jer. 31:34)

So, with this in mind, we need not fear the judgment of our Father. If we submit to it now, before the time of grace closes on humanity, if we submit in this great day of salvation, then the judgment becomes for us a saving power. It destroys the sin, and leaves behind the image of Yah that was placed in us when we first received the spirit of life.

We have seen some good and pleasant aspects of our Father's personality. Now, what about these?

"For Yahweh thy Elohim is a consuming fire, even a jealous God." (Deu 4:24)

"Wherefore we, receiving a Kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve Yah acceptably with reverence and godly fear, for our God is a consuming fire." (Heb. 12:28, 29)

Keep in mind, the character of Yahweh is perfect, and perfectly consistent. All of it, even this, is "goodness." All of this, and even this, is perfect love that casts out all fear. That Yahweh is a consuming fire is as much a part of His loving kindness as His promises of victory and joy for those who seek His blessings. We read of the results of this consumption, of this burning punishment of sin:

"And Yahweh shall separate Him unto evil out of all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant that are written in this book of the Law, so that the generation to come of your children that shall rise up after you, and the stranger that shall come from a far land, shall say, when they see the plagues of that land, and the sicknesses which Yahweh hath laid upon it, and that the whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning, "that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom, and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, which Yahweh overthrew in His anger, and in His wrath... "Even all nations shall say, 'Wherefore hath Yahweh done thus unto this land? What meaneth the heat of this great anger?' Then men shall say, 'Because they have forsaken the covenant of Yahweh, the Almighty One of their fathers, which He made with them when he brought them forth out of the land of Egypt.'" (Deu 29:21-25)

In another place we read,

"For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble, and the day that cometh shall burn them up,' saith Yahweh of hosts, 'that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. "And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this,' saith Yahweh of hosts." (Mal 4:1-3)

Unlike many Christians, Seventh-day Adventists accept all that the Bible has to say about the final destruction of the wicked. We read the Old and New Testaments, and find consistency in the passages. While the punishment for sin will, indeed, be everlasting, and the results will impact souls for all eternity, the Bible confirms that the "hell" to which unrepentant sinners go is not everlasting, conscious torment. The Bible actually tells us directly that hell comes to an end. We read:

"And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death." (Rev 20:14)

This is a glorious verse. Death and hell, the two states of human “ending” are themselves destroyed. There is an end to endings. There is an end to all goodbyes, to all sorrow of separation. In the Kingdom to which we go there are only beginnings, only life everlasting, because nothing that diminishes joy is permitted in our eternal Home.

There is a lake of fire and brimstone. There will be a lake of burning sulfur, a pool of intense heat that covers all the earth, the planet upon which sin in the universe has been isolated. Brimstone, sulfur, is flammable, but it is not used for fuel. Instead, it was once used medicinally, to purify wounds. It was, and I think in some places still is, used to stop the spread of infection.

The New Testament word used for brimstone is defined in the concordance as a “divine incense,” to be used with sacrifices because it represents the cleansing of sin, and the end to Yah’s wrath. This would be a new notion to many of the “fire and brimstone” preachers of the past, but the burning of brimstone is an activity that ends, not reveals, our Father’s wrath. It burns away, consumes the sin, and when that “moment” passes, all that is left is peace and joy.

The “type” of Yah’s judgment is the aforementioned Sodom. The Almighty’s messengers called down fiery judgment to wipe out the rebellious cities mentioned in Genesis.

It is important to keep in mind, when reviewing these passages, that it is not the destruction of the wicked that pleases Yah, but the end of the sin.

In the Old Testament, wherever you see the term “sin offering,” the word is the same as “sin.” There is no difference between the two in the Hebrew language. The offering becomes sin itself, and is consumed in fire, which is why it is not a case of poor wording when it says that Yahshua became “sin” for us, as we read:

“For [the Father] hath made [the Son] to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” (2Cor 5:21)

Yahshua became the offensive thing, from which the Father turned away, that the Father’s wrath destroyed, and He became subject to the same destruction that meets the wicked, an end to consciousness, existence.

With Yahshua, being innocent, the grave could not hold Him, and so it will not hold any of the righteous, to whom Yahshua's grace has been imparted. But the sacrifice was made, and we see that Yah is “torn” by the sacrifice, hating the suffering of the sinner, but rejoicing in the end of the sin. This distinction is not an easy thing to contemplate if one does not already love Yahweh. Satan has always held out the punishment for sin as a flaw in Yah’s character, and this is accepted in the world today, that wants freedom without consequence.

But it is our duty, and our joy, to say of our Father, “I know Him.” It is our privilege to teach the world that the wrath of Yah is for only a moment, and that He purges us now, so that we will be clean forever. It is our pleasure to let the lost and dying know that the Father so loved the world that He permitted His Son to become “sin,” to become the “sin offering” that He might be subject to wrath for our sakes, that we may escape the fire and brimstone that ends life.

By Yah's grace, we may stand in the fire even now, like the bush that appeared to Moses, a representation of divinity. We burn, and yet are not consumed, because the love of Yah purifies us, consuming the sin but not the life, and like the sulfur from which it is made, stopping the spiritual affliction from spreading – without destruction for those who love Yah.

Ultimately, when the earth is purged with brimstone, the universe will be clean, and sorrow, death, and all suffering, the infection, will finally cease to be. In this knowledge, let us rejoice.

Are there any comments or questions about tonight's study?

Guest_Elyna_Family : Amen!

Zahakiel : *If there aren't, then I will ask Bro. Luke to close the study with a prayer.*

Lucan : *Dear heavenly Father. We thank you for the judgment you have called us to stand in, and the tools you have given us to do so. All of the blessings you have given us in this world are for the purpose of developing your character, and inviting others to do the same. We thank you for those blessings, and the opportunity to seek out any remaining sins in our lives that we may offer them to you in exchange for gold. May we continue to display the person of Christ to those we interact with. In Yahshua's name we pray, amen.*

Zahakiel : **Amen.**

Barbli : **Amen PC: Amen**

Guest_Elyna_Family : Amen

Guest_Daphna : Amen