

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

Pastor Chick: Dear Father in Heaven. We come before Your Throne with praise and thanksgiving, expecting a fresh baptism of Your Spirit. May the intended Sabbath blessing be ours as we worship You in Spirit and in Truth. in Yahshua's holy name, Amen.

Adriel777: Amen

Zahakiel: Amen.

Gloria: Amen.

Barb: Amen

Naraiel: Amen.

Elyna: Amen.

Lucan: Amen

daphna dee: Hello

Ruth: Amen

Martha: Amen

Peter: Amen

Zahakiel: Happy Sabbath to everyone. Tonight's study is called "The Dew Unto Israel," and it is taken from a passage found in the Book of Hosea. We read,

"Oh, Israel, return unto Yahweh thy God, for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. I will heal their backsliding; I will love them freely, for mine anger is turned away from him. I will be as the dew unto Israel. He shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon."
(Hos 14:1, 4, 5)

This passage is unique for a number of reasons. First, Israel is almost always referred to in feminine terms.

For example, we read here, "The virgin of Israel is fallen; she shall no more rise..." (Amos 5:2)

Also, "Surely as a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so have ye dealt treacherously with me, O house of Israel," saith Yahweh." (Jer 3:20)

In Hosea's passage, Israel is seen as a son, rather than a bride... as embodied by the man Israel himself, once named Jacob, the leadership of the chosen people had fallen short of Yah's purpose. Israel had become joined to idols, and would not submit to the refining power of true worship.

We find in the parable of the "Prodigal Son" an expression of Yah's desire for the Israelites, for we read in the Gospel of Luke that this wayward child had a moment of revelation, of insight.

"And when he came to himself, he said, 'How many hired servants of my father have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and

will say unto him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. Make me as one of thy hired servants." And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." (Luke 15:17-20)

To me, this is one of the most moving scenes from any of Yahshua's parabolic teachings, and if we understand its context – the Savior was speaking directly to the Pharisees and scribes in this chapter – it becomes all the more poignant. The Son was holding up a picture, pleading, seeking a spark of self-awareness among those who had "received Him not." It also immediately followed the parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin, in which one who had lost something deliberately went out to seek it. The Father was not merely sitting in Heaven waiting for Israel to repent. He had sent His own Son, His earthly Representative, to bring the wandering home.

Even this, however, was not enough.

Mankind is not an inanimate object like a coin, nor is it a beast to be herded. One of the most fundamental principles of Yah's kingdom is that individual freedom is respected. That those who are truly free and not fools will never choose sin is a natural consequence of the power of Agape, but none are forced into repentance and everlasting life.

Thus, it is fitting that after two parables revealing Yah's searching love for the sinner, it is followed by one showing the destitute son seeing his position and choosing to run home, where he is met by his eager, loving father.

Adriel777: Amen

Zahakiel: Salvation is a gift freely given; in fact, even "given" may be too gentle a term. Salvation has been poured over the head of every human being even as the anointing oil was poured over the head of Aaron to sanctify him as Yah's priest. (Lev 8:12) In order to be effective, however, salvation must also be wholly received.

The Son has come from His glory, seeing the lost and dying...but they in turn must see their condition, their wretchedness, their hopelessness, and return to the Creator in humility and contrition. We say, "Make me as one of thy hired servants," and Yah raises us up to sit at His own right hand, in the very throne of His First-begotten. He anoints us as His priests, and we never raise ourselves up in pride, for we know, more than any creatures in the universe, just what we are without His limitless grace.

Adriel777: Amen

Zahakiel: It is Israel as a "man," as a spiritual representative of humanity, and collective son, who turns to Yah and is healed.

But now, how is it that we are healed?

Yah says of each of His children, "I will love them freely, for mine anger is turned away from him." The easy transition from "them" to "him" shows that Yah sees us both as individuals and as members of a group.

Salvation is individual, yes, in that it is a choice only the individual can make; thereafter, however, Yah joins us to "the commonwealth of Israel," and we are all treated according to the covenant with have with Him and with one another. The relationship between Yah and mankind can only truly flourish within this covenant, for the Law reflects the necessity of these two bonds: to love the Father with all our beings, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. It is not agape to say, "I love my fellow men, but I will not worship with them. I will not stand among them in both celebrations and trials, to be refined by their wisdom, nor to offer words of encouragement and correction for their own sanctification."

The Apostle John describes this quite clearly. "If a man say, 'I love Yahweh,' and hateth his brother, he is a liar. For he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love Yahweh whom he hath not seen?" (1John 4:20)

The logic is clear and inescapable. If we do not see the image of Yah in one another, tarnished though it may be among those in the world, then we do not see Yah at all, and any claims of faithfulness are revealed as deception and self-deception among those who resist baptism and fellowship amongst those whom Yah has sent to be His righteousness upon the earth. Yah says of all of us, "them," even as He calls us each by name.

But again, how is it that we are healed?

We are healed as individuals and as a united people, but He does not just say to us, "All is forgiven, all is forgotten. If it were just this, it would be better than we deserve. We would be servants in the holy kingdom, but we would never hold authority to instruct the angels, nor to reign with the Father and Son. Forgiveness may be sufficient for a servant, but it is not sufficient for a son or daughter, and an heir. Yah loves us freely, and His anger is turned away from us, but it is altogether wonderful what comes just before that. He says, "I will heal their backsliding."

The language here is significant. He does not say, "I will forgive or overlook your transgressions." He does not say, "I will allow you to make up for the bad things you have done." He does not even say, in this place, "If you repent of your evil works, I will receive you and give you healing." There is something more fundamental being revealed here.

Yah does not say to the repentant sinner, "I forgive you." It is far greater than that. Yah does not heal our "backslidings." He heals our "backsliding," the thing itself. It is not our individual acts of rebellion or willful sins, but the condition itself, the great transgression of being a sinner, that is being discussed. He removes from us the very principle in our spirits that permits sin to exist at all, just as removing a virus from a sick man will "heal" the symptoms. If we take someone with a fever and put him in icy water, his temperature will go down, but he is still sick. We have "healed" the fever, but not the man.

Religions that are based on works will say, "Recite these prayers," or "Perform these acts of repentance," and your soul is supposed to be healed of the sin. This holds no more power than overt paganism. It is like trying to kill a tree by plucking off some of its leaves. No matter how thoroughly we may strip a tree of its foliage, if the root is alive, it will grow back, and stronger than ever for having been pruned.

As it is written, it does no good to cast out a demon from one who is possessed if that victim does not become converted. "Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first." (Luke 11:26)

The priests, and preachers, and pastors of modern Christianity may have powerful-sounding words, and draw large crowds. They may make a line of people who will testify that their lives have improved greatly since hearing a sermon, or reading a book...because yes, the symptoms of the "disease of sin" may be suppressed for a time. The demons are happy to have it so...but if the root of sin is alive, if the flesh and the self are still alive, then the works of the flesh will spring up once again as soon as the Gardener's back is turned.

It is not so with the "man" Israel who returns to Yahweh as a repentant and sorrowful son. It is not so with the young man whom the Father rushes out of his gates to embrace. Yah heals the backsliding, the "great backsliding," the state of being a backslider, for those who trust in His love and His righteousness. Yah does not merely forgive and cleanse us from individual acts of sin. He removes the cause of sin, and the effects naturally disappear.

When there is no sin to punish, then He may be perfectly just, and perfectly merciful, and receive us unto Himself in perfect glory. He makes of us new creatures, modeled after His perfect pattern, in one holy principle, one tendency, and one character. In practical terms, this means that once we have repented of some wrongdoing, it is never deliberately repeated in our experiences.

Further, we learn once of righteousness, and it is ours forever after. We need not be told, repeatedly, "Do this," and "Do not do that." The Law was created for sinners, to teach them what Yah's righteousness is, but once we have read the Law, the focus is on Christ, and that knowledge does not depart from us at any time.

How many times would a new Christian need to read, "Thou shalt not steal," in order to be convinced never to steal again?

We need only be told of righteousness once, once only, and never again do we go contrary to that righteous word. This is experienced, the great backsliding is healed, when three things are present.

First, we must understand the principle that we are learning.

If we read, "Thou shalt not steal" and do not understand that stealing is wrong, then the conscience will not be pricked by past acts of theft. But if we understand that stealing is contrary to Yah's character, then we are convicted of our past wrongdoing, and we feel the weight of our guilt.

Second, we must genuinely repent of the sin once we have understood it.

We must not only "feel bad" for what we have done; remember, repentance is a deeper thing than remorse or regret. We must know, on a most foundational and spiritual level, that we have lived and acted contrary to the purpose of our Father...that we have wounded the Son of Yah, who for love's sake was compelled to take on human flesh and surrender His life for us, who are those who have wandered away as a people from the Law that leads to liberty and life.

Many, many say prayers and ask for forgiveness without contemplating that their actions have always led to death, either their own, or Christ's, and the power of this understanding must never be taken lightly.

Third, we must be committed to salvation.

Here we see the importance of hearing the Gospel in its pure and unadulterated power. Here we see the importance of the covenant Yah has given us, of remaining "stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." (Acts 2:42)

It is not good for man, for Israel, to be alone. This is not merely a statement about marriage, but about sanctification. Only in the society of those who teach and live the victory over sin can righteousness by faith be cultivated. Only in the Church, the Ecclesia, those drawn out from the world, can the heavenly life really be experienced as it should be, and the faith of Yahshua encouraged and refined among the children of promise.

Some will say, "What of this situation or that?" as if the thief on the cross who was promised salvation without baptism was the rule and not the exception. It is Yah's purpose for all to be joined, wing-to-wing, with their fellow messengers. It is Yah's purpose that His people take for themselves one banner, one name, under which the Gospel is taught with a certain, clear sound, as the call of a trumpet to victory.

Yah says, "I will heal your great backsliding," but this is in the context of calling us both "they" and "he." Those who make a distinction between themselves and the fellowship of the brethren cannot be included in this happy company. Those who are committed to righteousness, who are held in the fellowship of the saints, who are baptized into the Body of Christ Yahshua on earth, have their great backsliding healed, and because of this they need only encounter transgression one time, and then they surrender it to the lake of fire for time and all eternity.

While the worldly Christian tries, and fails, to give up his "bad habits," because he believes that Yah is pleased by his personal successes, and disappointed by his repeated failures, the born-again believers live by faith. The righteous live by faith, and because of this they please the Father in what they think, and say, and do. Their backsliding is healed, and thus their sanctification goes from glory to glory, stepping forward and upward, never backward, never falling away from what they have already attained.

Among the people of Israel, Yah's Covenant of Creation Seventh Day Adventism, sanctification becomes personality, and character. We would never "forget" not to kill because, having once learned of its sinful nature, it becomes a part of our very spiritual and mental fabric... the substance of who we are. We would never "forget" not to steal, for, should we even absently put out our hand to grasp something, not realizing at first it isn't ours, the mind and spirit coordinate to say, "Wait a minute, this isn't mine."

Demons may notice this and capitalize on the opportunity, using that moment to strike with a temptation, "But if you were take this thing you desire... who would know?" Because the Christian knows not to steal, and has been told and convinced even once, that is who he is. As I said in my last study, the decision not to transgress the Law, for the truly born-again, is not made in that moment of temptation; it was made at the moment of new birth. Thus, the temptation is rejected as naturally as breathing...the sorrowful thoughts are put away, the demons are rebuked, and life goes on ever upward to Heaven. All this, on the strength of having heard "once" what righteousness in that matter is. We do not need to keep reminding ourselves of anything, if that thing has really become a part of our character.

Simply put, there is no backsliding possible for the Christian, because there is nowhere to backslide TO. The mechanism for backsliding has been healed. Just as demons cannot re-enter Heaven, because the atmosphere of glory is poison to them, so a state of sin is barred from us because of the choice we have made to be Christ's, and we can no more enter into a state of sin than a demon can sneak past one of the 12 gates of the Holy City.

I say this, and repeat it for emphasis, because this is the power of the Gospel that must be made clear to all who hear of victory over sin. In all things, both great and small, the victorious – the true – Christian has power over habits, choices, and individual acts. Having learned once that an action is contrary to Yah's desires, that thing is gone from us, as is the means to return to it in failure.

Whosoever is born of Yah cannot commit sin.

He has refreshed us and nourished us like dew on the leaves of Israel. He has healed our backsliding, not merely our individual acts to which we might return, but the very means of returning to the life of the flesh. The very means by which we might reject life again and enter into the shadow of death is taken out of us, and the flesh that would walk that path is reckoned dead until the manifestation of the translated or resurrected body.

We do not commit sin, and we do not fall short, not because we are very disciplined sinners, but because we are once-sinners and now-saints, saved to the uttermost by grace. "Sinner" is not something we are, for the very character of Righteous Yahshua has become ours, and in even the smallest acts of righteousness just once identified and understood: the organizing of books on a shelf, the word of gentle encouragement, or the wiping away of a speck of dirt, His glory surrounds us as both weapon and armor against the darkness that rests, for a very short while longer, over the world.

How perfectly elegant, how infinitely graceful, are the angels and the people of Yah. All that the Father has made is "very good." Do we not rejoice, day and night, that it is so?

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

Adriel777: Amen!

Martha: Powerful study!

Lucan: C

Zahakiel: Go ahead.

Lucan: This verse was a great blessing to me when first encountering the gospel... Yahshua's healing is perfect, on the Word spoken, and taking place "immediately" in every instance. So, to see the promise of "healing their backsliding" was, to me, a definite answer to any temptations of "what if..."

In terms of the message of unity, I note that this is associated strongly with the third angel's message within Adventism. And I notice that in the verse right before "I will heal their backsliding," it gives a very "third angel" type of message:

"Assyria shall not save us, we will not ride on horses, nor will we say anymore to the work of our hands, '[You are] our gods.' For in You the fatherless finds mercy." (Hos. 14:3; NKJV) <end.>

Adriel777: Amen

Zahakiel: Thank you for sharing that. Yes, I did notice that as well. In fact, when I was writing out notes for tonight's study... I thought that there might be some association between the three factors that are present when backsliding is healed and the Three Angels. I eventually left it out for the sake of time, but it might be worth looking into that later on.

Are there any others with thoughts to share?

Then, I will ask Bro. Luke to offer a closing prayer.

Lucan: Dear heavenly Father. We thank you for healing our backsliding, and for your promise to present us faultless before your Throne. We thank you that you have not only

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healed us, but created us new creatures entirely, unto your own good works. As we rest in the power of your creation, may we be blessed during the Sabbath hours that commemorate it. In Yahshua's name we pray, amen.

Elyna: Amen.

Zahakiel: Amen.

Martha: Amen

Adriel777: Amen

daphna dee: Amen

Naraiel: Amen

Peter: Amen

Ruth: Amen

Gloria: Amen.

Nattie: Amen.

Pastor Chick: Amen.