

## **Simplicity: Yahshua, the Answer**

Happy Sabbath to everyone.

On this first meeting of our “civil” New Year (because our religious calendar begins anew in April), I was inspired to present something that is not a “new” topic, but hopefully a renewed one. It is called “Simplicity,” and subtitled, “Yahshua, the Answer.”

As we all know, when discussing a matter as deep as the Gospel of Salvation, what was intended to be a simple message, to be accepted with a child-like faith, things can become somewhat complicated. This is not a fault with the message itself, and not always with the messengers... but we can identify a number of reasons why this is so. All these reasons, though, from the infiltration of pagan traditions to inaccuracies in Biblical translations to ongoing demonic deceptions, all of these ultimately go back to the flesh.

The apostle Paul includes “variance,” “seditions,” and “heresies” in an extensive list of the works of the flesh. (Gal 5:19-21) Variance and heresies are the most similar and, as one might imagine, they signify differences that lead to contentions, disagreements about spiritual matters. Seditions are a little worse, because they indicate that the disagreements have grown so sharp that there are actual divisions among the believers. They separate into little groups, they form their own ministries independent of the unified body, and they (despite their best intentions in some cases) cause confusion among those who are seeking the true Way.

All of these are works of the flesh. All of these are founded in the sinfulness that resides in the bodies of those who have not come to know true conversion to Yahshua’s resurrected life. All of these work against the simplicity that was the original state of the Gospel message.

We may write studies, books, and libraries about evangelism... but if we want to know how it was done in the newness of the former rain, we need only go to the Book of Acts. Here are but a few:

“Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Yahshua of Nazareth, a man approved of Yahweh among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which Yah did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know, Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of Yahweh, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain. This Yahshua hath Yahweh raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that Yahweh hath made that same Yahshua, whom ye have crucified, both [Master] and [Messiah].” (Acts 2:22, 23, 32, 36)

“And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, ‘I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet [Isaiah] this? Of himself, or of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Yahshua. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, ‘See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?’ And Philip said, ‘If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.’ And he answered and said, ‘I believe that Yahshua the Messiah is the Son of Elohim.’ And he commanded the chariot to stand still, and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.” (Acts 8:34-38)

One more:

“Then Peter opened his mouth [in the house of Cornelius], and said, ‘Of a truth I perceive that Yahweh is no respecter of persons, and we are witnesses of all things which [Yahshua] did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree. Him Yahweh raised up the third day, and shewed Him openly; not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead. And He commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is He which was ordained of Yahweh to be the Judge of quick and dead. To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins.’ While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.” (Acts 10:34, 39-44)

Whether to Jews or to Gentiles, whether to Scripture-readers or those who followed the voice of conscience, and whether to those awaiting the Messiah and those who did not know of the Anointed One, the message in essence was the same, and it was simple. Yahshua was sent by God, did works and miracles that validated His mission, was crucified unjustly for our sins, was raised from the dead, and has become the Savior and Judge of mankind. To the Jews and Proselytes, this made Him the “Messiah” whom they had expected since the days of Moses. To the Romans and other Gentiles, this testimony made Him the Judge of the living and the dead, a figure present in their beliefs from the time of the ancient religions of Egypt.

But there were no great discussions about Yahshua’s exact nature. There was no deep discourse about justification, sanctification, and even the Law. Now, there were discussions about these things, and in fact the Law was a particular point of contention that needed to be clarified by the early Church... but none of these things were presented before those who asked the Christians, “What is your message?”

Those who heard the testimony of Yahshua’s life, and received it, were declared “justified.” After this, after they had committed to the truth that they had heard, then they followed along with doctrine and practice unto perfection.

Ideally, we would love to return to a time such as this with regard to conversion; unfortunately, there is a problem in Christendom that draws a darkness over both themselves, and those to whom they try to take the message. Today, many who identify themselves as “Christian” have been deceived about the faith that they hold, even from the very first step: conversion. Many who claim to be followers of Yahshua cannot explain conversion beyond indicating that it is a “change” as potentially superficial as choosing to go to one store instead of another. They know the words, “born again,” “born of the Spirit,” “crucified with Christ” (sometimes), but these terms have no power within them to save them from their sins – to draw them forth from their sins, and keep them free.

Most do not even know the goal of their religion. They consider it to “become good,” to “be saved,” to “go to Heaven,” to “escape God’s wrath.” None of these are the goal of Christianity. These are all side-effects in a sense of the true goal, and while “being saved” is correct in wording, it does not mean “not being destroyed,” it certainly does not mean “not being judged,” (all are judged, sinner and saint – 2 Cor 5:10 was written to the Church) but rather, it means being like Christ Yahshua.

Of course, even the most nominal of Christians will have used, or at least heard, the phrase “What would Jesus do?” The idea is not a bad one; in fact, it is the core principle of Christianity that we “walk, even as He walked,” and “take up the cross, and follow [Him].” (1 John 2:6, Mark 10:21)

Thus, asking that question is good, critical in fact; however, the problem arises when we try to answer it. As the subject of tonight's study indicates, the answer is always "Yahshua," for who He is determines what He does; but in answering the question "What would Jesus do?" we must ask another question as well: "How do you know?"

Even among those Christians that actually read the Scriptures for themselves, few attempt to actually incorporate everything that is written into an overall "picture" of Yahshua's personality. Few indeed among many Christians read the Old Testament, even though these also testify of Christ, (John 5:39) and fewer still understand what they read, ignoring what does not meet their expectations of a gentle, kind, forgiving Savior.

No doubt, Yahshua is all these things, and to a greater degree than is realized, but it was also Yahshua, as the Angel of Yahweh, of whom it was written, "He will not pardon your transgressions, for my name is in Him." (Exo 23:21) It was Yahshua of whom it is written, "He answered [the Canaanite woman] and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread [i.e., the salvation sent to Israel], and to cast it to dogs." (Mat 15:26) It is Yahshua who is appointed not only Savior, but also Judge of mankind, before whose brightness the Wicked One and his deceived followers will be destroyed and then cast into the lake of fire.

I do not say these things to take away from the goodness, the patience, and the mercy of the Son of Yahweh; but if these things are not added in, and understood to also be "Him," then we cannot answer the question, "What would Jesus do?" This is why, this is the very reason why, it is written that knowledge of the Father and Son is everlasting life. (John 17:3) This is not just a "spiritual" statement; it is an extremely practical one. If we do not know the Father and Son, we will not know what to expect from Them, nor will we know what They consider righteousness (e.g., Sabbath keeping, the Biblical diet), that we may do it by faith.

Adventist writer Ellen White once said that the "personality of God" is "everything to us as a people." This is a true statement, and while it was given in the context of opposing pantheistic reasoning that was being introduced into Adventist theology, it has a broader application as well.

Why is it important that we "know" the Father and Son? Why is it that the personality of God is "everything" to us as His people? There is only one reason – so that we might have it. We know Them, so that we can become like Them, for as the Scriptures so clearly put it, "we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Cor 3:18) By beholding, we become changed. If we do not "see" Them, we cannot ever become like Them. If we do not have a "vision" of Christian perfection, we can never attain it.

Thus, when we talk, when we act, when we discuss our faith, we who are covenanted to the Son of Yah and the Son of Man, are in a unique position to answer the question, "What would Jesus do?" We, who know Him because He abides in us, keeping us from sin, and leading us daily along the path of perfect sanctification, can say with assurance what He would do, because it is what He does in us, through us... what we do as we abide in Him.

This claim does not intend to propose, as some have accused, that our every impulse and inclination is correct. This does not remove the necessity of Yahshua's continual ministry of salvation. On the

contrary, this is only accomplished because His work in us is continual, every moment resisting, and overcoming, the works of the flesh: the strife, the variance, the heresies, the seditions, and the sin.

But what it does mean is that all that we believe, and all that we do, shows the world what the answer to this question happens to be. Yahshua is the answer to the questions that the soul asks, and this applies to even the doctrines that are most assaulted by the fallen spirits.

What is the truth of the victory over sin? Yahshua overcame all sin in His flesh, and He now abides, by His Spirit, in our flesh. The “Seed of Yah” remains in us, so that we “cannot sin.” (1 John 3:9) Some may debate this back and forth endlessly on doctrinal grounds, but the simple answer is the best: Yahshua committed no sin; therefore, if I am “dead” and “born again” in His image, if it is Yahshua who lives in me, then who is it that remains to commit sin? The very possibility is excluded by our understanding of who Yahshua is.

How exactly does this work? It is not revealed to us; but as we see from the testimony of the Book of Acts, it is not knowledge of this mechanism that converts the soul from death to life – it is knowledge of Yahshua, who He is, what He has done for us, and, being raised to life by the Father, what He continues to do for us now.

What is the truth of the Trinity doctrine? Yahshua the Messiah, being the Savior and Judge of all mankind, is also mankind’s Advocate. In fact, He is identified in the New Testament as the ONLY mediator between Yahweh the Father and mankind. (1 Tim 2:5) It is not some patron saint, it is not His earthly mother Mary, and it is not the Holy Spirit as a separate Entity from Himself. He tells us, when speaking of this “another” Comforter, “I will come to you.” (John 14:18) How exactly does this work? Again, we are not shown the mechanism; it is a wonderful thing to study the science of salvation, and it will be the delight of the saints to examine it in eternity... but in this time at the very end of history, this is not the sweet sound that calls souls to the Throne of Heaven.

What is the truth of the Appointed Times? Yahshua, as One born under the Law, and a faithful Israelite, kept the Feast days. He did not see the attendance as necessarily mandatory, (John 7:8) for none questioned His statement that He wasn’t going to go (yet) with His brethren; nevertheless, those to whom He revealed Himself, and those in whom He resided, (and not “under the Law”) kept the feasts, and taught their importance throughout the New Testament. (1 Cor 5:8, Acts 18:21, Jude 1:12 – where “feasts of charity” is actually the Agape meal)

What is the truth of the Trademark Law about which CSDAs warn Adventists and all the world? I will make this as general as possible: It is possible to know, with complete certainty, what Yahshua would do, and what He would sanction. With regard to something as large as the Trademark persecutions, or as small as daily decisions, if we are abiders in Him, and if He is an Abider in us, there are certain things that are so clearly contrary to His revealed character, to His Person, to the testimony He gave during even the brief period of His earthly ministry, that definitively deny the possibility of certain courses of action being “Christian.”

Yahshua, the Savior of the earth, did not rely on the strength of human governments, or civil authority, to add the least bit of legitimacy to His Heavenly Mission. With regard to the influence of the world and its institutions, He said, “Give to Caesar what is his, and give to God what is His.” Religious observances,

acts of faith and conscience, these are things that are rendered by faithful Christians unto the Father... and upon these matters we, as Christians, as Protestants, as Adventists, as free creatures, say that the civil power has no say. We know what Yahshua would do in the face of a government attempting to enforce its will on matters of religious obligation. We will say, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," and when it is over, we will show them the nail-prints on our palms as a testimony against their unrighteousness. How exactly will the last scenes play out? We do not yet see, as in the cases above, the "mechanism," but again, it is not the precise way that prophecy will be fulfilled that wins the heart from darkness. It is the testimony of, and about, Yahshua.

It is our testimony, that we are firm as steel to principle, and will not cease to say, "We serve the One who was crucified for our sakes, who was raised from the dead by the Father, and made Savior and Judge, forgiving us for our sins, and raising us up to an everlasting inheritance."

That He has called us to a certain faith, given us (as all fathers do) a distinctive name, and blessed us with a holy covenant. These things are the evidences of His love toward us, a love that the world would seek to take from us because its own works are evil.

But although – because of the deceptions that are in the world today – we must at times "explain" our beliefs in order to distinguish them from the counterfeits, Yah forbid we should forget that the true answer is simplicity itself. At the heart of every true doctrine is the character of Yahshua, the personality of Yahweh, which is everything to us as a people.

When we speak with others, sharing our faith in word and in deed, our invincible testimony is, and ever will be, that Yahshua is the answer to the questions, however complex, that man's soul asks.

END

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Creation 7th day Adventism