

Zahakiel: It's time to begin. Pastor, please offer an opening prayer.

Pastor Chick: Dear Father in Heaven. We ask for Your special blessing for this convocation as we worship You in spirit and truth. In Yahshua's holy name, Amen.

Barb: Amen

daphna dee: Amen

Zahakiel: Amen.

Elyna: AMEN.

Lucan: Amen

Ruthline: Amen

Zahakiel: Happy Sabbath to everyone. Tonight's study is called "The Rock of Offense." It is taken from an Old Testament passage that was paraphrased by Paul in the New, and we read it here:

"Sanctify Yahweh of Hosts Himself; and let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread. And He shall be for a sanctuary; but for a Stone of Stumbling and for a Rock of Offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem." (Isa 8:13, 14)

Paul mentions it here:

"What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; as it is written, 'Behold, I lay in Sion a Stumblingstone and Rock of Offence; and whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed.'" (Rom 9:33)

Let me know when you have read these passages.

daphna dee: F

Lucan: F

Barb: F

Elyna: F

Pastor Chick: F

Kim: F

Zahakiel: Romans 9 is a chapter that describes the acceptance of the Gentiles into the Family of Yah, and by faith, which is superior to what bloodline one happens to possess. While it is certainly true that Yah chose a people, Israel, and highly favoured them with the first knowledge of His salvation, and the various prophets and kings after His own heart, He did not give them a conditionless guarantee, but rather a Covenant.

He said to them, "But the Word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it. See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; in that I command thee this day to love Yahweh thy Elohim, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply, and Yahweh thy Elohim shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it.

"But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them, I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it." (Deu 30:14-18)

Zahakiel: Let me know when you have read this.

Pastor Chick: F

Adriel777: F

Lucan: F

Elyna: F

daphna dee: F

Kim: F

Barb: F

Zahakiel: I spend the time sharing that entire passage, because such conditional results tend to be overlooked when discussing our Father's faithfulness and His promises.

Those who claim fellowship with the Creator today, as have many people down through history, misunderstand that the greatest gift our Father has given us is freedom. This freedom is not always expressed in a physical sense, for some are born to misfortune and oppression, but all who hear the Word of Yah are given the power to accept it.

Yah did not choose a people and force them to serve Him. He did not impose upon them any rigorous system of behaviour against their will. He gave them laws for their own good, (Deu 5:29) and punishments so that the faithful would not fully suffer the effects of the disobedience of a few.

Some have seen the Old Testament punishments as extreme, and we may certainly talk about the Levites that slew their brethren after the incident with the golden calf, (Exo 32:26-28) or the man who was slain for violating the Sabbath by gathering sticks, (Num 15:32-36) but there were reasons for each of these.

Actually, I should point out that the word "sticks" there is the word for "trees," or "lumber." This was not merely someone collecting a few twigs to keep his hearth going, but one who – fully knowing Yah's requirements – went out to labor in full view of the fledgling congregation.

While Yah mourns over the destruction of each individual sinner, (Ezek. 18:32) He will not permit His people as a collective whole to suffer pollution for very long. He urges His people to cleanse their camp of unrighteousness, (Isa 1:16, 17) but when they have not, He has purged them with divine fire, casting out the unrepentant, and giving those who remain a firm lesson lest they fall after the example of their rebellious brethren.

In the most extreme cases, which in this generation we identify as "Babylon Fallen," the rebellious remain, while the remnant are called out to finish the work that could not otherwise be done by the former, adulterous body. Yah says to such as these, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." (Rev 18:4)

The promises to every individual, and to every group of people, is conditional upon obedience. While salvation is of faith, and not of works, it is written, "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine." (Exo. 19:5)

What shall we do, then?

Does this mean that, despite all our natural urges to the contrary, we break down all our idols, we force ourselves to stop working from sundown on Friday to sundown on Saturday, and we forbid ourselves from smoking, drinking alcohol and eating pork? This is the sad state of the Seventh-day Adventist who does not understand Righteousness by Faith.

Consider this verse very carefully:

"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (Rom 6:16)

It may seem obvious to some, but for others perhaps they have not considered this before... Yah's covenant requires obedience. Obedience is not obtained, at least not on an eternal basis, by fighting against one's body with the effort of mere mortal will. We believe in Righteousness by Faith, and not Righteousness by Force. Obedience leads to righteousness, as the apostle tells us; therefore, it can only be the case that the obedience our Father requires of us is that obedience that comes through faith as well.

We may say Righteousness by Faith, or Obedience by Faith. They mean the same thing, for obedience to Yah is "obedience unto righteousness." We obey because we believe. We are not forcing ourselves to be righteous; instead, we are being healed of unrighteousness, even as it is written, "If we confess our sins, [Yah] is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1John 1:9)

A body builder may, through tremendous effort of will, make his muscles larger. However, no amount of effort and training, even by someone very disciplined, would heal a physical

wound. That is a natural process that can be aided with good nutrition and rest, but the healing comes from the blessings Yah has placed in the human body, despite the power of the individual's will.

Those who are attempting to cease from sin with their own power, like the Pharisees of Yahshua's day, are similarly trying to apply one set of rules to another. They are trying to force themselves to be righteous; they do not see sin as a wound in the spirit, but rather some natural flaw that may be "trained" away.

Healing from sin comes only from the Father and Son. It is immediate, and complete, but it must be sincerely sought, and diligently maintained through that obedience that comes by faith.

Adriel777: Amen!

Zahakiel: This message, this Righteousness by Faith and Victory over Sin, is not something that is joyfully accepted by many who claim to be Christ's people. It is, to them, a stumbling block, every bit as much as Yahshua's presence among them many years ago was a stumbling block. I have called this study "The Rock of Offense," because Christ and His message, this message, in every generation, separates the faithful from the rebellious. It separates those who are willing to receive healing from those who are trying to "make" themselves do something, or be something, different than they are.

I have laid out the message for this generation, that through faith in Christ, one may truly and completely obey, one may truly and completely be righteous, and thus have victory over all sin. Some, when they hear this, rejoice. Others, like the religious leaders in the days of Yahshua's earthly ministry, will stumble, and fall, and meet their end.

So, what is it that is "offensive" about this Rock? Why does it cause the righteous to rise, and the unrighteous to fall?

It is the revelation of His character that does this work. We read what He Himself said of the reaction He received from those who were to be awaiting Him, "But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not Him that sent me. If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloke for their sin. He that hateth me hateth my Father also." (John 15:21-23)

Those who had not encountered Yahshua "had" their sin in an accountability sense, yet they were able to justify their wrongdoing. They could "cloak" it under a pretense of righteousness, or duty, or some other excuse. And yet, when exposed to the testimony that Yahshua bore, their pretenses were revealed to be just that – a false covering – and they hated Him for taking away their metaphorical fig leaves and laying their motives and purposes bare. It is the testimony of righteousness, of the divine nature, that rebukes sin within the sinner, where it cannot be hidden.

The names that Yah has given to His people down through the ages:

Israel, Christian, Protestant, Seventh-day Adventist, Creation Seventh Day Adventist, each of these is designed to "shape" that testimony for the generation in which it exists. It, when combined with an individual testimony of victory, will convict the sinner, not by any oppression or force, but by contrast. When light shines into a darkened room, the darkness must, by its very nature, depart. When a sinner is exposed to righteousness, he knows the difference immediately, and that darkness must flee, either literally, or by "hiding" itself through self-justification or a distracting attack on the source of that light.

I heard it said recently, "I don't mind religious people. They can believe whatever they want. It's just when they come to me and try to get me to believe what they believe, and do what they do, that I have a problem with them."

The nature of Christianity is such that a "religious" person who does not seek to influence others has no faith in the righteousness of his own beliefs. It's as simple as that. Evangelism is not complicated; if I believe a thing, and I think it is important, I will share it with someone else. Only a lack of love would prevent that from happening, and in fact it is a divine instruction to speak against unrighteousness.

"When I say unto the wicked, 'Thou shalt surely die,' and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thine hand." (Ezek. 3:18)

There are three things I want to point out about that verse from Ezekiel. First, Yah says, "When I say to the wicked... and thou givest not him warning..." This is an interesting statement, because while Yah is the Speaker, the Originator of the message, it is we, His servants that have the responsibility to give the warning.

Some have said, "Christians are not to judge others," in a similar vein to the quotation above about "religious people." And yet, Christians are the only ones who CAN judge in love and righteousness. They have the words of Christ, and therefore the very words of life for those who have ears to hear. It is not they who judge, really, but it is they who give the warning from the One who has already set the boundary between the sacred and the unholy.

Second, Yah says that He will hold the silent witness accountable for the blood of the unevangelized sinner. This does not mean that the unfaithful servant becomes guilty of that very sin, for the unrepentant sinner is destroyed regardless of whether or not he was warned. But His "blood," the guilt of his death, becomes the burden of the one who did not give the warning, because – as I said above – his works reveal his faith. He did not have Agape love, to speak truth in love to one who was dying.

Third, the testimony in such a case, coming from Christ Himself, becomes that very Rock of Offense. It is Christ in our words, stumbling the unrighteous and calling the genuine seekers to repentance. In many cases, the speaker will not be thanked. This is to be expected, and Yah said to this very prophet I have quoted, "But the house of Israel will

not hearken unto thee ... behold, I have made thy face strong against their faces, and thy forehead strong against their foreheads." (Ezek. 3:7, 8)

Yah knows that few find the way to life. He knows that few appreciate the words of His prophets, especially when they are revealed in the light of straight testimony. We must each be prepared to be treated as an offender, as a "troubler of Israel," a worthy name for the Eli-Yah people. (1Kings 18:17, 18)

Humility is in short supply these days, and a sign of the times that those in the flesh become more arrogant, dishonest, and spiritually blind as the Day of Judgment approaches. But we know our role nonetheless. If everyone in the world was dying of some disease, and I knew the cure, would I not be frantic, desperate, to share it with anyone who would listen? But many, like our bodybuilder that I mentioned above, do not see sin as a wound, or a disease. They see it as some kind of flaw that can be taken care of, gradually, by natural processes or an effort of mortal will. "We try hard enough, and maybe we'll get better." Some believe and teach, "We'll just do the best we can, and when Yahshua returns, He will take care of it all." They do not understand the covenant of Yah. To even be part of the people of Yah, much less to grow as one, one must be born again, born of the spirit, and dead to the flesh.

It is offensive to be an Evangelist of the Fourth Angel's message, to reveal the lie of this false religion, this false way of thinking of sin. It is offensive to say to someone, "Your sincerity will not save you. You do not have control of healing your own unrighteousness. You do not know the Lord of Hosts."

It is a rock of offense to speak the truth in love, especially to those who have been taught by tradition and their own experiences that sin (like so many medical conditions of today) cannot be "cured," it can only be "treated." It can be trained away, they say, but never left at the foot of the cross.

It is offensive to walk in the footsteps of the Master, who was crucified as a rebel, a troublemaker, a false teacher. And yet, He submitted Himself to the humiliation and death of the cross, letting our sins pierce His heart and His soul, because of agape.

The Rock of Offense is filled with agape, and when it is broken open, when the "hard surface" is breached, then we see the Seed from which the Kingdom of Heaven has grown. All who know this truth, to any least degree, are called to be filled with the fountain that flows from the Rock, the sweet water that flows as it did in the days of Moses, (Exo 17:6, 7) even in the land called Massah (temptation) and Meribah (strife), and to call others also to drink. Whosoever drinks the water from the Rock of Offense shall never thirst again, and will be satisfied for time and for eternity.

Let us stand firmly on that Rock, offensive as ever to sin, and bear a testimony, an invincible testimony, of love and of salvation.

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

Adriel777: Amen

daphna dee: q

Zahakiel: Go ahead.

daphna dee: Is there a difference between faith and belief. If so please explain. End.

Zahakiel: That really depends on the context of the statement, the statement they are used in. In many ways, they can be used interchangeably, but in some contexts a "belief" can be belief in a specific thing, and faith can be a way of life. Were you thinking of a specific sentence where they were used?

daphna dee: I have been believing that we had our faith or faith came from us. I have just found out that Yah gives us our faith. End.

Zahakiel: All good things we have are gifts from our Father. 😊

Adriel777: 😊

Zahakiel: Are there any others with thoughts to share?

Lucan: C

Zahakiel: Go ahead.

Lucan: Some thoughts on the muscle parable. You pointed out that building up a muscle through effort and willpower is ineffective if there is a wound. I think that can be taken further. A wounded muscle cannot be built up; if there is a tear or a rend in it, effort will only cause MORE damage. It will increase the wound, and possibly prevent it from ever healing properly.

Any who are "working" at fixing, or building up, or strengthening something they don't have are doing worse than nothing. They cause positive damage, and every moment that repentance and full healing are not accepted, the more damage is done. There is a reason that "now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation..." All the sophistry of Satan is bound up in the word, "wait." <End.>

Zahakiel: That is a good addition, yes. It brings to mind the Pharisees and Sadducees... they feared violating the Law, and so they built extra, burdensome rules around it...working hard to try to improve something that could only be obtained by (Sabbath) rest and the gift of Yah.

Any others? All right, then I'll ask Bro. Luke to offer a closing prayer.

Lucan: Dear heavenly Father. We thank you for the opportunity you have given us to fall and be broken on your Son. We know that all who do not do so will be ground to powder. But, you have not left us broken; you have showed us our lack that we might be healed in full. And, more than our former selves, you have created us as new creatures in your own image. We thank you for your Spirit, your righteousness, your faith, and your character of obedience. As we reveal them to the world, may we take comfort that the Rock we have built upon is immovable. In the name of Yahshua we pray, amen.

Pastor Chick: Amen.

Zahakiel: Amen.

Adriel777: Amen

Elyna: Amen.

Peter: amen

Barb: Amen

Ruthline: Amen

daphna dee: Amen

Forgivenmuch: Amen

5-11-2018 The Rock of Offense