

Lucan: Bro. David, would you please offer an opening prayer?

Zahakiel: Loving and holy Father in Heaven. We thank you for the week that has passed, with both its joys and challenges, for we see Your guidance and presence, leading us through, and bringing us to this time of rest and communion with the brethren. We thank you for these sacred hours, in which our minds are centered on You, and in which we draw near to You for a fellowship that none but Your sons and daughters can know. Bless us now with eyes to see and ears to hear, that we may receive the blessing you have intended for us, and may those things that you now give us bring us strength for the week to come. We ask this in Yahshua's name. Amen.

Pastor Chick: Amen.

Barb: Amen

Adriel: Amen

Elyna: Amen.

Lucan: Amen

Peter_Jr_18 Amen

Lucan: Two Sabbaths ago, we reviewed certain aspects of the prophecy of Daniel 9; specifically the 70 years allotted to Israel, and what was to be done with that probationary time. We also reviewed the Scriptures that reveal the principle of a day for a year in prophecy, and in doing so, reviewed the example of those who, on the very borders of the Promised Land, failed to enter into the rest of Yahweh (Hebrews 4), and preferred to return to the world.

This week I would like to conclude the notes that I have for this study, beginning by turning from the days of Israel under Moses to the days of Israel as the 70 weeks came to their close. We might be tempted to conclude that the Sanhedrin of Yahshua's day were, for all of their sins, not particularly "worldly" – they were, after all, so religious that they accused the Lawgiver of violating His own law. They were so guarded against the leaven of the world that they separated themselves wholly from the gentiles, regarding them with suspicion and distrust. Yet what does the Scripture say about this? Who is the "prince of this world?" A few passages are sufficient:

"Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Eph. 2:2)

"Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out." (John 12:31)

"In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." (1 John 3:10)

We see that Satan is the prince of this world, and worketh in the children of disobedience. We see that those who do not do righteousness are made manifest as the children of the devil, including those in Israel who, for their self-piety, rejected the Savior: "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." (John 8:44)

We may reference inspired commentary for one final reference on this point, speaking of the end of the 70 weeks in particular: "The Jews misinterpreted and misapplied the word of God, and they knew not the time of their visitation. The years of the ministry of Christ and His apostles,—the precious last years of grace to the chosen people,—they spent in plotting the destruction of the Lord's messengers. Earthly ambitions absorbed them, and the offer of the spiritual kingdom came to them in vain. So today the kingdom of this world absorbs men's thoughts, and they take no note of the rapidly fulfilling prophecies and the tokens of the swift-coming kingdom of God." [DA 235] (LMK)

Zahakiel: Finished.

Adriel: F

Barb: F

Gloria: F

Naraiel: F

Peter_Jr_18: F

Pastor Chick: F

Lucan: Let us make no mistake, then; the children of the devil are the children of the world, and it is the love of the world, in any or all of its facets, that ever clouds the minds and numbs the senses of those who profess to be awaiting their Lord and Savior. Yahshua offered this warning to His disciples:

"And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares."

"Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." (Luke 21:34, 36)

Why does He tell us to "take heed to ourselves" if we have the victory? Why must we "watch and pray always" if we are born again and kept from known sin? It is because Satan is subtle, and knows that the world will rarely influence the children of Yahweh while wearing its true colors boldly. We are thus told: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." (James 1:27)

And again: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:" (1 Peter 5:8)

How does one keep themselves unspotted from the world? "Watch and pray," yes; "Take heed," yes; yet the Scriptures tell us more specifically than this. What are we to watch for? Of what are we to take heed?

"And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection." (Luke 8:14)

We see it is the "cares of this life," "riches," and "pleasures of this life" which will choke out the good seed of the Word. The "earthly ambitions" that blinded the Jews of Yahshua's time, the "kingdom of the world" that absorbs men's thoughts, attempts to do so regardless of the station, profession, or calling of those tempted. Yet the cares of this life require tending, do they not? Riches are needed to some extent for personal needs and the support of Yah's work, as many of us know. The Scriptures themselves say that "for even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat." (2 Thess. 3:10)

Herein lies the subtlety; herein lies the need to watch, to pray, and to take heed. Rarely will Satan present the world to Yah's people in the form of obvious distractions from the things of Yahweh. More commonly, the world comes in the pretense of that which is, in and of itself, innocent or even holy.

Work is a blessing; yet Satan will pervert this to attempt to cause us to focus on riches and the cares of life over the One who gives us both our wealth and our life. Family is a blessing; yet Satan will pervert this to attempt to draw us into worldly engagements, or to place as secondary the work of Yahweh and the true Family. Recreation is a blessing; yet Satan will pervert this to offer amusements, which turn the mind from Yahweh rather than offering "re-creation." The Sabbath is a blessing; yet Satan will pervert this to Sunday. The name Seventh-day Adventist is a blessing, yet Satan will use this to hide the very mark of the beast. We may see, over and over, that it is in the guise of righteousness that Satan offers the world to us, even as he did to Yahshua himself in the wilderness.

We may see how the Savior responded when those things which of themselves are good, were made to be a distraction from the work to which He was called: "Then came to him his mother and his brethren, and could not come at him for the press. And it was told him by certain which said, Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to see thee. And he answered and said unto them, My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it." (Luke 8:19-21)

Now, what do we take from this? Was Yahshua disrespectful of, or uncaring towards, His earthly mother? Certainly not; not only did He give the commandment to honor thy father

and mother, but among His last acts on earth, while hanging on the cross, was to appoint John to care for her earthly needs. Rather, we see that He would not allow even His lawful earthly affections to overshadow His mission to the lost.

On the topic of the lost, we see another requirement of those who would keep themselves unspotted from the world: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." (2 Cor. 6:14-18)

This passage is often applied to the marriage covenant, and with good reason; there is no greater curse to a saint than an unsanctified spouse. Yet Paul does not specify marriage here. He simply says, be not unequally yoked; come out from among them, and be separate. What does this mean? How can we come out from among the world altogether, while living in it? Paul wrote in the epistle before this one, to the same church: "I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world." (1 Cor. 5:9, 10)

And, we might look to the example of Yahshua Himself: "But their scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners?" (Luke 5:30)

The temptation may be to conclude that it is only those sinners who claim Christianity we are to be separate from; the sinners, publicans, and fornicators of the world must be reached out to, even to the point of dining with them. Yet we must look at the context very carefully: "And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, Follow me. And he left all, rose up, and followed him... But their scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners? And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." (Luke 5:27-32) (LMK)

Adriel: F

Zahakiel: Finished.

Pastor Chick: F

Gloria: F

Kim: F

Barb: F

daphna dee: F

Peter_Jr_18: F

Lucan: We see from this and other accounts that Yahshua did not dine with sinners and publicans _on their terms_. When He did so, He was among those who had "left all, rose up, and followed Him." He directed the conversation, and did not permit it to divert into common, unsanctified channels. How is it with those in our close association? How is it with us among our coworkers, our family members, our spouses, our children? Is the conversation, the time spent together, the activities and purposes, solely of the Heavenly sort? This is the example Yahshua has left to us in these things; "these are my mother and my brethren." Inspiration affords us the following commentary: "God does not own the pleasure seeker as His follower. Those only who are self-denying and who live lives of sobriety, humility, and holiness are true followers of Jesus. And such cannot enjoy the frivolous, empty conversation of the lover of the world." [AH 525]

And again: "You may see no real danger in taking the first step in frivolity and pleasure seeking and think that when you desire to change your course, you will be able to do right as easily as before you yielded yourselves to do wrong. But this is a mistake. By the choice of evil companions many have been led step by step from the path of virtue into depths of disobedience and dissipation to which at one time they would have thought it impossible for them to sink." [AH 519]

We may certainly, and are given a great commission to, labor for the souls of those we encounter; and certainly those most closely tied to us. Yet the motives must be, at every point, examined - "watch and pray." "Take heed to yourselves." We may speak with the world lover, but does our flesh reach out, enjoying their frivolous, empty conversation? If so, take heed. Those whose lives are not sanctified to Yahshua, and who yet share our homes, workplaces, and frequent company, may well seek to induce us to "taking the first step in frivolity and pleasure seeking" while in their company. If so, take heed.

Inspiration gives us a "decisive test" on this matter: "By the frequenters of the ballroom God is not an object of thought and reverence; prayer or the song of praise would be felt to be out of place in their assemblies. This test should be decisive. Amusements that have a tendency to weaken the love for sacred things and lessen our joy in the service of God are not to be sought by Christians." [AH 517]

Would a prayer or song of praise "kill the mood" in the home, the family gathering, the mirthful conversation? If so, take heed.

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the

world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." (1 John 2:15-17)

As we ourselves stand on the very borders of the Promised Land, we have good reason to look closely at those who came before, and what led to their failure. Satan will not come to us as that which is most offensive to our senses, but as an angel of light, with good intentions and motivations. The world was not presented to the Sanhedrin under the guise of the gentiles, or pagan influence. It was not presented to Yahshua in the wilderness as the worst and most sinful examples of all ages, but as the most pleasing, and best angled to secure the interests of God.

Yet for all of these deceptions, we are not left without a sure guide. Yes, we are to "watch and pray." We are to "take heed to ourselves." We are to "come out from among them, and be separate." Yet these are the fruit of those of whom it is said, "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world." (1 John 4:4)

It does not say, "will overcome them" - it says HAVE overcome them.

Adriel: Amen

Lucan: And why is it past tense? "Because greater is He that is in you" - that has already overcome the world - "than he that is in the world."

We see again: "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." (2 Peter 1:4)

"Having escaped," it says, not "that shall escape."

Lastly, from our very church creed, John 17: "I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." (John 17:14-16)

Let us therefore speak boldly the testimony of Yahshua, having brought our actions into harmony with our faith: "Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." (John 14:30)

Are there any questions or comments on the study tonight?

Adriel: Amen

Zahakiel: C

Lucan: Go ahead

Zahakiel: Thank you for sharing this study... As I was reading your presentation, I was reflecting on my interactions with friends over the past few years. The truth is, I don't have very many... even those with whom I grew up, and once felt very close, I rarely if ever see. We just don't have much in common. And... it's not something I deliberately "did." I did not say, "They do not appreciate my conversations about faith, so I won't spend time with them any longer." It's just something that seems to have happened naturally. Of the few friends I do spend any time with at all, these are the ones that I have had significant spiritual conversations with on several occasions. They may not always believe what I share with them, but they are comfortable with the subjects that I enjoy discussing, and they aren't just being polite, we can pick it up again later from where we left off... These are the ones about which I have some hope, from an eternal perspective. There are one or two I can think of... that some might consider to be "rough around the edges," and yet...they seem more receptive to the things that I share with them than those society might consider to be the more respectable ones. That is an interesting parallel... with the groups that the Scriptures mention, and that you cited, as being the first and most eager to follow Yahshua. End.

Lucan: Thank you for sharing. Are there any others with a comment?

Adriel: C

Lucan: Go ahead

Adriel: I also appreciated this timely study. I have very few friends I spend any time with also. I share as I'm able...and will be "taking heed" and "watching and praying". End

Lucan: Personally, I am not sure that I could call anyone I know a "friend" outside of Church context. I have noticed that, whether in faith or the world, "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard..." Whether the things that are seen and heard are of Yahweh, or of self. Those who hear someone speaking of Yahweh will either choose to "see and hear" so that they might speak, and join the conversation... Or, they will go away back to the world to see and hear more of it. One of the dangers of television, no doubt; is what is seen and heard there is rarely sanctifying.

Are there any others with comments to share? If not, I'll ask Pastor to close with prayer.

Pastor Chick: Dear Father in heaven. We thank You for the warning and edification given this hour, and may we write it upon our hearts for future victories over the subtle visits of our enemy. In YAHSHUA'S holy name, Amen.

12-30-2016 Unspotted from the World

Gloria: Amen.

Barb: Amen

Peter_Jr_18: Amen.

Lucan: Amen

Adriel: Amen

Naraiel: Amen

Kim: Amen

Elyna: Amen.

daphna dee: Amen

Zahakiel: Amen.