

Ye Shall Be Clean

This week, our study's title is "Ye Shall Be Clean," and the question we seek to answer is, "When?"

Last week, our Pastor shared a video with the Church showing a presentation by an individual about the regeneration. As I mentioned recently, I've written my thoughts out regarding that study that I have yet to share in full, but (by way of summary) I think that it had some valid points as well as some subtle errors.

I've seen a few comments from the other members, and I hope to see a few more in the coming days, but I really felt the need to directly address what I consider to be one of the more damaging mistakes present in the theology being promoted.

The basic premise of the video that was shared with us is that conversion is not just a human decision. Many Churches teach that once you become convinced of a need for the Savior, you simply recite a prayer – sincerely, of course – and then you are saved. Whether or not this has an impact on your behavior, if you were sincere, then you go to Heaven after death, or at the return of Christ.

We have looked at this doctrine before, and of course the Scriptures directly contradict the idea here. We read, for example, "If we say that we have fellowship with [the Father] and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth." (1 John 1:6) Also, "He that saith, 'I know Him,' and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." (1 John 2: 4) Some will reply that an "occasional sin" is not the same as walking in darkness, but John makes no distinction between an occasional sin and a recurring one. He writes, "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." (1 John 5:18) That word "keepeth" means "to carefully guard;" as a result of this careful guard, the wicked one does not so much as "touch" us to lead us into sin.

Of course, no matter how much we "guard" ourselves, we have no power OF ourselves to resist temptation; it is Christ in us that overcomes, *so there is no chance of failing to guard ourselves properly, or that the keeping of ourselves is somehow insufficient to prevent each and every sin.* The Apostle says, "Abstain from all appearance of evil." (1 Th 5:22) Some have used that verse to mean, "Don't do anything that even looks like evil." Yet, some of what is righteous appears evil to the perverse sensibilities of the world, so that cannot be the proper use of those words.

What Paul means by "all appearance" is "every appearing" or every kind, and every form, of sin. This is not just "good advice," it is a divinely-inspired instruction, and the next verse tells you the purpose, so that *"the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."* (1Th 5:23) Now, when you realize that the "I pray God" is added by the translators, you will see that

Paul is not hoping that this will be the result of abstaining from evil; *it is the certain result*: a blamelessness of the spirit, the soul, and the body as well.

Now, these are things with which we should be well familiar by now. We utterly reject the Gnostic doctrine that the “soul” can be saved but the body (that is a component of that soul) may persist in sinful activities. In the video that we saw, the speaker appears to reject this falsehood as well, to agree with what I have explained here, and that is good, inasmuch as it is commentary on the Bible’s clear teaching.



I thought that most of the parables were accurate, explaining (for example) that when someone is “born again” they are a “new creature” in the very same way that a pig – if it could be miraculously changed into a human – is not the same kind of creature as the man that it becomes. The habits are different. The desires and appetites are entirely dissimilar, and the man, now capable of higher reasoning, would be disgusted and ashamed by the actions he used to perform. If one were then to tell the man, “Go back to living in filth and eating garbage,” the man would entirely reject the instruction with his whole being – mind, spirit, and body as well. This is like the relationship of the convert to his or her previous life of sin.

But where the study fell apart, as they will always do if the presenters do not understand present truth as it was conveyed to the world through Biblical Christianity or Adventism, is in the understanding of exactly what conversion accomplishes. Without an understanding of the Sabbath, the Sanctuary doctrine, and Yahshua’s ministry of intercession in this spiritual Day of Atonement, and made more difficult if one accepts a Trinitarian notion of the Godhead, one cannot eternally “rest” in the change of heart from stone to flesh, and *the Gospel’s power is lost*.

One of the passages presented near the end of the study was this one, quite a powerful set of verses: “For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh.

And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.” (Eze 36:24-28)

Now, for all these promises, the people of Yah, more so than the nominal Christians and the world-lings, should say, “Amen.”

Look at these wonderful things that Yah has said He will give to those who are His: He will give us cleanliness. He will give us freedom from idolatry. He will give us a new heart and Spirit.

He will, by that Spirit, cause us to walk in His statutes and judgments... to DO them. Notice that it is not merely a change in the “inner man,” but the Spirit’s effect on the convert is that they will do the things of Yah, the commandments, statutes, and judgments. The convert will be “caused” to obey, not by force, not by fear of punishment, but because of love and with full agreement. Even human-to-human love is “compulsive” in that it causes behavior to be different; most see this as a good and positive thing, and quite contrary to the compulsion that results from threats and penalties.

But this list of promises, and the wording, leads us to that vital difference between those who are “almost there” and those who are “one” with the Father and Son. It leads us to that question I asked at the beginning. Our Father says, “*Ye shall be clean.*” I ask, to those who read that promise, “*When?*”

The presenter in the video that was shared with us took great apparent pleasure in these promises. We will walk in sanctification, we will do the best we are able, we will not “walk in darkness,” and as we continue to walk in Christ, he indicates, these things become true. As the Savior refines us through spiritual lessons, we become more and more clean, *until eventually, some day, we are truly cleansed.*

But consider the effect that this kind of thinking has on those who accept it. As subtle as it is, this teaching makes allowance for sin. *As close to the truth as it is, it introduces error and distance into the relationship between Christ and His people,* even using the very words of the Bible, because it does not fully understand the context of Ezekiel’s words, and it puts the “unity” that the convert is to experience somewhere into the future, and to a degree reliant upon the “performance” of the Christian.

No doubt, they would not see things this way. They will say, “It is not about works, or performance, because it is merely accepting more and more of God’s grace, and growing in that way.” *But this does make the receiving of the grace a kind of work.* Specifically, it treats grace as if it were a pitcher of water, which can be poured more and more into a cup, until one day that cup is full. The Scriptures tell us that this is not the case; we read, “But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.” (Eph 4:7)



I am not sure if most people who read that verse really understand its power. They might interpret it to mean, “Unto every one of us is given grace according to the amount that Christ gives us as a gift.” In other words, Yahshua decides how much each person is to receive, and gives them the proper amount. Some Bibles even translate it this way; for example, the NIV says, “But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.”

This is totally incorrect. It says that to every one of us is given grace *according to the measure of “the gift of Christ;”* that is, the grace that we receive is equal to the gift of Christ that we

obtain when we accept Him as Savior. “Christ’s gift” is not how much grace He decides we are to get; “Christ’s gift” is literally “*the gift OF Christ.*” It is Himself, His infinite, endless life. His gift to us is the un-borrowed, un-created, eternal vitality that will sustain us for endless ages through our connection with Him, and it is to that limitless degree that we have received grace. We can never receive “more” grace than we receive the moment we become the King’s priest and child. We will never be more “holy” than the first moment we take a breath as a born-again Christian, just as a mature olive tree is not “more” of an olive tree than a sapling.

It is necessary for us to understand this, completely, for Satan seeks to undermine and deceive even the very elect.

Really, we might give this study the alternate title of “*The Gift of Christ,*” because, just like the Faith of Yahshua, we must understand it in a new light. The gift of Yahshua, like the faith of Yahshua, is not just a gift from Him, or faith in Him, *but it is the gift of Himself, and the faith that He Himself has and shares with us.*

Knowing this, we can allow Yahshua Himself to answer the question of “when” we receive these great blessings. Looking right at the verses from Ezekiel, though, we can begin by identifying the ones to whom the Almighty is speaking. From what I quoted, we read, “I will take you from among the heathen,” “Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you,” “ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.” “And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.”

Notice that those things are ALL future-tense. It is not that they become His people, and He becomes their God, and then, sometimes afterwards, they receive the new heart and become clean, obedient, and pure. The simple fact of the matter is this: *The ones to whom Ezekiel’s prophecy was given were not yet Yah’s people.* Consider... if John, for example, tells the Church to “keep yourselves from idols,” where would we need to be in relation to those idols?

Clearly, we would need to be separate from them already, otherwise the instruction would be, “Separate yourselves from idols.” John’s instruction assumes his audience is already separate from those idols.

Look at the passage from Ezekiel again... it does not assume any such thing. Yah is not speaking to a people for whom He is already their acknowledged God. He is not speaking to a people who are already keeping His commandments, who are separate from the heathen, or who have been sprinkled with water. Israelites or not, these individuals are not yet doing any of these things, or the passage would make no sense. Again, these things are all future with regard to the audience of that particular passage.

Applied spiritually, to those who have not yet come into the “land” that Yah has prepared for them, it is evident that these promises are future... to those who have not yet received Yahshua as their Savior, and Yahweh as their Heavenly Father. *Clearly stated, the passage from Ezekiel*

applies not to the Christian, but to those out there in the world that are being called. Now, once they accept the unity offered by the Father and Son, then those promises are no longer future, not even by an instant, but they are the present reality of the born-again Christian.

As I said, we may let the words of Yahshua answer the question of “When?”

We read, “Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.” (John 15:3)

“He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit; and ye are clean, but not all [indicating Judas].” (John 13:10)

For those who had become Yahshua’s disciples, those promises were fulfilled. For those who have become Yahshua’s disciples today, those promises ARE fulfilled... fully filled. We read them today to know what we have received, and so that our joy may be full. The true Christian does not say, “I will put away my idols,” he says, “By Yah’s limitless grace, I have put away my idols.” Then, and only then, does John’s instruction make sense: *Keep yourself from those idols that you have already put away.*

The New Testament speaks of the Old Testament promises as having been given to Yah’s people, for it is in Christ, who is the mediator of this New Covenant, that these promises have been made manifest. It is in His life that we are no longer numbered “among the heathen.” It is in His life that we are brought “unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ,” (1Pet 1:2) which is the water of salvation. It is in His life that we are clean, and are the people of Yah. Those who are “not all” clean, those who are still waiting for cleanliness, who believe that they shall have victory “someday” are still betrayers of the Son of Man. This would be a “hard saying” for them to receive; yet Judas, who was “not all” clean, did not see himself as a villain in the Gospel records. Let all see themselves as they truly are.

Such as these may claim to love Yahshua; indeed, they may betray Him with a kiss... but unless they have accepted His life, the full measure of His grace, they are far from the Commonwealth of Israel, no matter how well-spoken they may be, or how many things other than the heart of the Gospel they get “right.” We have seen examples of such speakers before.

Yahshua says to the sinner, “*Be ye clean. Go and sin no more.*” Many read this and say, “Christ is trying to tell me to cease from sin.” But they are identifying with the pre-Christian, not the redeemed; one cannot accept this instruction as “present truth” and yet claim to be His disciple already. No, present truth is what the Savior said to those who had already given up the lives to become His followers, and to such as these He never said, “Tomorrow, I will keep you from sin. In a week, I will purify you from idols. After some time, you will become obedient to the commandments I have spoken to you.”

To the saints it is said, not, “I will restore you from sin,” but rather, “*I will keep you from falling,*” and if we are kept from falling, again, the statement indicates that we are not fallen, and that we are not falling.

The power of Yah’s promises is that they are NOT future, they are NOT “someday.” Not for those who are truly His. They are ours, now, from the moment of conversion, and we keep perfection with us, even as we walk in the light of Yah’s sanctifying grace.

Now there is more to say on this issue, and what “sanctification” means in this context; but I will continue it next week. For now, I ask that you meditate on what I have shared with you tonight, for though it is fairly simple, it is a vital and effective tool in knowing the true messengers of the Most High from even those pleasing ones who have, unfortunately, not yet understood the power of the Knowledge of Yah.

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