

Feast Welcome: Lebanon

Happy Sabbath to everyone, and welcome to the Feast of Unleavened Bread, 2015.

This is a particularly significant feast, as it marks the end, and the beginning, of a major phase of the CSDA ministry; that is, the recently-completed Walk Across America.

I trust that by now you have all seen the video of this historic occasion. I certainly enjoyed it, and experienced a full range of emotions while doing so. Ultimately I was inspired by what was said, and as I was praying thereafter, Yah led me to a passage from Isaiah that I felt would be a good one to open our week-long appointed time.

The verses of the passage are these:

“Is it not yet a very little while, and Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall be esteemed as a forest? And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness.

“The meek also shall increase their joy in Yahweh, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.

“For the terrible one is brought to nought, and the scorner is consumed, and all that watch for iniquity are cut off, that make a man an offender for a word, and lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate, and turn aside the just for a thing of nought.

“Therefore thus saith Yahweh, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob, Jacob shall not now be ashamed, neither shall his face now wax pale. But when he seeth his children, the work of mine hands, in the midst of him, they shall sanctify my name, and sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and shall fear the God of Israel.

“They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine.”
(Isa 29:17-24)

Even though Lebanon was not the same nation as Israel, it is nevertheless described as “goodly,” (Deu 3:25) and an often-praised ally of the Chosen People. (1Kings 10:17, Psa 29:6) Its trees are used as a visible parable of an upright character, (Psa 29:12) and very little is ever said of its spiritual state, unlike the powerful rebukes that the Scriptures sometimes level against the pagan nations that surrounded Israel.

Although, as I said, not a part of Israel itself, Lebanon is right at the northern border. I see this, in symbol, as representing the “nation” of those sincere Christians who have not yet, for one reason or another, “entered in” to Israel as a spiritual covenant. They are not “nominal,” in the sense that they are sincere and committed; but because of their traditions, because they do not “know” the Father and Son as they are, they have not reached a settled place in preparation for the judgment.

Now, what does this have to do with the conclusion of the Prayer Walk, and what does it have to do with the beginning of our Feast?

Well, we do not have a “theme,” and each one is to bring to the spiritual table a meal based on what they believe the Church has as a nutritional need – spiritually speaking.

My contribution, even as I welcome our members to this convocation, is to invite you to enter into a work for Christianity. In the words that he shared to the United States, Pastor “Chick” read a passage that spoke of the judgment to come, of desolation and tribulation for those who reject our Father’s message of mercy. I believe firmly that he has been inspired to share those words, to warn those who must come to know the truth.

There is also this passage from Isaiah, which is a promise to those who do turn to Yah. It is a promise for we who are His people, if we will unite with Him in the final stage of His work on earth, and it is a promise that we are called to share with others, so that they may see out of darkness, increase their joy in the Holy One of Israel, come to understanding, and learn doctrine.

We do not teach doctrine for the sake of teaching doctrine, but we teach doctrine as a means of perfecting character, and it is that character that Yah searches in the Day of His Judgment. Just as Pastor’s walk was a message of mercy to the Churches primarily, but ultimately to everyone, in a place that Yah has previously placed His blessing, so our work is to be a message to those who might hear us, to those who stand as Lebanon on the borders of spiritual Israel.

Tonight’s welcome is not a long one, but I do want to address one potential obstacle that Satan may, and has, set in our path to this goal.

Some may ask, “How can I help? What can I do?” Too often are the people of Yah susceptible to the temptation to think that they cannot be effective in carrying the Gospel message to others, but that is an error from which the very elect must repent.

Yah has given me a word for His people.

This Feast, let us be clear before Yahweh, our Father. Let us invite His smile upon us, and upon our labors on behalf of His name. Let us make “decided movements” to reach out to others in fulfillment of the work we have been called to accomplish. We have the resources, we have studies to share on every topic that could reasonably arise. We have books written. Let us introduce them to our fellow men.

We have a tradition of voicing our expectations at the beginning of our feasts. At this feast, I expect to learn. I normally volunteer to lead out twice in our camp meetings; giving the initial welcome, and then conducting another study. This time, I am not giving any studies but this one, which only “looks” like a study, but is really a welcome. I learn as I teach, for Yah shows me, week by week, what He desires, but I enjoy the thoughts of my brethren. I long to have the brethren say, “Rest this week, I will lead the study.” It is not that I need the rest, but it would be “restful” for me to see others taking more active positions among us. These are not sermons, but studies; and I have invited both male and female to share their testimonies, and what they have learned, among us on Sabbaths. Yah is calling us to be teachers to the world, to spiritual Lebanon as well as to the heathen nations around us; and in this safe place, among those who love and serve, what better time, and what better place, to practice?

We have asked, “Why has Yah not sent more workers?”

He has replied, "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." (1Pet 2:9) Do we seek success in our evangelism? Do we seek a Pentecost among ourselves? Then this verse must be true for us; we must be a "royal priesthood," and what is it that the priesthood did?

There are two things they did, which I suspect is not done among us as it ought to be done. First, the priests were intercessors. They would pray for Israel, and they would intercede on behalf of sinners. If we were to take up that work with diligence, we would see even greater success. Second, the priests were teachers. We read, "The priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the Law at His mouth; for he is the messenger of Yahweh of hosts." (Mal 2:7) "And Nehemiah, which is the Tirshatha, and Ezra the priest, the scribe, and the Levites that taught the people, said unto all the people, "This day is holy unto Yahweh your Almighty One; mourn not, nor weep." (Neh 8:9)

That is another good verse for us tonight. But it may be said of Christendom, "Now for a long season Israel hath been without the true Elohim, and without a teaching priest, and without Law." (2Ch 15:3)

And who shall remedy this? Shall not the Royal Priesthood remedy it?

In the days of Solomon, at the feast during which the Temple was being dedicated, the people rejoiced before Yahweh to such a degree that the king extended the convocation to a full fourteen days. In just such a way, I would like for this convocation to be for us a feast that does not end.

In this time of geographic separation from one another, principles such as communication, agreement, fellowship, and brotherly love, ought to be highly prized by the brethren. At the same time, we all how the verse, "Then they that feared Yahweh spake often one to another; and Yahweh hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared Yahweh, and that thought upon His name." (Mal 3:16) Here is another of the same spirit, "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know Yahweh,' for 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)

It is not Yah's plan for us to be continually taught by one or two teachers. It is not for us to say to one another, "Know Yahweh," with regard to the basics of His character. We are to speak often to one another, to enlighten, to encourage, perhaps to rebuke, and as a community we shall grow.

Yah has said that the opinions of our people are altogether too weak, and your voices must be strengthened. This is a blessing, if you will accept it. It has been seen in our meetings... if those who seem to be leaders say nothing, other members often fear to put forth their thoughts and opinions for consideration. Then, Satan adds evil to evil, and those who do speak their minds begin to appear more prominent. Ultimately, those who were largely silent are tempted to ask, "Why is it that the ideas and opinions of Brother X and Brother Y always carry through?"

The answer is because this is the situation we have allowed to develop. We are responsible for the state of the Bride, and Yah is telling us, even in this feast, even now, how to address these concerns.

With regard to those who have been hesitant to speak, to share their minds with the brethren, let me say this... there was a time when I would have been content to be just that way. My desire upon initially

joining the CSDA Church, was to learn, to sit quietly in the back, and to await the Advent. But I was called to teach. At my very first camp meeting, Yah said, "I am going to heal your stage fright," because I was very uncomfortable speaking in public, and at that very time, Pastor called me to lead a study.

In my "feelings," I was quite fearful. I distinctly remember those days. I did not "want" to lead a study, but I realized that it was Yahweh who was calling me to step forward, and I dared not refuse. I decided to trust Him, and employ my newly-found faith. I had to step out of my "comfort zone" in order to be obedient. I had not yet become a teacher, but I was made to be one, and that is how I discovered some of my various gifts.

Now, Yah calls to you, each and every one. You must do the same... you must all become teachers, members of that Royal Priesthood that will strengthen the weakness of the Bride, that will prepare a place on earth for repentant sinners from Lebanon, that will build a place of refuge for the rescued heathen. As we do this, many of Satan's thoughts and suggestions will be silenced. But you must depart from your comfortable places, from your settled roles, and begin to see yourselves as more than you have. This Feast, if you listen, the Spirit will tell you how to do this. If you are obedient to the voice of our Father, then you will also discover your gifts, and then you will have a "loud cry" for a voice. In this Feast, in these days, you will learn more from teaching than from listening. There is value, I pray, in all that I have shared with the Church over the years, and this I will continue to do as long as I am called to... but more is required of us now (as individual Church members) than to merely be hearers of the Word.

Know Yahweh. I say it because it needs to be said. Go back to the basics so that you may go beyond the milk of the Gospel. Cast out fear, embrace perfect love. It is neither right nor safe to say before Yah, "I do not know enough to teach the Brethren," or "Others are better than I am," or "I do not like to give studies (or testimonies, or words of praise and encouragement)." These are all deceptions that must be overcome, and statements of ingratitude to our Savior, not worthy to come forth from a sanctified tongue. Learn to teach the Word, and start with your Brethren, who can (without condemnation) rejoice with you, and also suggest, correct, improve... so that when you go to the world, you will be equipped. This Feast is a practice session, and I am pleased that everyone (I think) has agreed to lead at least one meeting. That is pleasing to Yah. Let us maintain our joy in Him, and He will maintain His joy in us.

Let this Feast be the kindling of a fire to this ministry, and then Pentecost will surely come. Let not the Feast-spirit die out in your hearts after this week concludes; but let us extend it, like Solomon, for another seven days after, and another seven, and so on. See yourselves as teachers, with humility and according to all that is right and orderly, and you will prosper. "Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." (1Cor 5:8) That is my prayer for these coming days, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and beyond. Yah is waiting to bless our sister Lebanon, whom He loves, and to save all from the world that will hear... but first Israel must accept its blessings. Hear the voice of Yahweh calling you to accept the blessings He has been pouring out upon us from the beginning of the creation.

So, welcome to the Feast, and let our hearts and minds be open to this Spirit of Love, and of teaching, and of learning, and let this time lead us to grow up in Christ Yahshua. I look forward indeed to this week of blessing.

David.