

Topic is: When the Fire Comes

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

 Zahakiel : *Well, we should get started. Hopefully Pastor will be in soon. Bro. Luke, please open with a prayer.*

 Lucan : *Dear heavenly Father. We thank you for this time of gathering and rejoicing in your Word and presence. We ask that your Spirit lead in our discussions and meditations. In Yahshua's name we pray, amen.*

 Barbli : **Amen**

 Guest_Elyna_Family : **Amen.**

 **Guest_Adriel : Amen**

 Guest_Peter : **Amen.**

 Guest_Daphna : **Amen**

 Guest_Naraiel : **Amen**

 Guest_gadriel : **Amen, Amen**

 Zahakiel : **Amen.**

 Zahakiel : **Happy Sabbath to everyone.**

 Barbli : **PC: Amen**

 Zahakiel : *Last week, I spoke about Tithes and Offerings, a sacred duty we have to our Creator... not to “give” Him anything that is ours, but to recognize that all we have, and all we receive, is a gift, and to “return” a requested portion to His work.*

As I testified, participating in this holy practice is not just a “spiritual” blessing. It is not merely storing up treasures in Heaven, as it is often described, but it is about edifying and building our support system here on earth, so that Yah can provide for even the physical needs of His people as they do His work on the earth.

For CSDAs, returning the tithe has become what we call a “test of fellowship,” and not because it is a rule used to judge the actions of others, but because it is truly a “test,” an indicator, that there is a common goal, a common spirit, among all who claim to be among Christ's last, tiny remnant.

Tonight we are looking at a topic that is, on the surface, very different, but they share a common underlying principle, and it is that of “dedication.” It is called, “When the Fire Comes,” and it has to do with making mental preparations for the open Time of Trouble, and tonight I would like to focus on a very specific issue. Here is a question we might do well to ask ourselves from time to time:

“Can I count on those who are around me? Can I rely on them when my life – and those things even more important than my life – are at stake?”

This is not an easy question to ask, because if we answer it honestly, some of us might receive answers from our perceptions, and from the Holy Spirit of Yahweh, that we might consider to be unpleasant. I have used at least one of these examples before in other studies, but let me tell you about an early experience I had as a mainstream Seventh Day Adventist that has been very important for me even to this day, because it was truly a formative, and an informative, experience.

I became a mainstream Adventist in or right around my last year of high school. My grades were very good, and so there was an expectation, even of myself, that I would be going on to the junior college, and then beyond. The junior college to which I was applying required, as a condition of entrance, a certain minimum score from an international examination, and typically these were only held on Saturdays. I was concerned about this... so I asked around, and discovered that I could apply to take the test on another day, but it had to be a formal request by mail – regular mail, for email was not as common in those days – and I had to receive a reply before the testing date.

Now, up to this point, my parents were semi-supportive. They didn't understand my new conviction, but as long as it didn't cause any problems, they didn't give me much trouble about it. The matter of this examination was the first real test of my sincerity, because even though I sent the request well before the date of the exam, the reply was very slow in coming. As the days passed, I could sense the growing anxiety of my parents, and the tension hit its peak one night, which would have been the deadline, I believe, for me to apply to take it on the regular (Sabbath) date. We had a long, often circular discussion, with my parents at times pleading, at times threatening, in an attempt to get me to relent and take the exam on Saturday. I told them that, regardless of the consequences, I could not. My parents took turns trying to convince me that my religious position was not all that important, that God would understand “just this once,” and that getting an education was for the greater good. I cannot remember most of the argument, but that it happened, and the spiritual warfare I experienced, these were burned into my memory, never to fade.

Now, let me be very clear...I had not so much as heard of the “Victory message” at this point in time. I did not fully understand the Gospel, the good news, and so my motivation was not entirely pure. Yes, I wanted to please my Father, and to obey Him, because I had before me examples of Christians who had endured much more for their faith, and I wanted to do the right thing. On the other hand, I also had fear, of the regular kind, that God and my fellow Church members would be disappointed in me... would turn away from me.

Of course, the Bible does speak about penalties for disobedience...the reality is that there are consequences for violating the will of Yahweh; however, if this is as much of our motivation as it was for me that night, we do not yet fully grasp the Agape that comes with conversion. It becomes, ultimately, a matter of joy in obedience, and a trust in Yahweh that in doing the right thing, we and those around us are blessed, and the consequences... they simply do not matter in eternity.

I believe, as incomplete as my understanding was, that Yahweh honored my obedience. This is something that we as a Church have addressed more than once – when we read testimonies and teachings from non-CSDAs. As long as we ourselves are grounded in the truth, we can certainly see some light in the experiences of others who seek to honor Yah with their words and actions. At the same time, we can usually discern where the beliefs of those involved are not “perfect,” and therefore the results are not always as they should be even if they are counted as genuine blessings. I myself, who have pointed this out in the testimonies of others, do so not from a position of judgment that their experiences are not important, but from a position of experience, and would encourage those that have them. I would say, “You have come this far by Yah’s grace... but there remains a more complete rest for the people of Yah.”

So, as I have described before, we had this long and painful discussion about the importance of my convictions, and at the end my parents seemed to give up, not accepting, but realizing that they could not change my mind, and resolving that whatever happened, I would have to deal with it. The next day, the reply came from the testing organization, authorizing me to take the test on another day. To me, this was vindication of my faith, and a reward for overcoming temptation. Can you imagine how I would have felt if I had submitted to my parents just the night before, and then received permission the day after? What shame, what rebuke that would have been. What a demonstration it would have been of my lack of trust. What a victory for Satan.

For my parents, this was probably considered to be “mostly luck.” They did give my beliefs a bit more respect; however, and this is the point I am making tonight, they did not respect it to the degree that they said, “We must also have this kind of faith.”

My second example is an ongoing one. Having become a CSDA, I let my parents know from the very beginning that I was joining a “hated sect.” I told them that the world and apostate Protestantism would attempt to get me to give up my faith, including the belief that inspiration provided us with the name “Creation Seventh Day Adventist” as an enduring banner of our connection to the Savior. Most people, of course, do not share that belief; however, most people DO have some understanding of the importance of religious convictions, and the importance of the freedom mankind should be granted to abide by those convictions. Most people, unfortunately, are also carnally-minded, and this places a natural limit on how far the Christian faith should be tolerated as far as its ability to guide our actions go.

Naturally, my parents have never liked the fact that I could very well be in serious legal trouble one day because of the things I believe. I say naturally, because no sane person would “like” that idea. However, those who are spiritually minded understand, as we have always understood, that there are more important things than physical liberty. The Scriptures tell us, “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.” (Rom 12:18)

Paul, of course, knew from experience that it was not always possible, and that it does not always lie within us, to peaceably agree and live with all men. Where men rebel against the will of Yahweh, we will disagree with them. Where they consider the Law and the prophets a light thing, we will disagree with them. Now, as much

as it lies within “us,” this will not necessarily violate peace. We may discuss and try to convince one another of all manner of things without a breach of peace; however, there comes a time when Yah’s judgment is made manifest. There is a coming crisis, yes, but the characters of all men will be fully formed when probation closes even before this crisis breaks forth. There will be conflict, and there will be separation. And when the persecution comes, when the fire begins to fall... can we count on those around us?

I know, with certainty, that I cannot count on my parents for good counsel and support should I be persecuted for my Adventist faith. They have seen sufficient evidence in my testimony, in my conversations with them, and in the hand of providence, to know that my beliefs are Biblical – are true. Nevertheless, they simply consider the benefits of this life to be the most important things we can attain. I know that, when they believe I am in danger, my parents will attempt to convince me to escape it, even if that means sacrificing my convictions. It is not their “fault.” They have been deceived by the principles and policies of this world so that, even if they speak of God, their belief is not of a nature that it forms convictions about spiritual things.

I love my parents very much... I am grateful to them for their generosity and their support in most matters... and they actually speak highly of the Church and its members (so they do have some discernment)... but I know that I cannot trust them with spiritual things. I cannot trust them with matters important to my soul, because they would easily sacrifice the good of my soul for the good of my body. They value this life more than the next, and so they will see what they are doing as logical, reasonable, loving...to try to remove me from danger. They will think, even as they attempt to belittle and dispute my faith, that they are demonstrating wisdom, and that they are doing me a great favor that I just won’t be able to appreciate. I pray for them. I have, and continue to do so, that they will “see” the things of Yahshua, but as of this moment, they have not accepted those things for which I have prayed. I am prepared to face a lack of support, even betrayal – if not a physical betrayal, certainly an emotional one – when the fire comes.

It has ever been the case that those deceived by Satan adopt a position that they are serving the “greater good” by doing some small transgression now. Judas said in his heart, “I will let them capture Yahshua, and He will see the importance of using His power to destroy His oppressors.” He was sorely disappointed, and then horrified unto death, by the depth of his error.

The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, who are of this very mind, say, “We will bring lawsuits against these little groups that are misusing the name of the Church, and then we will be able to evangelize more effectively. And who knows, maybe some of these that we go after will learn the authority of the Church, and return to the ‘fold.’” We have characterized the General Conference as wicked, as un-Spiritual, as oppressive. I have even called them “atheistic” as it relates to the true God... and I stand by that characterization; but they will not see it that way. The truth is “foolishness” to their perceptions. They cannot see their actions as hostile to Yahweh, because they are deceived into thinking that their doctrines and decrees are more important than individual convictions. They have surrendered the mantle of Protestantism, allowing the civil magistrate to have a

say in religious observances, and imposing the power of "The Church" to supplant the demands of conscience. "The ends," as they say, "justify the means."

In our lives, we will have people who have this mindset. They may be our parents, our brothers and sisters, our husbands, or wives, or children. Paul says we cannot avoid keeping company with the impure, with the envious, with the violent, with the disorderly. These people fill the world, and are present in our personal circles. He warns us, for the sake of the faith, to avoid such people if they claim to be Yah's followers while doing these things, because they degrade the testimony that Yahshua intends to shine forth from His people.

As long as we can, we should labor for these people, but we must not ourselves be brought under the illusion that the incomplete love they know, the incomplete love we all once knew ourselves, will be sufficient to prevent them from being caught up in Satan's delusions. They will not be able to prevent themselves from contributing to our troubles in the time of those troubles, and wounding us even more deeply than Satan could directly, because they will think – like Judas, like the General Conference – that they are doing Yahweh, and maybe even us, a favor.

This is a solemn matter. Yahshua did not think it too small a matter to have it recorded in the eternal writings, saying, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." (Mat 10:34-39)

These are one of the "hard teachings," and Christians have discussed it for centuries; but we are seeing the reality of it unfolding before us, and if we have not discerned it yet, then pray for deeper discernment, or you too will be in danger of agreeing with the "mind of the flesh" and not the "mind of Christ." Be prepared, for when the fire comes, when the persecution "heats up," then we will have no earthly support, not financially, not emotionally, from those upon whom we have placed our deepest affections. It is the spiritual family that will endure. It is the spiritual family that Yah calls us to cultivate.

If we want those of our other loved ones to be "with us" in the grace of Yah, then they must become Family indeed. We must work for them, pray for them, speak to them, while it is yet day, for the night comes, and even now falls, during which none of us may work. We may act, we may speak, but we cannot "work," for our efforts will be of none effect when the judgment closes for each individual soul.

We live in amazing times, in most privileged times... but also in most solemn times, and I would have Yah's people ready to withstand the temptations of the Enemy, and if the temptations fail, then to withstand the insults, the anger, the "loving disappointment" and ultimately the rejection, of those who will not see the blessed streets of New Jerusalem.

If we have mother, father, sister, brother, husband, wife, children... that do not understand eternal truths, they must learn them or they will certainly become agents of our sorrow. As much as they love us, and we them, without Yahshua within them and surrounding them, they simply have no protection from having that familial love turned into a weapon of war. They cannot help it, it is not their "fault," but as children may be tricked and then abused by wicked adults who know more, and are greater in power and cunning...that is an understatement, a vast under-estimation, of the difference between an unconverted soul and a demon that excels in the art of rebellion. If they know something of the truth, they are in even worse shape. If they are "close" but not "in" the truth, they will be Satan's most effective servants when the Holy Spirit ceases to plead with them for the sake of divine love.

Let us pray for one another as Brethren, that we will stand firm, and that we will teach others to do the same. Let us bless and edify one another, this spiritual Family that will endure, for the dark times are merely being held back until we can complete this work – Satan is not idle, nor is he hesitant, to bear down on us with every tool that he has available. But even as we know this, even as we understand this, let us find peace in our solemnity. Let us find joy in knowing that we have such a Savior, One that is willing to save to the utmost all who call upon Him in faith. And then... let us be the angels who introduce Him and His perfect, complete and incorruptible love, to those whom we would see with us "this day" in Paradise. Are there any comments or questions about tonight's study?

 Pastor_Chick_CSDA_7 : **C**

 Guest_Adriel : **Amen!**

 Guest_Peter : **Amen**

 Zahakiel : **Go ahead.**

> Pastor_Chick_CSDA_7 has left the conversation.

 Zahakiel : ***It might be easiest if you post his comment, Sis. Barb.***

 Barbli : **Yes, am waiting for him to reply in FB.**

 Zahakiel : ***Ok. Does anyone else have a comment or question while we wait?***

 Guest_Adriel : **C**

 Zahakiel : **Go ahead.**

 Guest_Adriel : **I also feel that unless my husband has a conversion experience, I will certainly experience more than what I already do of his unbelief in the CSDA as being a divinely led movement. He has not been as negative as he was previously and I am grateful to Yah for that, but neither has he been supportive. It has been difficult, but "I will not fail nor be discouraged. 😊 End**

 Barbli : **Amen**

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 Guest_Naraiel : Amen.

 Guest_Elyna_Family : C

 Zahakiel : **Go ahead.**

 Barbli : PC - C: (waiting for Sis. Guerline)

 Guest_Elyna_Family : *Amen to Sis Jody's last statement. I am also reminded that our lives are hid with "Christ Yahshua in God". I for myself am resolute to face my trial in silence, for in so doing we are strong. I do bear my testimony whenever I can to my family and those around me, but I find that manumits for me a quiet disposition bear more weight than words.... manumits=many times. But I want to know that we are supporting each other in our prayers for ourselves and for our families. End.*

 Guest_Adriel : **Amen**

 Zahakiel : **Go ahead, Pastor.**

 Guest_gadriel : Amen

 Guest_Naraiel : Amen

 Barbli : PC: Pastor had an experience that he would like to share. He related to the staff at Aponye Hotel that he would like to speak with Edna, who no longer works there. Someone called her and she traveled from Entebbe to Kampala. "She arrived at 2 in the afternoon and did not find me until after 10 p.m. I was amazed at this woman's dedication to a visit with me. I realized after our brief visit that she must travel a long distance late at night and with some personal expense. It may surprise us who will be there for us in the fire. <End>

 Zahakiel : **I do hope we will have some pleasant surprises, yes** 😊

 Guest_Adriel : **Amen** 😊 C

 Zahakiel : **Go ahead.**

 Barbli : PC C

 Guest_Elyna_Family : *Amen*

 Guest_Adriel : **I know that the Holy Angels will be with her to protect her on her trip home as they were/are with you.** 😊 End

 Zahakiel : **Go ahead.**

 Barbli : PC: What I was really trying to get a cross with my testimony is a question. How many family friends are church members will travel a long distance and wait over 8 hours to visit knowing they must travel long distance and very late to return home with expense and inconvenience? I have not seen such great faith in all of Israel. Amen to Sis Jody's last statement "I shall not fail nor be discouraged" <End>

Zahakiel : *All right, then if there is nothing further, let us close with a prayer.*

Almighty Father in Heaven, We give you thanks for the blessings we have, of the opportunity to gather together as a Family. We thank you that, despite the distances that separate us, we can communicate immediately, and I pray we will not be found neglectful, in taking advantage of this blessing to edify others and be built up ourselves in the faith. We thank you that you have made of us a people, one that will endure the darkness, and enter into your marvelous light. And even as we rejoice in gratitude, we pray for those in whose lives our testimonies and examples may still make a difference, to bring them with us into your kingdom. We know that the enemy is enraged, and must surely know, now, that he has very little time left. Strengthen us, preparing our hearts and minds, to withstand his deceptions and attacks, and may those near us turn toward your light, so that they will not be so used. Bless our Sabbath hours that we may be refreshed to honor you in the week to come. We thank you for Pastor's safe trip, and pray he will be used to greatly further your kingdom where he is, and may your Spirit guide your Church with wisdom in the days ahead. We ask this in Yahshua's holy name, Amen.

 Guest_Peter : Amen

 **Guest_Adriel : Amen**

 Guest_Peter_JR_1718 : Amen.

 Guest_Elyna_Family : Amen.

 Lucan : Amen

 Guest_gadriel : Amen, Amen

 Guest_Ruthline : Amen.

 Guest_Naraiel : Amen

 Guest_Daphna : IAmen

 Barbli : PC Amen

 Barbli : Barb Amen