

Zahakiel: Pastor, please offer an opening prayer.

Pastor Chick: Dear Father in Heaven. We are thankful for your presence with us as we gather to worship you in spirit and in truth. We ask for a fresh breath of your Holy Spirit just now, thanking you for your blessings, in Yahshua's holy name, Amen.

Gloria: Amen.

daphna dee: Amen

Elyna: Amen.

Naraiel: Amen

Zahakiel: Amen.

Lucan: Amen

Barb: Amen

Adriel: Amen

Peter_Jr_18: Amen.

Gadriel: Amen, Amen

Zahakiel: Happy Sabbath to everyone. Tonight, our study is called "Water to Wine." Last New Moon we did not have a formal meeting. As a result, I used the time to review the state of the Answers from Heaven Bible study series, and began work on its fifth and final section. I am hoping that this will be completed very soon, and it concludes the set of studies by speaking of the concept of the "Covenant." This is one doctrine that receives fairly unique emphasis in the Faith of Yahshua, and thus in CSDA teachings. Other Churches make passing mention of Yah's agreements with mankind, but they generally refer to Old Testament foundations, or something very informal if it is ever mentioned in the context of the Gospel.

What the Spirit has shown Yah's people is that we are to be One with the Father and the Son. We are to have Their mind, and character. We are to have Their presence within us, and this can only be accomplished with a unity that goes far beyond merely reciting a prayer and waiting for good feelings. The Faith of Yahshua is something that may produce feelings within us, of peace, of happiness, of purity; and yet, the faith itself cannot be felt. It is something that is agreed-upon, that is decided.

A man will (hopefully) be very pleased with His new wife; however, it is rarely the act of marrying, the act of committing, that produces this great joy. He may speak of her beauty, her charm, and the prospect of a happy life together. In other words, it is the characteristics and qualities of the bride that causes the groom to rejoice. Similarly, the bride may find much with which she may be pleased with her new husband, but (modern, materialistic western culture notwithstanding) it is not actually the wedding that causes her joy. Spiritually, the act of uniting causes pleasure, not in the act itself, but in the one with whom one unites. Thus, while carnal and nominal Christians often focus on the feelings, the Bible and its true believers focus on the commitment that leads to those holy

sensations. In this way, we know that the feelings are genuine when they arise, and not the result of false impressions or incomplete understandings.

One of the questions that the last section of the Bible study series addresses is: How can we know we have found the people who are truly in Yah's covenant, in this eternally bound relationship with Christ?

In the notes provided to the one conducting the study, I speak of Church membership, and the character of the individual believer. I speak of "love" being the primary characteristic revealed by those who have accepted the Faith of Yahshua, not only a professed love for Yahweh, but an abiding love for the Creator that also manifests as love and fellowship with one's fellow human beings. The true covenant with Yah is not with Yah only, but also with His people. The two great commandments in the Law reflect this, (Mat 22:37-40) as does the description of baptism in the New Testament, which reads, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one Body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." (1Cor 12:13) We read, elsewhere, "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." (Gal 3:27)

This pair of verses, as several others, associates Christ with His Body. The man and his wife become "one flesh," while Christ and His Bride become "one Spirit." This is the unity, this is the blessing, of the born-again experience, and no distinction is made between being one with Yahshua, and being one with His people. I stress this, as we have stressed it before, for precisely the same reason we are called "Seventh-day" Adventists. Yah would have His people meet error and ignorance directly, in as bold a manner as possible. If the Seventh Day has received the most attention from Satan, to remove its blessing from Yah's people, then His chosen messengers will rise up and stand under the very banner of that blessing. If the world (and worldly Christians) believe that the Christian religion is a solitary experience, without fellowship, and gatherings on appointed times, and communion among its members, then we speak of these things, attempting to correct, not their doctrines and practices only, but their perception of Yahweh who gave us these sanctifying directions.

As I noted these things for the study, Yah's Spirit took me to the scene at the wedding that Yahshua attended with His mother, the location and time of His first public, recorded miracle. I did not know why at first, I would see this miracle, this transformation of water into wine, as I contemplated the characteristic of Yah's true people... and then I realized that I was seeing a very simple way of understanding who Yah's people are.

Yahshua's first miracle that we have described in the Scriptures is His transformation of water into wine. We should recognize that the "first" of everything is significant in the Bible. It is the most important, it is the "head," the spiritual element with which all that follow are identified. Adam, as the first man, was the "head" of mankind, and he remains so... we share his destiny (specifically, what would have been his destiny after his sin)

unless we become born again and take Christ as the new "Head," that of redeemed humanity. The New Moon is the first day of the month, and in Hebrew the first day of the first month is called "Rosh HaShanna," or the "Head of the Year." The turning of water into wine is the rosh, the "head," the first, and perhaps the most important of Yahshua's miracles. It is easy to focus on His more dramatic ones. After all, He walked on water, healed diseases and cast out demons with a word, stilled the stormy seas, and raised the dead back to life. Surely, these are more important than the change of one liquid into another liquid? Yet this miracle, with its symbolic meaning, is one of the most important to His ministry, because it identifies His legacy among mankind, and allows us (whether we understand its symbols and meaning or not) to identify others who are walking the Narrow Way to Heaven.

As Yah's people, of course, we are privileged to know, and to understand, what the Savior did, and why. As we know by now, if we want to understand a symbolic teaching in the Bible, whether it is an event like this, or a prophecy, all we need to do – it is very simple – is look at the individual symbols in their context. We do this quite a bit with Revelation, perhaps because the evangelists of the mainstream SDA Church "specialize" in this during their seminars to win converts, and yet the method works on the symbols in every book of the Bible, including the Gospel records.

What is water? Most of us have heard the SDA Revelation Seminar, or have read the Bible Commentary, or have at least heard other Adventists discussing Bible prophecy. As such, this one is an easy question. Water represents people, the population of the earth. Of this we read, "Woe to the multitude of many people, which make a noise like the noise of the seas; and to the rushing of nations, that make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters!" (Isa 17:12) More explicitly, "The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues." (Rev 17:15)

Now, what about wine? This is a more complex symbol, because it can be used to represent different things, some apparently contradictory, and this is even before considering the "fermented" vs. "unfermented" issue. Let's look at a few uses of wine in the Bible. We read: "Therefore Elohim give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine." (Gen 27:28)

"All the best of the oil, and all the best of the wine, and of the wheat, the firstfruits of them which they shall offer unto Yahweh, them have I given thee." (Num. 18:12)

"And the [grape] vine said unto them, 'Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?'" (Judg. 9:13)

"Yahweh hath trodden under foot all my mighty men in the midst of me; He hath called an assembly against me to crush my young men. Yahweh hath trodden the virgin, the daughter of Judah, as in a winepress." (Lam 1:15)

"And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before Elohim, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath." (Rev 16:19)

Leaving out references to wine that is obviously the fermented, intoxicating kind, we find that the verses above attribute the following characteristics to wine: joy, celebration, blessing, but also sorrow, judgment, and tribulation – testing. This, it appears to me, is the perfect symbol of Yahweh's own covenanted people – His Church. In Yahshua we have joy, celebration, and blessing. He has given us His own sinless life in exchange for our own. He has redeemed us unto everlasting life, and in the world to come, we shall share "new" wine as a sign of our victory. (Mat 26:29)

But in Yahshua we have something else as well: "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Yahshua shall suffer persecution." (2Tim. 3:12)

"And He said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." (Luke 9:23)

One passage that sums up both ideas quite well is found here: "And Yahshua answered and said, 'Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the Gospel's, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.'" (Mark 10:29, 30)

This is the "wine" experience. It is sweet – a blessing, it is joyful, and yet if it is not carefully tended, it can become bitter. It is the blessings of Yah that bring us joy, and peace, and yet it is because Yah has given us blessings that we shall be "hated of all men."

Consider our recent experiences with both groups and individuals over our keeping of the annual Feast days. These are things we have found to be blessings, and yet we encounter others – who do not have these blessings – that seek to take away from others that which they have never found themselves. They dress up the deception in pretty clothing, at times, (and not-so-pretty at others) but underneath any disguise is an empty place, a void where Yah's presence should be.

Those who follow Yahshua receive His joyful life, but because of that life we become, like Him, a people of sorrow, a people of judgment, and as that first miracle demonstrates, this is what Yahshua's influence does to the people of the earth.

The Son of Yah has taken water, people, from the world and transformed them into wine. He has pulled us from a common experience, at the end of which we would go the "way of all the earth," (1Kings 2:2) and made us something far more valuable. In His very first miracle, Yahshua demonstrated His ministry, and its effect. He has taken the waters, from "every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people," (Rev 14:6) and He has "pressed" us together, through trials, through shared experiences, and made of diverse grapes one royal drink.

We read that the "first shall be last," and so it was that at His first miracle, Yahshua's wine, the best, was served at the end. (John 2:10) Similarly, the 144,000 come forth under the message of the Three Gospel Angels, and are sent forth among the waters of mankind at the very end of human history.

When we are made "new," and thus, "new wine," we find that we have moral excellence – the way that Yahshua's wine was described at the wedding. (John 2:10 again) We have victory, a pure doctrine, and we have an understanding of the times. These are a part of the blessings Yah has given to us. At the same time, while we are a joyful people, are we not also they who "sigh and cry for the abominations" done in the holy city? (Ezek. 9:4) Are we not also the people of judgment, both those who stand IN the judgment and, by our presence, reveal that Yah's judgment on the world is just?

We demonstrate, by our presence, by our victory and our testimony, that Yah's Law is perfect, and transforms the soul. By our conversion from water to wine, we reveal the miracle of Yahshua's sacrifice, that it is both real and effectual, even in this world that rejects true spirituality and often the talk of miracles altogether.

We are the lightning-rod, the target of Satan's most furious efforts, small and apparently insignificant as we are...and we will not know, until we look back from the other side of translation, how often, and how fiercely, Yahweh's holy angels have intervened to keep us safe, and to preserve us until the sealing of Yah's saints had been complete.

Now, let us take a lesson from Yahshua's first miracle. The best wine was saved until last, at that wedding. The most pure, the most holy, appeared at the end of the process, at the end of the joining of the man to his wife, and symbolically Christ to His Bride. When Yahweh and His people join together, as they have been joining together since the Cross, (2 Cor. 5:19) at the very end the most holy shall appear. As Peter asked, in light of this information, "what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?" (2Pet 3:11, 12)

In brief conclusion, I will say this: we are called to be the best wine. We are to have the richest blessings, but we are also destined to go through the most strenuous trial. Let us be steadfast in prayer, for ourselves and one another, as we both press and are pressed together. It is not until the grapes burst, and leave their flesh behind, that the wine of Yah's triumph, His Victory in the Great Controversy, shall flow forth.

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

Elyna: Amen. C

Adriel: Amen

Zahakiel: Go ahead.

Elyna: I enjoy this study and find most beautiful the similitude between the water and the wine but more so the last line: "It is not until the grapes burst, and leave their flesh behind, that the wine of Yah's triumph, His Victory in the Great Controversy, shall flow forth."

Thank you for sharing this study. I am eager to see the series of study completed...

Adriel: Amen

Elyna: Praise Yah for all He does in our life to prepare us to be ready for Yahshua, amen.
End

Naraiel: Amen

Lucan: C

Zahakiel: Go ahead.

Lucan: The idea of wine representing Yah's people is a new one to me, and interesting. When I consider the symbolism of wine in the Scripture, especially regarding covenants, my mind is taken to the communion meal. Where, Yahshua says that the wine is His blood, shed for the remission of sins and the beginning of the new covenant. "Blood" has some symbolism itself; Yahweh considers it sacred, because it is the "life..." When we partake of communion, as only members of the covenant may do, we partake of the bread, which is Yahshua's body, broken for our sins. And, this is where Christianity at large seems to stop. They have a sacrifice, and a broken body - displayed on the cross still, in some faiths. But, no High Priest administering the sacrifice. And, no life of righteousness within. There is no new covenant; there is no "wine..." Whereas Yahshua did not stop with the bread; He continued to give us His blood, His life, His righteousness. So, we see it written that "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him..." (2 Cor. 5:21)

Adriel: Amen

Lucan: And, we may see that in the symbol of the wine; as we eat His flesh, and drink His blood, we become one with those things both in Spirit and, in the literal wine and bread, in body as well. <End.>

Zahakiel: Very nice. Thank you for sharing that. Are there any others with thoughts to share? All right, if not then I ask Bro. Luke to offer a closing prayer.

Lucan: Dear heavenly Father. We thank you for the blessings of the Sabbath hours, when you draw especially near to your people. We thank you for the calling you have given each of us, to daily partake of Yahshua's blessings and sufferings. We ask that your Spirit will continue to guide and sanctify us, as we show judgment, rejoicing, and gladness to the world and watching universe. In Yahshua's name we pray, amen.

Pastor Chick: Amen.

Elyna: Amen.

daphna dee: Amen

Adriel: Amen

Naraiel: Amen

Zahakiel: Amen.

Barb: Amen

Gloria: amen