

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

Pastor Chick: Dear Father in Heaven, we come before your Presence with thanksgiving for all of Your benefits. And now we ask for an outpouring of Your Spirit during this time of holy convocation. In Yahshua's holy name, Amen.

Barb: Amen

Elyna: Amen.

Adriel777: Amen

Naraiel: Amen.

Marie joined the chat

Lucan: Amen

daphna dee: Amen

Zahakiel: Amen.

nattie: Amen.

Zahakiel: Happy Sabbath to everyone. On this Sabbath, right after the New Moon, I thought it would be good if we considered, prayerfully, the impact of the impression that we as CSDAs give to the world, both individually and as a collective Church. As we walk perfectly in the footsteps of Yahshua, as we go wherever the Lamb goes, we are also learning to perceive things as He does, from a divine, objective perspective.

As Adventists have been teaching for years, mankind has been caught up in the Universe's conflict, which we have come to call "The Great Controversy," and the way that we advance the cause of Christ with regard to this controversy is by submitting to the sanctifying power of Christ, and by teaching the Gospel to others. We overcome, through the power of our Savior, and we teach others in turn how to overcome. This overcoming is the development of righteousness, even the righteousness of our Father, by the belief that He sustains us and keeps us from falling; in other words, it is righteousness by faith, and therefore victory over all sin in our lives.

With regard to submitting to sanctification, this is something that Christ Himself accomplishes in us, and we allow Him to transform us by considering the flesh and its impulses dead. We choose, by the grace He offers us, to let Him lead in every aspect of our lives, and this sustained choice, this state of spiritual submission, is a part of the Sabbath Rest Principle.

Each commandment of the Decalogue has not only a "letter," but also a "spirit," and the spirit of each commandment is an essential component of the perfection into which our Father is leading us.

We have spoken about sanctification quite often before, and we certainly will again, but tonight I would like to focus on that second aspect of how to advance the cause of Christ in the Great Controversy – the outreach to others. How do we teach others the Gospel?

In the early days of Christianity, frankly, things were a bit easier in many ways. One was either a Christian or a non-Christian. That seems obvious, but the distinction has blurred significantly in recent years.

If one was not a Christian, we would speak to them of Christ. We would convince them of their sinful condition, and point out that their current beliefs (of whatever kind) really did nothing to turn them away from doing destructive and self-destructive acts. We would speak of the judgment to come, and the everlasting life for which mankind was originally defined. And then, when they understood their current spiritual state, we would introduce them to the Savior. If they wished to be free from their current sinful state, they would accept Him, and would move from "non-Christian" to "Christian."

In this generation, it's much harder. One may be both a Christian and a non-Christian; that is, one may be a Christian in label, in name, and in outward appearance, but inwardly an unrepentant sinner. Even worse, one may be an open sinner, and still claim to be a follower of Christ, declaring boldly, "Who are you to judge me?"

This was not the Way that the Old Testament foreshadowed and the New Testament outlined, for how can such people be reached? How can they be saved? In the earlier days, one could effectively teach the Gospel through lecture and debate, as Paul and the deacon Stephen demonstrated. Those who heard them were not Christians; many of them were not because they did not know of Christ, and they only needed to be educated for them to make an informed choice. Today, the name of Christ, or at least His title, is common, and in fact is used as a sign of frustration and anger as often as it is revered.

There is still a place for teaching who Yahshua is; who He really is still has, and will always have, the potential to reach and transform the heart. There is still a place for discussing the ins and out of doctrine, for by this the attention of some may be captured, and they may seek to learn more of the truth.

But with the growth of ecumenism and confusion within Christianity, one method has come to prominence, and that is the living testimony. I am, in fact, calling this study "Ruined Testimonies" as we examine some aspects of this living testimony down through the ages.

The testimony has always been the most effective way of teaching the Gospel to others. Again, it may be that a lecture or a discussion over differing interpretations may open the way, but it is really the testimony that pierces the heart: "This is what Yahshua has done in my life, and what He can do in yours – come and see for yourself." For this reason, the concept of the Testimony has always been sacred to our Heavenly Father, and tonight I want to share with you just how important He sees this aspect of our communication with others. We read this of the nature of our Father:

"Yahweh is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy." (Psalm 103:8)

Again, "Yahweh is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy."
(Psalm 145:8)

The Spirit reaffirms this in the New Testament:

"Yahweh is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance [...] and account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you."
(2 Pet. 3:9, 15)

Yahweh is merciful, gracious, slow to anger, and long-suffering. These things are true, and repeatedly stated in the Scriptures. And yet, there are times during which our Father appears to grow angry rather quickly, and afford little to no opportunity for repentance before punishment is dealt. These are rare occasions, to be sure, and unusual. Isaiah calls the direct intervention of Yah in the punishment of sin to be "His strange work" and "His strange act." (Isa 28:21)

For the most part, our Father appears to let sin punish itself, by simply letting each effect find its cause. Unrepented sins damage the mind, leading to poorer and poorer decisions. Ultimately, the character is ruined, and the glory of Yah that transforms the redeemed into their everlasting, spiritual bodies does nothing but destroy those who cannot survive separate from sin.

Yah has no need to strike each transgressor with a bolt of lightning, or cause the earth to swallow up a rebel... yet, there are times when He has done precisely these things. What is different about these specific cases? What is it that causes our Father to do "His strange act" and immediately punish sin in a way that cannot be reasonably attributed to the natural effects of the sin? Let us briefly consider four cases, although the principle will hold true in any similar set of events. The first two situations involve Moses. We read of the first incident:

"Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men, and they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown[...]" "And Moses said, 'Hereby ye shall know that Yahweh hath sent me to do all these works; for I have not done them of mine own mind. If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men; then Yahweh hath not sent me. But if Yahweh make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have

provoked Yahweh.' "And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them. And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods." (Num. 16:1, 2, 28-32)

Let me know when you have read this passage.

Lucan: F

Adriel777: F

Barb: F

Pastor Chick: F

nattie: F

Zahakiel: Two things are noteworthy about Moses' prayer. The first is that he specifically called on Yah to administer something other than a "common" death as evidence that He was directly involved.

daphna dee: F

Zahakiel: Some that we have met have said, "Yahweh never punishes sin directly." This is clearly not the case, as the prophet directly calls on Him to do just that, and He – just as directly – responds.

The second thing of note is that this incident involved the reputation of both Yahweh and His servant before the people of Israel. We see this theme repeated in the second event involving Moses, which may be read here:

"And Yahweh spake unto Moses, saying, 'Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink.' "And Moses took the rod from before Yahweh, as He commanded him. 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. 20:7-12)

Let me know when you have finished with this one.

Lucan: F

Pastor Chick: F

Adriel777: F

daphna dee: F

Barb: F

Elyna: F

nattie: F

Zahakiel: Here again, the reason for Yah's immediate pronouncement of punishment, followed shortly thereafter by its delivery, is because His servants did not faithfully execute their duty "to sanctify [Him] in the eyes of the children of Israel."

The third incident is well known also:

"And they set the ark of Elohim upon a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab that was in Gibeah: and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drave the new cart [...] And when they came to Nachon's threshingfloor, Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of Elohim, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook it. And the anger of Yahweh was kindled against Uzzah; and Elohim smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of Elohim." (2 Sam 6:3, 6, 7)

And finally, here is the fourth, from the New Testament, lest we be tempted to view this as an "Old Covenant" phenomenon, or that Yah has changed in this regard since the sacrifice of Yahshua:

"But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, and kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, 'Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto Elohim. "And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost; and great fear came on all them that heard these things. And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him. "And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. And Peter answered unto her, 'Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much?' And she said, 'Yea, for so much.' Then Peter said unto her, 'How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband.'" (Acts 5:1-10)

Let me know when you are ready to proceed.

Pastor Chick: F

Lucan: F

Adriel777: F

Naraiel: F

daphna dee: F

Elyna: F

Barb: F

nattie: F

Zahakiel: This is four of several incidents. We could mention others, such as the unnamed prophet who was sent to Israel from Judah, and was eaten by a lion during his return journey. In each case, there was instant punishment for transgression, or at least (in the case of Moses himself) the immediate declaration of coming punishment.

None of these things would probably be seen, through human eyes, as the worst thing any of these individuals had ever done in their lives, and yet these specific actions prompted a rare act of direct intervention from Yah. The common thread should be apparent. In each case, the individual involved ruined a testimony that Yah intended to give to either Israel or the world at large.

The water at Meribah was intended to show Yah's mercy to a weary people. The leadership of Moses was to have foreshadowed the perfect and miraculous guidance of Christ to the Redeemed. The Ark was a sacred object, only to be touched by the priests, and only under very specific circumstances – for nothing that pertains to Yah was to be treated as ordinary or common. The money being given to the Church was intended to be a New Testament repeat of the building of the Tabernacle by the Israelites, of which it was said, "And Moses gave commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, 'Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary.' So the people were restrained from bringing, for the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much." (Exo 36:6, 7)

While to the eyes of the world, the individual incidents may be seen as small things, we who will replace the fallen angels in the administration of Heaven must judge as He does. We must see, not only the short-term effects, but the lasting impact of even the slightest flaws in a testimony intended to be given to the on-looking universe. What souls would have been saved had one word been different, or one choice been more faithfully obedient?

As CSDAs, who are called to be among the 144,000, "whatsoever we do" is a testimony to the glory, goodness, and mercy of Yahweh. Often should we reflect on the nature of this high calling. In light of what we know about the first and second Advent of Yahshua, Peter asks, "What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?" A few verses later he writes, "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless." (2 Pet 3:11, 14)

Peter, the same Peter that pronounced Yah's judgment on Ananias and Sapphira, is speaking of the Christian Testimony, the Living Witness that we bear to the world, and the

universe beyond. It is to be without spot, and blameless, in all that we choose. Only upon such people does the Latter Rain fall, and only by the hand of such people will the work be finally completed.

Let each decide, "I will be among these people. I will put away all of the flesh that keeps me from a sure covenant with Yahweh, and with His People," and then we shall see to a greater degree, and at a greater scale than before, what the testimony of the true faith of Yahshua can do.

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

Adriel777: C/Q

Zahakiel: Go ahead.

Adriel777: I have appreciated this study as I do all of them and am grateful to Yah for them...My question is concerning the death of the person who touched the ark. He was trying to keep it from falling, and it seems I may have asked this before...could you expound on this some? End

Zahakiel: What, specifically, is the question? If you are asking "why" it happened...that is the purpose of this study. When a testimony Yah is attempting to give is subverted, this is seen as a most serious offense, and ought to give us pause...for we, who claim to have "the testimony of Yahshua" bear this responsibility in all that we do.

Adriel777: Okay, thanks. End.

Lucan: C

Zahakiel: Go ahead.

Lucan: Following up on Sis. Jody's question... Uzzah (the man who touched the ark) has been mentioned a few times in some of our writings on the trademark. It is a good example of the saying, "the road to hell is paved with good intentions..." Uzzah may have had a good motive from the human perspective (keeping the ark from being dropped in the mud) but, he disobeyed an explicit command of Yahweh, in order to "do Yahweh's work a favor..." As if Yahweh, the creator of all existence, required the hand of a human to keep his Ark from falling. It is much the same spirit as those who sought to "do Yahweh a favor" by steadying the work with human effort via the trademark law. Now, imagine the different testimony had Yahweh kept His own Ark from being tarnished. So, we see there is the "disobeying an explicit instruction," as per the letter. And, we see there is "ruining the testimony," as per the spirit. Yahweh's commands are never arbitrary. There is a good He seeks to accomplish, and will accomplish, when we cooperate with them.

Zahakiel: Right, and further... well, two things... First, Yah's primary purpose is always about saving human beings. However, if His name is made common, less than glorious in the eyes of those to whom He is trying to teach sanctification, they will ultimately fall prey

to some deception of the Enemy. This must be avoided at all costs, for our sakes. Thus, He must act "for His name's sake" at times, though it is really for ours, even if this earns him the criticism of either being too harsh and abrupt in His punishments, or seeking worship for its own sake.

Second...Yah will turn any event to His glory, whether His instructions are followed or not. The lesson, however, will change, and perhaps not as many will be sanctified through it. As Bro. Luke has said, imagine how much more Yah would have been glorified if He had kept His ark from falling? But now, we at least have a useful object lesson with which to discuss the faithlessness of those who would resort to civil power to defend the sacred. When we see the broad view of history through the eyes of the translated, we will all see how much better Yah's initial plans would have been, although we will praise Him as well for turning even humanity's bad decisions into something worthwhile. Are there any others with thoughts to share? All right, then I will ask Bro. Luke to offer a closing prayer.

Lucan: Q

Zahakiel: Go ahead.

Lucan: To Sis. Jody... I note you asked for "expounding," but I am wondering if, in the expounding that's been done, your question has been satisfied? <End.>

Adriel777: A.

Zahakiel: Go ahead.

Naraiel: C.

Adriel777: Yes... One seems a little more pre-meditated than the other, but Yah is all-wise and your expounding helps to see all angles. Thank-you. End.

Zahakiel: Go ahead, Giselle.

Naraiel: About Yah's initial plans. We can see that Yahweh intended for Israel to become the light of the world, but failed to do it in the way Yahweh intended. However, like a passage of Isaiah says, Yahweh says that He will raise some kind of worship to His name in Egypt and Assyria. However, just because Yahweh still makes things work to His name and glory, it doesn't mean we can't contribute to make his plans "A" work, if we are more perceptive of His will. End.

Elyna: C/Q

Zahakiel: Go ahead.

Elyna: As we were discussing here the case of Uzzah, the question was asked, would Yah have stricken down the person, if it was a stranger, who just happened to pass by and came to the help of the oxen. I think the end result might have been different. While Yah is just and no respecter of persons, the soul that sin it shall die but He will judge each one

according to the knowledge they have of Him in righteousness and faith. But as in every one of these circumstances, they were indeed strange acts for our heavenly Father to perform. End.

Elyna: ...

Naraiel: A.

Elyna: Well the question was to confirm if indeed it would have been different if it was a complete stranger from Israel. End.

Zahakiel: The case of Uzzah is a difficult one to consider. Even King David, who was Yah's beloved, was troubled by it. I suspect that the event was intended to be troubling, for this too is a testimony.

Elyna: (Yes)

Zahakiel: And while it may not be something "solvable," I do think the result would have been the same if it was a stranger; however, in such a case, the blame for the death would have fallen on the Israelite guards who were to surround the Ark, and keep it from being treated as a common object. In other words, someone in Uzzah's position would still have been seen as guilty for allowing a passer-by to draw so close to this unique object.

Go ahead, Giselle.

Elyna: (Right)

Naraiel: Well, several situations came to mind. Eve was deceived by Satan in a way she didn't expect, and Satan presented himself in a way Adam didn't specified to her, and even so her actions and thoughts (more or less in a gray area) produced the consequences of sin, death to her and Adam, when he accepted her offer. Ignorance doesn't save us from the consequences of sin, even though we may be doing things the best way we know how, we still need to know the best way Yah expects.

Elyna: 😊

Naraiel: and finally, the instruction was given before that Levites were supposed to handle the Ark, and be in charge of it. And even if a stranger would have been the case, the reputation of Yahweh still was in play before the Israelite, who knew about those previous instructions. End.

Lucan: C

Zahakiel: Yes, I think those factors play into why I think the consequences would have been the same in that case. Although yes... the Israelites, who knew the instructions,

would have borne the brunt of the blame. As it's written, those who transgress through ignorance...

Naraiel: (Some are officious toward people, and other can become or are officious toward Yahweh.)

Zahakiel: are beaten with few stripes, and those who know better with many, but the wages of sin is "stripes" in either case. Go ahead.

Lucan: I think Sis. Giselle raises an important set of points. It is easy to look at the flash point of an event, yet, carefully examining cause and effect can reveal the principles behind it. Uzzah touched the stumbling ark, but why did it stumble? Because it was on a cart being driven by oxen. Why was it on a cart being driven by oxen, when Yahweh had explicitly said only the Levites were to bear the ark via beams? This responsibility lay on the priests and the king who knew that law, yet set up the transport another way. So, there were several errors made, of which any one might have prevented the tragedy. Had the instructions been followed, a stranger would never have been close to the ark, the ark never would have stumbled, etc.

So, a few lessons I see from this... One is that, if the "kings and priests" do not fulfill their responsibility to share their knowledge, others may die through avoidable ignorance. Another is that, if Yahweh's instructions are carefully followed in the first place, much difficulty and heartache is avoided. Perhaps others see more. 😊 <end.>

Adriel777: Amen

Naraiel: C

Elyna: 😊 Amen

Zahakiel: Very good, yes... and also that sometimes it does take the abrupt, the tragic, to prompt this kind of deep examination that must have followed for David and those involved in the planning of this transfer of location. Go ahead, Giselle.

Naraiel: That's a good point. Another situation came to mind, and another lesson.

Elyna: C

Naraiel: When we are supposed to know better, and Yahweh knows this, he doesn't protect us from the consequences. In the case of Uzzah Yahweh didn't intervene in relation to the animals. This reminds me when the Philistines took the Ark from the Israelites in the times of Eli and Samuel. When the Philistines decided to return the Ark, (after receiving evidence of Yah's existence) they returned and allowed the animals to take it back to Israel. And in that case, the Ark didn't stumble and arrived safely. Interesting. End.

Zahakiel: That is, yes... Go ahead, Guerline.

Elyna: It seems also that Israel followed after the Philistines who for fear of the Ark had sent it on oxen, but Peterson made the comment remembering that Israel just left the Ark on the cart instead of carrying it themselves when they received it for fear, why would they be stricken with fear as the unconverted? Another object lesson. End.

Naraiel: C.

Zahakiel: Go ahead.

Naraiel: One fear comes from dread, after receiving God's plagues, and the other fear was coming from Reverence to Yah's instructions. The Israelites of the times of Samuel were mindful of Yah's instructions, and preferred to leave it on the cart, until some Levites could pick it up. It looks that way. The Israelites of the times of David, didn't remember that instruction, or was the fear of Yahweh was less? End.

Zahakiel: It may have been a combination of several "small" things that added up to the large error.

Naraiel: (yes).

Zahakiel: Are there any others with comments or questions? All right, please go ahead when ready, Bro. Luke.

Lucan: Dear heavenly Father. We thank you for the outpouring of your Spirit, by which we live the life of Yahshua. We thank you for the testimony of Yahshua, which is shared in life and word. We know that your judgment is just, for your law is just, having been written in our hearts. As we go forth into the remainder of the Sabbath and eternity, we ask for the ministering presence of your angels as we work together for your kingdom. In Yahshua's name we pray, amen.

Pastor Chick: Amen.

Barb: Amen

Zahakiel: Amen

Naraiel: Amen

nattie: Amen.

daphna dee: Amen

Elyna: Amen.

gadriel: Amen

Adriel777: Amen