

Zahakiel: Let's begin. Pastor, please offer an opening prayer.

Pastor Chick: Dear Father in Heaven we come before you for a Sabbath blessing as we worship you in Spirit and in Truth and thanking you for the many blessings and inspirations over the past week in Yahshua's holy name, Amen.

Gloria: Amen.

Naraiel: Amen

Elyna: Amen.

Lucan: Amen

daphna dee: Amen

Barb: Amen

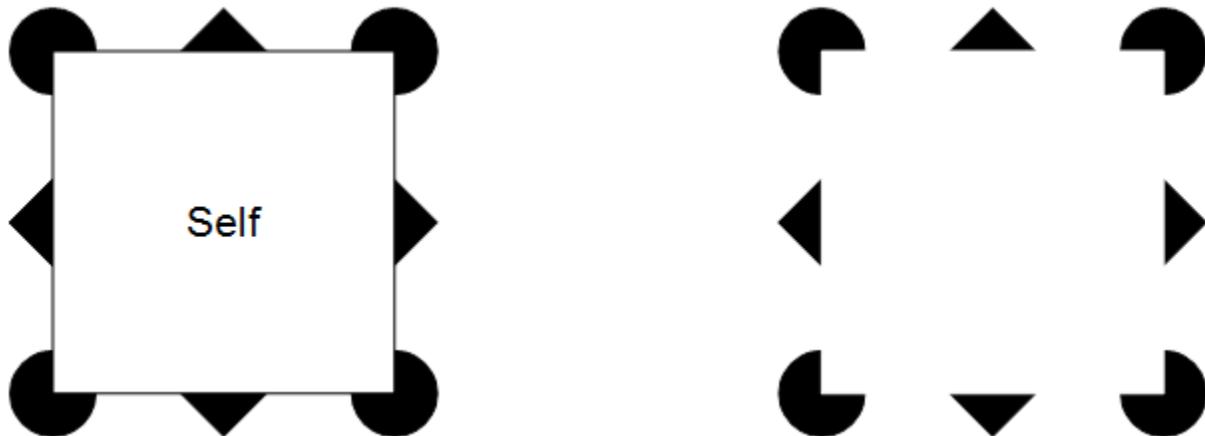
Adriel: Amen

Naraiel: Amen

Zahakiel: Amen.

Zahakiel: Happy Sabbath to everyone. Tonight's study is called "The Ghosts of Self." I had a very different study planned for tonight, but after Luke's study last week, and a conversation with Giselle the next morning, Yah showed me a way to illustrate a principle that I truly believe is vital for our sanctification, and necessary for us in order to overcome some of Satan's most dangerous deceptions.

Although I believe that this study is "for" one or two specific people, I pray that all will understand it, because spiritual things are discerned spiritually, and we all have need of this truth. I would like to begin by asking you to look at a graphic. It is found here, and please let me know when you have seen it: <http://faithofjesus.to/images/Ghost1.html>



Pastor Chick: Seen

Lucan: Seen

Barb: Seen

Elyna: Seen

Adriel: seen

Gloria: Seen

daphna dee: I seen it

Naraiel: seen it

On the left hand side, we see that there is a square entitled "Self." This is an image of an unconverted human being. They have senses, thoughts, feelings, and so on...but at the core, at the very center of everything, is the self. This self is carnal. It is powered by an unregenerate spirit, and therefore the thoughts are impure, and the actions are sinful. By contrast, the right side is a diagram of an individual at the point of conversion. Notice that "self" is completely gone. The brightness of Yahshua has slain it. At the same time notice that, to our senses, according to our eyes, a square is still there. We perceive this because it is the simplest way for our brains to interpret the eight (apparently, but not really, incomplete) shapes around the central area. Our thoughts, our feelings, and our actions are "used" to self being at the center, and so to a large extent, and especially at the beginning of sanctification, we may perceive it as though it were.

Last week, Brother Luke gave a study that I believe was perfect for this moment in time. We cannot trust our experiences. I added a little to that by including some examples about the untrustworthiness of our senses as well, especially in these last days. Our brains are designed to see patterns, to form complete images, even when there is only partial information. This is how we come to conclusions with our reasoning, even before all the facts are readily available. This tendency, to form complete images and conclusions, may be a blessing, or it may be a curse. If it is under the control of the flesh, it is a curse... we may become suspicious of even the innocent, and untrustworthy of others. We would make impulsive decisions, and draw hasty conclusions.

If it is under the control of the Spirit, and we train our consciences and thoughts, then it allows us to have great insights, and to appreciate spiritual truths of even those things that are only partially revealed. Although we cannot truly experience all that Yah is, because eyes cannot see, and our imaginations cannot grasp, His glory, those who have spirit-led minds can receive a concept of Him that is as accurate as may be endured by our limited abilities.

Again, if this aspect of our brains is ruled by the flesh, we find ourselves cursed, and very easily fall victim to Satan's deceptions.

Consider that right side of the image again... there is no "self." Self is, in fact, dead... but to our senses, and according to our experiences, self is still there – and if we submitted to temptation then we would still act according to the "shape" of self, even though it is not really present. I want to emphasize this: even things that are not real can be dangerous. If you were driving along a road, and a bridge ahead of you was destroyed, the "illusion" of a bridge over the gap could lead to your demise. You would trust your senses, deceived though they were, and believe that the way was safe. Similarly, although in the born-again Christian self is dead by faith, (and therefore, in reality) Satan will suggest thoughts and feelings – illusions – in an attempt to get us to act as if self were actually alive. This can feel discouraging, because we might perceive a square... and the greatest heroes of the Protestant faith, including (notably) Martin Luther, struggled with the idea that he was wicked, lost, beyond hope...all because Satan was showing him a "self-shaped hole," and saying, "This looks like 'self' to me. Self must still be alive!" Understanding this allows us to reconcile perfectly two apparently contradictory, or at least contrasting, doctrines of the Bible.

We read, in some places, "Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death; that, like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." (Rom 6:4)

"And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." (Rom 8:10)

"For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." (Col 3:3)

That last is one of my favorite verses. According to Paul, when we are in Christ Yahshua, self IS dead. It is slain when we receive Him as our substitute, and baptism is the outward sign, the "burial" of that self to rise no more. According to this same Paul, however, "I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily." (1 Cor 15:31)

Inspired writings, such as those of Ellen White, speak about a daily struggle with self. While Paul, in that last verse above, was in all likelihood speaking about putting himself in physical danger on a regular basis for the Gospel work, his words have also been applied at times to the spiritual conflict with temptation. This has, unfortunately, caused some (seeking excuses to doubt) to stumble at the concept of once-given, once-received, complete victory over sin. They describe conversion as a "daily experience," and seem to have both the experience, and the written authority, to interpret this as daily sinning and repentance. But how can this interpretation be accurate, if "self" that leads to sin is already dead?

One way to consider the matter is this, that our understanding of righteousness will exceed that of Ellen White, and Paul, and Moses who gave the Law, because Christ is in us, the perfect Hope of glory. (Psa. 119:100, Col 1:27) This is certainly true; although having said that, these words that we are quoting are not wrong either. After all, they are a reference to a spirit-inspired statement. While we might think of the experiences, and therefore the teachings, of past authors as being somewhat incomplete, since they all died, and therefore were not translated as were Enoch and Elijah, it may also be understood just as legitimately as a matter of perspective – of what they were speaking of when they (in these places) speak of the "self."

There is the true self, that carnal nature that separates the unconverted man from Yahweh. Then, there is the "ghost" of the self that remains behind (for us to identify and eliminate by repentance) when it is removed. Inspiration also tells us, "It is left with US to remedy the defects in our characters, to cleanse the soul temple of every defilement." [Testimonies for The Church, Vol. 5, p. 214, emphasis added]

I do not often quote Mrs. White directly in these Friday night studies, and yet since we are examining a doctrine that she addressed, it is important for us to understand how the Scriptures may be used to express a principle. In this, we are merely repeating what the Word has already said, "Seest thou how faith wrought with [Abraham's] works, and by works was faith made perfect?" (James 2:22) In this verse, James is speaking of faith in a slightly different sense than belief or trust. The term used, *pistis*, generally does mean faith, but it can also mean "character," specifically (according to Strong's Concordance) "the character of one who can be relied on."

When we speak of being "in the faith" we mean in the life that is motivated by faith, the state of mind that produces righteousness. Thus, by our beliefs, and by acting according to those beliefs, we make "the faith," the life lived according to Yahshua's Spirit, perfect. We are sanctified. Satan, of course, will do all he can to stop this, and he will take those for whom Yah has already removed the self, and point to thoughts we have, feelings we experience, and perhaps acts done through

imperfect understanding, and say, "Self is alive!" The Christian must never accept such thoughts as coming from the Father and Son. To the believer, the Father and Son speak comfort or loving rebuke, never doubt. To the unbeliever, the Father and Son speak invitation and anticipated acceptance, never doubt. To those already lost, neither the Father, nor the Son, nor Satan, has anything at all to say.

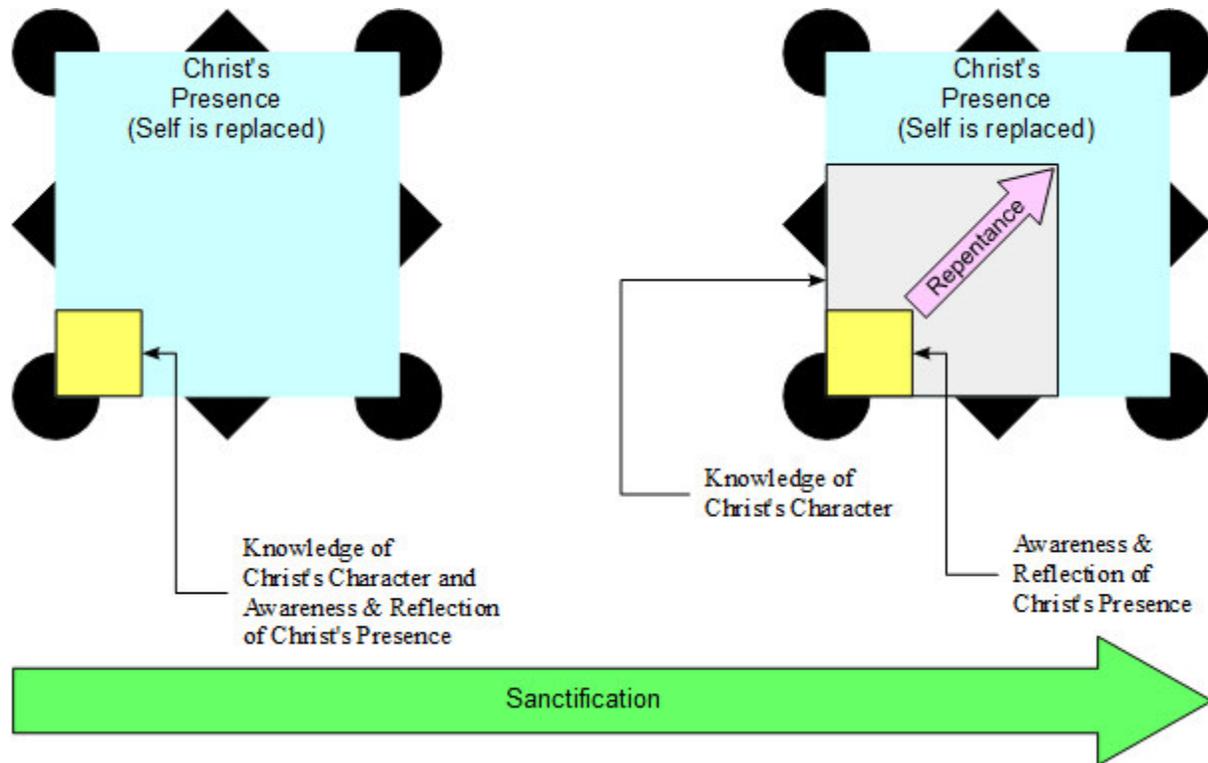
It is a waste of time for anyone to doubt, to ask, "What if I am not truly saved?" The Scriptures tell us that if you have made the decision to accept Yahshua, then "ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." (Col 3:3) This is true despite our temptations and our feelings, and our lives bear out the truth of it. That is the end, the absolute end, of that discussion, and the last that needs to be said following this affirmation is, "Get behind me, Satan." You need spend no more time speaking to the Enemy of souls.

So then, if self is dead, the "dying daily," the daily struggle with self, is really the struggle to recognize the reality, to identify the illusion and acknowledge that self is truly dead. A thing such as this is either true or false. The self cannot be "somewhat dead," or "50% dead," or "mostly dead," or even "almost entirely dead." What Yahshua does, He does perfectly, including slaying the wicked with the brightness of His coming. There are no such things as partial Christians, for there is no such thing as a partial Christ.

The daily dying to self is the daily settling deeper into the Sabbath rest, into the knowledge and the Spirit-confirmed (and therefore, reliable) experience that "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I [for "I" is dead], but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." (Gal 2:20)

Now, according to my diagram from before, what does sanctification look like? It is growing in the knowledge of Christ. The reality is, when self dies, Christ completely replaces MY-self with HIM-self. Our experience of this, our awareness of it, however, can only be accomplished with agreement since it is not a "hostile takeover." We may only perceive a small amount of "self" to be missing at first, and we promptly fill it (that is, allow it to be filled) with Christ. The false thoughts that once occupied that location in our souls are replaced with true thoughts, and Satan cannot successfully attack us in that area again. As time passes, and our understanding grows, we recognize more of what "self" was, and how much it affected our thoughts and actions. We understand Christ more clearly, and how different we have been from Him when self was alive. It is then left up to us to repent, and our awareness of Christ's presence will grow to fill our newly expanded understanding.

Here is another image to illustrate this: <http://faithofjesus.to/images/Ghost2.html>



Let me know when you have seen this one.

Lucan: Seen

Adriel: seen

Barb: Seen

daphna dee: I seen it

Elyna: Seen

Pastor Chick: Seen

Peter_Jr_18: Seen

Zahakiel: We see the difference, on the right hand side, between our prior experience of Christ's character and how much of His character we have come to understand after some new insight. In order to be perfectly fulfilled, as we were just after conversion (on the left hand side when both boxes are the same size) we repent. We turn away from those thoughts that lingered due to the shape of our now-dead selves, and more of the "carnal ghost" is replaced with the experience of the "Holy Ghost," with our awareness of the spiritual presence of Christ. As we turn to Him, Christ completely fills our understanding of His character and His love to more perfectly reflect the reality of His complete presence. We fill the "room" that we begin to see more and more clearly as the light brightens, as a previous CSDA parable describes it, and we consequently become more capable of reflecting His presence to the world.

It is important to note that this ONLY happens after self is dead, in the gap that is left behind. It cannot happen while self is alive, for if it is, there is nowhere for Yahshua's presence to fill. Another way of saying it is that the Three Angels of Revelation must be received in their proper order; only

after we have been born again can we truly grow, can we really appreciate the significance of doctrines, of holy days, of intercessory prayer, and so on.*

To conclude tonight's study, let us, brethren, believe the Word as the truth of Yahweh. If it tells us that "self" is dead, then any suggestion, or insinuation, that "perhaps self is really alive after all" must come from the Father of Lies. As the serpent said to Eve in the Garden, "Has God really said this?" The fruit, to Eve's senses, was "obviously" good for food. It was clearly going to result in her enlightenment, and she, trusting her own judgment and experiences with the other fruits of the Garden, missed the mark.

We, "daily," deny the Serpent's deception. We, daily, reject the fruit he offers, the belief that self is still alive, though it has been slain by Yahshua and laid in the grave. We shall not miss the mark. We shall not judge ourselves based on our own, previous experiences with our "selves." We know that self is dead, and if it has left behind a hole, a wound, that looks exactly the same as "self" did – at least at first – then we know only that we have the work of faith to accomplish, to be healed of that wound, to fill it with a clearer, and more honest, understanding of reality. Self is dead, and Yahshua lives in us despite what our experiences and senses may conspire to tell us, despite what Satan desperately wants us to believe.

Finally, brethren, be strong, and of good courage. If our thoughts trouble us, perhaps our feelings would give us comfort. If our feelings were troubling, perhaps our thoughts could affirm our faith. And yet, even for the best of men, Satan will suggest both thoughts AND feelings to assault us. When both of our pillars of assurance are toppled, in what, then, can we trust? We can trust only in our knowledge of the promises of Yah, that He will accept the decision of the soul that cries out for salvation. He will receive the prayer of those in need, even those with an imperfect understanding of the "science" of Salvation. He will exercise infinite pity to save the lost, and not cast out one soul that is willing to stand in the light of His judgment and His mercy (for it is but one light) to willingly see, willingly shed, all that would keep us from sharing with Him the experiences He has planned for His people in the endless ages to come.

Let us live the lives that we have accepted, perfect, from the hand of the Creator. Let us believe in the Savior, and in the choice that we have made to be His, because He has given us the will, the freedom, to love Him, and follow Him, and to be One with Him.

Are there any questions or comments about tonight's study?

Adriel: Amen

Elyna: Amen.

*Footnote:

As a practical example of this, suppose that a newly converted person smokes cigarettes. As time passes, he gains knowledge that smoking is a sin against Yahshua's temple. His "gray box" of knowledge becomes larger. When he understands this, and sees that there is a lack, he repents and gives up smoking. He realizes that Christ in him has filled that gap, and he is free of his addiction.

The yellow box, which is his awareness of Christ in him, which allows him to testify to the healing and reflect Christ to the world, now fills his knowledge. Yahshua's presence does not actually get any bigger; that is infinitely large, and fills the whole person. At the same time, He does not force us to be Christ-like. We must take up our cross and follow Him.

Elyna: C/Q

Zahakiel: Go ahead.

Elyna: In the transcript will you be able to include the diagrams. I would like to share it. I am not sure if they will fit well into Word...

Adriel: A

Elyna: I liked this study very much. I like the perspective of it. Thank you. End

Zahakiel: Jody handles the formatting of the study that is posted. It can easily be converted into a Word document with the images included - my notes have them embedded. Go ahead, Jody.

Adriel: I have them included. 😊

Elyna: (Ok)

Adriel: (end)

Lucan: C

Zahakiel: Go ahead.

Lucan: I recall for some time after I was first converted, waking up in the mornings... In those first few moments of consciousness, I would come to a sense of where I was, what day it was, and a host of other feelings and thoughts. And, generally, those thoughts and feelings would reflect the old man. Then, I would recall daily that I had been born again, and realize those thoughts and feelings were false. This all happened very quickly as far as mental processes go, but, it has been a lens through which I've understood "dying daily..." And, the blessing of realizing how much better the reality is, compared to the emptiness that existed before, made waking up an experience of joy. 😊<End.>

Pastor Chick: C

Zahakiel: Amen 😊 Go ahead.

Pastor Chick: In terms of "ghosts of self", I think I have thought in terms of "remnants (or residue) of the old man". I recall that after people die, their clothes and living quarters remain with distinct odors left behind from the deceased. END

Elyna: C

Zahakiel: Right. That is what the diagrams show... that the residue can look like (or smell like, if you prefer) that which is already dead and gone. And Satan attempts to use that to convince the believer that it is still present. Go ahead.

Elyna: I also want to request prayer for a niece of mine who would like to attend our meetings on Friday nights. She would like to move closer to me... and she can't afford a computer right now. I am requesting prayer for her that Yah's will be done in her life and that she finds peace and rest in Yah. Her name is Danielle. Thank you. (End)

Lucan: C

Zahakiel: Go ahead.

Lucan: Two comments... One, re: Sis. Guerline's niece, it would be helpful to me to have that request on Facebook, both for recollection and any follow-up questions.

Two, I am recalling times when I had more direct interactions with other brethren in person. I have been blessed not to hear it for some time now, but, I can recall some souls who, when shown a sin or error, would respond with a question akin to, "are you saying I'm not converted?" This study, I think, should be of assistance in overcoming that temptation if it still harasses any among us. The idea that uncovering a remnant of the old man indicates unconversion is a suggestion of the enemy...And, one very well calculated to prevent the change necessary by distraction. We are blessed to know the fullness of Yahshua's promises, and the creative power of His Word. We know that Satan himself is but a tool in Yah's hands for the sanctification of His people...

Elyna: Amen.

Lucan: And as we are kept in mind of these things, we are blessed in the spirit of self-examination and cleansing that finds its monthly symbol in the New Moon. I would put us in memory that uncovering a sin is a cause for rejoicing, as it places us one step closer to the heavenly gates.
<End.>

Adriel: Amen

Zahakiel: Absolutely. Thank you for that. All right, if there is nothing further, then I'll ask Bro. Luke to offer a closing prayer.

Lucan: Dear heavenly Father. We thank you for the fullness of your character, given to us freely in Yahshua. We are blessed to continue learning more of the fullness of your glory, and to perfectly reflect all which we understand. We are thankful for the knowledge we may gain on this earth, reflected to those who are still in sin and we are thankful for the knowledge we will gain through countless ages, reflected through eternity to our brethren, and in worship before your Throne. May we each be blessed as we continue in the light and comfort of your judgment. In Yahshua's name we pray, amen

Peter_Jr_18: Amen.

Pastor Chick: Amen.

12-9-2016 The Ghosts of Self

daphna dee: Amen

Elyna: Amen.

Adriel: Amen

Barb: Amen

Gloria: Amen.

Zahakiel: Amen.