

The House of Yahweh (Part 1)

Happy Sabbath to everyone.

Tonight, I would like to address a question I've been meaning to tackle for some time now, and it might take a couple of weeks to cover it. What is it that makes a group of people a "Church?" Now, we as members OF that Church, might say, "the presence of Yahweh," or, "the sanction of Heaven," or something similar. These are true answers, and we will examine them a little tonight, but the question that really ought to concern evangelists about this subject is a bit more precise. Specifically, the question is not merely what makes a group of people a Church, but also... how could an outsider tell?

This is actually a most critical matter, because we have taken a fairly "hard line" against the Ecumenical movement, independent ministries, and diverse "free" and independent groups – with clear support from the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy writings. But having done so, we must be able to explain to those who hear our message what it is that makes us different in essential nature from these others that may look, at least superficially, very much like Yah's Bride.

Most of you here tonight are already familiar, at least to some degree, with my conversion experience. I have described it in several of my articles, and I have referred to it on a few occasions during the course of illustrating a spiritual teaching.

In becoming a born-again Christian according to the Biblical pattern, and therefore a Creation Seventh Day Adventist, I had to follow the Three Angels' Message as described in the Book of Revelation for the sealing of the 144,000. (Rev 14:1-12) I had to learn about, and accept, victory over sin. That prepares a soul for the judgment declared by the first angel. I had to come to understand the truth about the investigative judgment, the character of my Father and His Firstborn, the true significance of the Sabbath, and so on. In becoming familiar with the truth in regard to these things, my confusion was stripped away. Babylon had fallen in my soul, and I came into harmony with the second of the three.

But there is a third angel as well. The third angel, that warns about the Mark of The Beast, is also a necessary messenger for conversion to Christianity, and this is a doctrine that none but Seventh-day Adventists hold with any degree of accuracy. Without all three of these, including this third, an individual has simply not heard the "Everlasting Gospel" (Rev 14:6) that saves man from sin and death.

I encountered this third angel, although I did not yet understand or accept it, even before I met a CSDA. Yah had called me to His service from the world, and I was in a state of repentance. I had returned to the mainstream SDA Church after having fallen away for years. As a result, I used to walk for more than half an hour from my apartment in Florida to a nearby Adventist Church on Sabbath mornings... but on my return from backsliding, I had begun to experience some unease with the home to which I had returned.

The teachings seemed to be sprinkled with the spirit of the world. The pastor's approach and demeanor did not inspire me with any confidence in the beauty of holiness. The congregation dressed, spoke, and acted, like they would in any other church; there was nothing about them that separated them from any nominal Christian group except for the day on which they met. I say these things, not with any particularly critical spirit, because they were very kind to me, and accepting of this new (returning) member... but with sorrow because the same Spirit that drew me from the world was telling me that something was wrong.

In my confusion, I walked to the Church house one Sunday afternoon, when I knew it would be empty, and I sat alone in the back row and I prayed. What followed was my first experience with a vision. There was a wooden cross up behind the pulpit, and as I raised my head from my bowed prayer, I saw the cross covered with flames, although it was not burning.

The flames began to come forth from the cross, two “ropes” of fire in either direction, one to the left and one to the right. They stretched out in bursts, rather like links in a chain, and as they got longer they began to bend toward me. These two “arms” of fire came most of the way down the room toward me, and then I heard a voice speaking distinctly in my head, saying, “This is not my house.” Those were the words that I “heard,” but there was more meaning in them than just the words. It was not an indication that the SDA Church was never Yah’s house, but that it was “no longer” His house.

I was not afraid, or even (it seems to me) very surprised. I simply got up and went back home, with a certainty that I would receive understanding of what I had seen very soon.

It was shortly after this experience, during the course of seeking conversations with SDA ministers, that I did meet Pastor “Chick,” the first CSDA I encountered, and began to learn all the doctrines I have already listed. I have left one out, however.

While learning about victory over sin, and other necessary concepts, which I was finding in the Bible with renewed eyes, I was also introduced to the Seventh-day Adventist Trademark Law. I will not, in this study, go over all the principles and details about how and why this is a Mark of the Beast for this generation, except to mention that it is – without a doubt – the result of a union of a fallen Protestant Church and a civil government: an image of Papal Rome.

I could not do nothing in light of this knowledge. When I read the court documents, the news reports, the official releases, it was a heartbreaking apocalypse (which is the Greek word for “revelation”). It was the “end” of all things, but also the beginning, because, with my sorrow also came relief. I had come to understand Yah’s words to me in the Church on that Sunday afternoon... that the mainstream SDA Church was not (no longer) His house. My path was clear from that day on, and repentance, faith, baptism, and fellowship quickly followed. I had come to accept the third of the three angels’ messages.

Now, in giving this portion of my testimony, I have really already answered the original question of this study, “What makes a group of people a ‘Church’?” I will clarify just how.

I stated above two perfectly valid answers to the question. They are the Presence of Yah, and the sanction of Heaven. These are the things that provide the calling to be a Church. Those who are within it believe that Yah is with them, and that they have been called by Heaven to do whatsoever it is they do. But any Church believes this, or at least it should, so this does not help an “outsider” to become convinced or convicted.

How would someone in the Church explain to someone in a state of deception why their movement is the true Bride?

Well, I suppose we could test it. In my experience, most members of a congregation will not know “why” they are members of their current Church. In a previous study, I mentioned several factors, such as the need for fellowship, tradition, family ties, and Biblical instruction (i.e., we “should” be in a Church).

For those who are little more educated, they will fall back on doctrines. “We are the only ones who teach this or that doctrine correctly.” But, interestingly enough, correct doctrines alone are not what define the true Church. Even the Biblical prophets have had to correct themselves from time to time, and were they “unchurched” until they corrected their errors?

CSDAs certainly have the truth of the doctrines that we teach; we who are members all believe this, and as I have said recently, we have the answers necessary to convince the earnestly seeking soul. But this truth is not sufficient to claim Church-hood.

Similarly, if we were to go to the independent groups, and the offshoots, and ask, “Did Yahweh call you to separate from a mother Church, or start your own group?” Some will not be sure; others will simply say “Yes,” and then begin to cite doctrine. We have heard answers like, “Well, the mainstream Church is apostate because they believe the Trinity,” or “That Church supports abortions in its hospitals,” or, “They support going to war.”

Those criticisms are worth discussing, to varying degrees; but neither these nor any of the many other doctrinal failings provide sanction for another Church to form.

As CSDAs, we have explained our calling in terms of the sanction of Biblical history. Specifically, when “Christ is crucified” a new Bride is called into unity with the resurrected Husband. A Church that joins with the world, and persecutes Yah’s people make themselves no longer Yah’s people, and invariably the Spirit will call the faithful out.

But... how do we know that? How did we come by that knowledge? If we can explain exactly why we are certain this teaching, this pattern, is Yahweh’s own perfect will, then we can explain how we know that WE, as Creation Seventh Day Adventists, who have followed that perfect will, are Yah’s Church, and why none other may lay claim to that title with the same validity. And I do want to say, this is not about elitism or exclusivity. We do not celebrate that we are the “true Church” and rest on that mere assertion.

We are humbled by the heavy commission we are called to bear, and while we do rejoice, it is in “the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue.” (2Pet 1:3) Pride dies with the flesh, but humility does not deny what the Father has declared to be true. It is not the Bride that saves, but the Son... yet the Son has purposed to gather a single, united People for His everlasting good pleasure. (John 17:9, 10, 21-23)

All are called by Yah to be His people, and without taking away from anyone’s personal religious experiences... we need to be able to reveal to those who have had an encounter with Yah’s mercy and grace what the true Source of their blessing is. We need to be able to call those who are seeking in darkness, and also those who have had a divine revelation, and guide both to the truth before the ravens come and snatch them away in their sincerity. (Mat 13:4) As I mentioned, I had already begun to experience the Word from my Father before I learned and accepted the CSDA message... but what would have become of me if I had not done so? Paul had already spoken with Yahshua before uniting with the other apostles, (Acts 9:3, 10, 27) but what good would he have been if he had rejected the principle of unity and become an independent preacher?

Here is the clear answer to the question we are examining tonight, and I will give it in a series of four verses. They are the following:

“And the Dragon was wroth with the Woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Yahshua the Messiah.” (Rev 12:17)

“And I fell at his feet to worship [the messenger angel], and he said unto me, ‘See thou do it not. I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Yahshua. Worship Elohim, for the testimony of Yahshua is the spirit of prophecy.’” (Rev 19:10)

“Where there is no vision, the people perish; but he that keepeth the Law, happy is he.” (Pro 29:18)

“Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not; but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe” (1Cor 14:22)

The first two of those verses are used quite often by Adventists. They say, “We know we are the true Church, because we have the Spirit of Prophecy.” Now, they have the right principle in this matter. The verse from 1 Corinthians clearly tells us that there are gifts for evangelism, to reach those who do not yet believe... but prophecy is specifically a sign “for them which believe.”

Some are out in the world, and must be evangelized. They must be brought to a conviction of sin, so that they will seek salvation from Yahshua. But some are already religious, or spiritual. Some already believe that they must serve Yah and do His will... but Satan has ensnared such with the cares of the world, and the deceptions of the flesh and spirit. He has corrupted true doctrine... but Yah has provided an answer.

Prophecy is the sign for those who believe, to correct, to guide, and to set them on the right path. It is the only gift the Scriptures specifically describe as a sign for believers. It is prophecy that told us that a union of Church and state is the Mark from which we must flee. It is prophecy that taught us about righteousness by faith. It is prophecy that reveals the meaning of the Sabbaths and New Moons. Prophecy wrote the Bible, and inspired commentary thereon. Prophecy speaks to us daily, if we are indeed among Yah’s people.

So, the mainstream Adventists do have the right idea... but they lack another vital element: the Spirit of Prophecy itself. Mainstream Seventh-day Adventists do not have the Spirit of Prophecy. They certainly claim it, and I use them as one example specifically because of that claim... but ask them to show you where it is... and they will show you a set of books.

Now this is a sign indeed, that they once had the spirit of prophecy, and it produced for them a wonderful and enlightening series of commentaries and teachings. They will call the books themselves the spirit of prophecy... but that is a bit like calling a fish the ocean. We get fish from the ocean, but the fish is the result, the product, not the thing itself.

Calling the books themselves that spirit may be acceptable in casual use, (I do it myself on occasion) but we need to understand the distinction. The spirit of prophecy is exactly what it sounds like. It is a spirit... of... prophecy. It is a spiritual gift, not a person, a book, or a set of letters. It is a spirit that allows us to speak with our Father through prayer, and hear His reply through visions, providence, and enlightened conscience. If that Spirit is with the Church, it is a Church indeed, and its people are Yah’s children.

No Church can rest on the blessings it used to possess, especially if it is a state during which Yah cannot hear its leaders’ prayers. No Church can claim validity based on what it used to have, or else we might as

well become Israelites, for they were the first, and most dramatically, blessed by Yahweh after the Flood and the rise of Babylon. But if we will be Israelites after the spirit, then Yah has called us to His Church, to His true House.

Now, having answered the question, (and I believe it is answered) we need to understand what that answer means. Next week, I would like to look at how we can identify the true manifestation of this gift from among the many who claim to have received a calling from Yahweh, a vision, or a divine conviction to do some work upon the earth.

For this coming week, I would like us to consider how we know what “truth” is; and I can say that, for myself, I know the truth because Yah told me. I know I am a member of His bride, because Yah told me. I know I have been baptized into, and continue with, the fellowship of the Church of Yahweh, because He told me through the Testimony of Yahshua, which is the Spirit of Prophecy; and as it is written – as we are promised by the Lord of Prophecy – “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.” (John 10:27) Shall we not be confident in this?

Finally, we know that this is the purpose of the Spirit of Prophecy: “They shall hear my voice; and there shall be ONE fold, and one Shepherd.” (John 10:16) If these are truly the words of the Savior, then let any who yet have ears to hear, hear what the Spirit of Prophecy says to the congregations.

I will end here tonight, and ask if any have questions or comments about the study so far.

Next week:

SOP is a manifestation of AGAPE (show verse)

Not about claims of having, but having.

SDAs do not have the SOP! They had it. They have the books inspired by it, which they call it that. But the spirit of prophecy is not a book or set of books. It is a spirit... of... prophecy. It is a spiritual gift, not the result of a spiritual gift. No Church can rest on the blessings of its past, or else we should all become Israelites, for they were the first, and most dramatically, blessed. No CSDA led by pillars of fire, after all.

Spirit of prophecy accomplishes things, which we will examine next week.

“Where there is no vision, the people perish; but he that keepeth the Law, happy is he.” (Pro 29:18)

Therefore, Presence of Yah through prophecy drives off sin.

Sanction of Heaven is for a purpose. What is that purpose? The same as has been the case of EVERY called-out people: spread the Gospel, vindicate the name of our Father in Heaven.

Now, where is the Bride? Where are a group of people who claim, who have a testimony, of living with uncompromising victory over sin? Where are a people who are dedicated to spreading the Gospel, and to vindicating the name of our Father in Heaven.

I know of no people on earth to whom these things all apply. And I say this: if the CSDA Church is not such a Church, then there can be no Church on the earth. Therefore, let those who believe they are in the Church of Christ take notice: Be the people, or Find the people. Those are your options. If you, by

examination, see that you are not the people, do not wait for it to improve! Do not say, "Someday the leaders will straighten themselves out, and get all their doctrines right!" Mr. Antonio in the Eternal Gospel, but not a Trinitarian. Do not say, if you recognize corruption in your Church, "God will someday remove those wicked men, and we can go back to being the Biblical Bride."

Yahweh has a people now, and each sincere Christian has the obligation to be that people, or to find that people, to join unto them and receive Yah's gift of perfection of character, and the life of His Son, given through the covenant He forms with us, and refined through the work of our beloved brethren. (Eph 4)

END

David.

Creation 7th day Adventism