

Zahakiel: Well, let's get started. Pastor, please offer an opening prayer.

Pastor Chick: Dear Father in heaven. We come before your Throne with praise and thanksgiving, in spiritual worship and appreciation for answered prayers and victories over the enemy's devices. We request afresh baptism of Your Spirit just now in Yahshua's holy name, Amen.

Naraiel: Amen

Adriel7777: Amen

Lucan: Amen

Barb: Amen

Zahakiel: Amen.

Elyna12: Amen

Piedad: Amen

Zahakiel: Happy Sabbath to everyone. Tonight's study is called "Blind Spots."

I would like to begin with a common statement, but not from the Bible. I am sure you have heard it before: "But King David sinned, and he was a man after God's own heart." Either you've come across this statement directly when evangelizing those who have not yet accepted the First Angel of the Gospel message, or you have heard it discussed by those who have. It is a common defense against the Biblical understanding of the concept of conversion, and it is a very effective one to the mind set on self-justification, because there doesn't seem to be a commonly-known, clear, Bible-based response.

Seventh-day Adventists who are committed to righteousness by faith may point to post-Biblical writings, which indicate that only those who are strangers to the Faith of Yahshua, and whose primary intention is to justify sin, will bring up the example of those who have acted in such ways in the past. Unfortunately, this is not even very effective against other SDAs, much less those whose understanding goes no further than the Books of the Canon.

This brings to mind the larger idea of self-examination, which is necessary for true sanctification. This work of a lifetime, this sacred preparation for the glories of the world to come, requires a keen sensitivity to sin, and a willingness to admit wrongs, despite what it may cost in comfort, financial security, relationships with others, and – perhaps most dauntingly – a person's very concept of who he or she is.

We know the verse that tells us, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves..." (2Cor 13:5)

Many mis-read that verse, and understand it to mean, "Examine yourselves, to see how well you are doing in the faith." Christianity is not a religion of degrees; if it were,

we could not avoid being correctly identified as a works-based belief system. Some would be "more holy" and others "less holy." In the past, these may have been convenient terms for a basic understanding that some are called of Yah to do special works, some apostles, some evangelists, some prophets... but the 144,000 must move past this limiting idea of what it means to truly be born again.

If Christ is in all, then all are holy. When Christ is in one who is dead to self, and this is the only kind of person in whom Christ may be, then that individual is as holy – as set-aside and intended for Yahweh's purposes – as Christ Himself. This may be a hard thing for some to grasp, but one can never call Yahshua "Brother" and "Friend" if he does not accept the gift that the Father and Son have given him. "And the glory which Thou [Father] gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one." (John 17:22)

Many who call themselves Christians have difficulty saying, "I am a saint." How will they fare when they are called to testify that they share actual, divine glory with the Father and Son? These things are too wonderful for carnal understanding, but we believe it because He who does not lie has declared it. This is the nature of our faith. This is the wonderful life that Yah has given to His people.

Returning to that verse from 2 Corinthians, Paul says to examine yourselves "whether ye be in the faith." In other words, whether you are in the faith or not... not if you are doing okay, if you are passable, if you are getting better at the faith.

I wrote a study some time ago entitled, "Nobody Almost Makes It." The idea here is the same – one does not fall just barely short of salvation or destruction. Those who are saved are saved to the uttermost, and have no shadow of damnation upon them. Those who are destroyed have nothing of Christ in them, despite what their profession may have been, or the quantity and nature of their good works.

One is "in the faith," or one is "not in the faith." Some are called to be in the faith, and BY faith we greet them with joy, anticipating their imminent decision to proceed through repentance for the life they have previously lived, a profession of the invincible faith of Yahshua, and then baptism into the spiritual and earthly Body of Christ.

And when it comes to self-examination, only those who are entirely honest with what they discover in their examinations will overcome the pervasive and subtle attacks of the Enemy of souls. It has always been a solemn time... but this is the most solemn of times. Two thousand years ago, Peter described Satan as "a roaring lion [that] walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:" (1Pet 5:8) Is it reasonable for us to conclude that he has learned nothing, or grown less ferocious, between that time and this?

In this most solemn of times, there are two ditches that the Christian must avoid when walking the Narrow Way and engaging in self-examination. The first is to let Satan convince him that some transgression is not really a transgression, so that it may be justified as merely an error in judgment, and overlooked. The second is to let Satan convince him that some error in judgment is not really a mere error, but an actual transgression.

The danger in the first ditch is obvious; none who have the stain of sin upon their character may enter into everlasting life. Those who fall prey to this deception are described here, "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works?' And then will I profess unto them, 'I never knew you: Depart from me, ye that work iniquity.'" (Mat 7:22, 23)

The Savior does not deny that these acts were done, or even that they were done in His name – no devil will depart for any less authority than that of the son of Yahweh – but that those who did them were not truly His people. They do not know Him for, if they did, they would love what He loves, and hate what He hates. Should they encounter sin in their own character, they recognize it as repulsive, and they run to life, putting away the offending spot, and calling upon the power of the Creator to destroy it utterly, so that it may never arise again. Their testimony is not, thereafter, "Look at what I found. Oh, how I struggle with this sin. How often we find things like this in our minds and spirits."

No, that is not the utterance of the heart that has seen the face of Yah. That testimony is, "I have overcome all things by the power of Christ in me, the mighty Hope of Glory."

Adriel7777: Amen

Zahakiel: But what of that second ditch? What is so bad about mis-identifying an error as a sin? Both require correction. Both may potentially require restitution. Both would send us to prayer.

The problem, though, is as I said before... those who have the Spirit of Christ love what He loves, and hate what He hates. To have the "mind of Christ" means we can, and do, know the difference between a transgression – an action contrary to the will of God that we know (or clearly ought to know) is wrong – and an error in judgment, a decision based on ignorance of information we have genuinely never encountered or considered before. Those who consider errors in judgment to be sin may fall into legalism, and Satan has legitimate claim to gradually and unfailingly darken their understanding of Yahweh's loving nature, so that He becomes more Judge than Savior, more Critic than Comforter. Remember that the Holy Spirit of Yahweh (which means, ultimately, the purest expression of His essential nature) is called the

Advocate, the Comforter, and the Counsellor. This is how Yah wishes us to see Him; it is how humanity must see Him, if it is to trust Him to define their very persons, and to guide them unerringly through both temporal and everlasting life.

So how do we know? How can we tell what is a transgression from which to repent, and a "blind spot" in our understanding from which we may learn?

The Bible records incidents that seem to "clearly" be blind spots, and yet Yahweh considered them sin. The Bible records incidents that seem to "clearly" be sins, and yet Yahweh considered them errors.

Of the first, we may read, "And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, 'Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?' And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice; and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also. And Yahweh spake unto Moses and Aaron, 'Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.'" (Num 20:10-12) Let me know when you've read this.

Lucan: F

Adriel7777: F

Kimberly: F

Barb: F

Pastor Chick: F

Peter: F

Elyna1: F

Zahakiel: The leaders of Yah's people have often grown frustrated with the apparent slowness and lethargy of the professed Chosen Ones. Yahshua Himself asked His disciples in some consternation, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me...?" (John 14:9)

Moses must surely be excused for expressing some anger here, after their years of constant complaints, doubts, sedition, and outright defiance of divine authority... And yet, Yah did not overlook his unguarded words and actions. Even less do we consider that Yah said, "Because ye [plural] believed me not," including both Moses and Aaron in His pronouncement, despite His high priest saying nothing recorded in the sacred text.

Of the second, we have already referenced David's adultery with Bathsheba, and his betrayal and indirect murder of her husband Uriah in order to cover up his crime. Surely, surely, this was a known sin. We may read of a less dramatic, but equally relevant, example in the New Testament.

Paul writes, "But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles, but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. "But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, 'If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?'" (Gal 2:11-14)

To those seeking justification for their own shortcomings, these are rich resources to mine. They say, "Look at how even these great men did things that were not always upright. Surely, my own little indulgences and blurred lines cannot be so bad." They never consider the Scriptures in a balanced way, looking at contrasting incidents, saying, for example, "Even if there was a misunderstanding on my part, look at how Moses was denied entrance into the Promised Land for merely an angry word and single display of anger." I am not suggesting that this ought to be the foundation for those examining themselves to see whether they are in the faith or not... but what I am saying is that there is a "complete picture" that those on either side of the Narrow Way are unable, or unwilling, to see.

There are transgressions, and these the children of Yah avoid at all cost. There are blind spots, and these the children of Yah identify, and put away quickly, knowing that they are called to be free of all such things.

So what is the difference? It lies in the very term that we use to identify the second type, the "blind" spot. Consider perhaps that most obvious example, that of King David and what we would rightly identify as his great transgression.

We read, some time after the events in question, "And Yahweh sent [the prophet] Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, 'There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds. But the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. "'And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him.' "And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, 'As Yahweh liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die. And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.' "And Nathan said to David, 'Thou art the man...'" (2 Sam 12:1-7) Let me know when you've read this.

Lucan: F

Pastor Chick: F

Barb: F

Adriel7777: F

Peter: F

Elyna1: F

Ruth: F

Zahakiel: Nathan goes on, in the continuing passage, to explain to David how great his crime against Uriah, and indeed Israel, had been, but I ended there because that is the moment of divine revelation: Thou art the man. The King, upon hearing these words, was shocked. He had not considered his actions in light of their impact on others. He had not seen his great corruption in his words and actions; his anger at this relatively minor infraction in Nathan's parable reveals just how blinded, truly blinded, David had become because of his authority, and the un-earned glory to which Yah had raised him. He had not learned that those who are given great power are the more accountable. Their gifts are provided to them for the purpose of serving others more effectively, of doing more for the needy than those who are themselves poor. David had a blind spot... perhaps one of the largest in recorded history, but he clearly did not feel the sting of conscience, or the burden of guilt, until Yah's messenger brought it before his face.

And this is the nature of the blind spot, that it cannot be seen. The man who sees a thing is evil, and participates anyway, will either revel in the sin, justify the sin, or suffer under the guilt of the sin. Those are the only three options. None of those options reflect the Faith of Yahshua, and so one who does any of these must repent, be born again of the Holy Spirit, and be baptized into the Body of Christ.

But he who does not see, he experiences none of these things – he must be healed of blindness and corrected in love. One of the parables that the CSDA Church uses for sanctification is that sometimes we discover "dirt" on our faces. This is a significant image, for if I have dirt on my feet, I can see it. If I have dirt on my hands, or under my fingernails, I can see it. And yet if I have dirt on my face, even though that dirt is actually closer to my eyes than my hands or feet, I cannot see it. But it is written, "The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His Kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity." (Mat 13:41)

Those things that offend, including dirt on the faces of the saints, cannot be permitted into the gates of the Great City. Before probation ends, before the saints are sealed for eternity, their faces will light up with glory, and shine... spotless before the Throne of Yah. This is why, this is one of the reasons why, unity of faith, the fellowship of the saints, is so very important. It is only when a brother or sister points out a missed point, or holds up a mirror (as we say) so that we can see our faces, that these offending things may be seen. Those who say, "I have Christ, and that is all I need,"

have neither the gift of the brethren, nor indeed Christ Himself. Despite their claims, they do not see Christ at all – who dwells within His people, and not merely at the Right Hand of the Father.

So then, this is how we avoid the snares of Satan. We may know a blind spot when we encounter it, because we will do none of those things that indicate a consciousness of sin on any level of thought. If one brother says to another, "I perceive that you have some dirt on your face, for I have seen this or that," then if he revels in what is revealed, if he attempts to justify what is revealed, or if he falls to feelings of guilt and seeks the sympathy of others in self-pity, then either it was never a blind spot to begin with, or he (now seeing it) wishes to keep it as a part of his person. Beware of these three reactions!

The saint says, "Thank you for showing me this dirt on my face. You have helped me to reflect more clearly the character of my Savior." The saint can never use a blind spot as an excuse for some action, because until it is revealed as offensive, it never occurs to him that it requires an excuse. And, in that moment when it is seen for what it is – sin – the blindness is removed, and immediately there is repentance. Immediately there is correction, self-correction, which leads to the removal of whatever it was so that it never again offends.

Again, "The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His Kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity." (Mat 13:41)

Offenses are all removed; either the offenses themselves by those who are willing to surrender them when identified, or "them which do iniquity" for those who are not. This is nothing to lament; this is cause for rejoicing. Matthew 13:41 speaks of the Judgment of the Living, which time this now is. The work in which the saints are engaged is a good work. It is a holy work. It is a blessed work, for it makes us happier, healthier, and fitted for service in the world to come.

The ideas in tonight's study may be simple, but perhaps some are hearing them for the first time, and perhaps some need to hear them one last time. There is "meat" that Yah requires us to learn. The flesh of the Son of Man is "meat indeed," and necessary so that we will have an everlasting part with Him. And it requires the saints to grow up. It requires the saints to be mature in the faith, not speaking as children in their understanding, for the eyes of the universe are upon them. This matter of self-examination is central to the work of the 144,000 as the last moments of human history play out, and we cannot afford to make a mistake, to mis-label those things shown to us of the Holy Spirit, lest, even if we find the Way to life ourselves, we leave an imperfect testimony as a stumbling block to sincere souls who seek those things we have been blessed to provide for them. May Yah forbid that this be the case for any who hear these words.

In this, as in all things, the apostle gives us good counsel.

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of Yah, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." (James 1:5)

And then, let us think, speak, and live only from that which we have received, that our vision may be clear, our paths may be straight, and our inheritance among the blessed for ever after.

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

Pastor Chick: C

Zahakiel: Go ahead.

Adriel7777: Amen

Pastor Chick: I am not clear on the point of "blind spots" ... as you have presented them. I recall having to analyze the sin of David with Bathsheba, years ago, as I contended for the faith, and I discovered that David required reconversion; and, of course, a true blind spot does not give cause for reconversion. I would need to review the study to say more. END.

Zahakiel: Right. I think that David's case is a somewhat unique one, because it involved the violation of written Law. It is a situation in which he did not really have an excuse for ignorance on his actions. Today, as we analyze self, it would not be something that could be clearly answered with an "it is written." It would involve applications of principle, and actions springing from faulty understanding of some of the more detailed points of character. As you say, a true blind spot would not require reconversion, because there is no consciousness of spiritual guilt. The reactions of people who know they are doing something wrong, as outlined before, is an indication that this isn't the case. Are there any other questions or comments? I think it may be worth following up on Pastor's comment... his case did require a reconversion (I think Mrs. White made a comment to that effect) and yet he was surprised when the prophet was sent to him with that convicting parable. If I have any further thoughts on this, I will add a comment to the post on Facebook.

Piedad: Interesting study, I'm reading and listening as well. Transgression is when a person don't keep in mind the God's law?

Zahakiel: Yes. It is when they violate a divine instruction.

Piedad: Okay, thanks for your answer.

Zahakiel: You are welcome 😊 If there are no others, then I will ask Bro. Luke to offer a closing prayer.

Pastor Chick: C

Zahakiel: Go ahead.

Pastor Chick: And whatsoever is not of faith is "sin." END

Zahakiel: Yes.

Piedad: Thank you Pastor.

Zahakiel: Please go ahead when ready, Bro. Luke.

Lucan: Dear heavenly Father. We thank you for the work of sanctification, and our sure expectation of its completion. We know that you are the author and finisher of our faith, and we are blessed to walk only in faith, being freed from sin. We ask that your Spirit continue to reveal any spots of dirt, as we surrender all gladly on your altar. In Yahshua's name we pray, amen.

Pastor Chick: Amen.

Zahakiel: Amen.

Adriel7777: Amen

Naraiel: Amen

Peter: Amen

Piedad: Amen

Barb: Amen

Elyna1: amen.

Kimberly: Amen

Marie-kadeth: Amen