

Zahakiel: Pastor, please offer an opening prayer.

Pastor Chick: Dear Father in Heaven, thank You for bringing us together for this sacred hour. We expect a fresh baptism of Your Holy Spirit as we worship You in spirit and in Truth. In Yahshua's holy name, Amen.

Lucan: Amen

Zahakiel: Amen.

Barb: Amen

Ruthline: Amen

Adriel777: Amen

Naraiel: Amen

Elyna1: Amen.

Marie: Amen

Zahakiel: Happy Sabbath to everyone, I've just returned home after the Feast of Tabernacles for 2018...just a few hours ago. It was a week of great blessings, not to be found anywhere else on earth. I learned many things from the conversations, teachings, and examples of my fellow saints, and the Almighty One worked many miracles of healing and transformation among the little company that is preparing for the soon return of His Son.

I would like to put to "paper," as it were, one of the important lessons that we, as a Church Family, discussed, and it involves the processing of our thoughts during the course of sanctification.

To identify one of the Enemy's traps that he employs to dissuade the Christian from realizing the Mind of Christ, I am calling this study "The Ultimate Legalist." What is a legalist? It is one who believes that obedience to the Law of Yahweh, on its own, makes one justified, and disobedience to the Law of Yahweh makes one unrighteous. The real danger of legalism is that it sounds very much like the truth on the surface. The Bible tells us what it is that makes one "just," or "justified."

We read: "In Yahweh shall all the Seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory." (Isa 45:25)

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of Elohim; being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Yahshua:" (Rom 3:23, 24)

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Yahshua the Christ:" (Rom 5:1)

"Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth." (Rom 8:33)

Justification, that is, deciding who to declare "just" and who not to declare "just" is a choice, a decision... thus, it requires a Person to perform. It is Yah who declares men of

faith "justified." He uses, as the deciding factor, the faith that they hold and He uses, as the means to do so, His grace.

The legalist will, in fact, place the Law above the Lawgiver. If one obeys the law, regardless of character or personality, that person is – must be – just, says such a person. The decision is not Yahweh's except that He, perhaps, set the "rules" in place from the beginning of the creation.

There are two passages of the Scriptures that the unlearned and unstable utilize to make the works of the Law the justifier itself, and they are these:

"But I say unto you that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment, for by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." (Mat 12:36, 37)

Here is the other:

"But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? [...] Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." (James 2:20-22, 24)

Neither of these passages can legitimately be used to declare the Law to be the justifier of men. In Matthew, Christ is speaking of the way that men use their words. One can outwardly keep the letter of the Law, however, and manifest an ill spirit by speaking unrighteousness; thus it is written, "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good, and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil, for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh." (Luke 6:45)

James is speaking of the Law "justifying" people in the eyes of others; he says in verse 18, "...I will shew thee my faith by my works." The point that James is making is not that works justify, but that faith which is not genuine, which does not manifest in works, is not the faith that Yah rewards with justification.

Despite what others have made of James' passages, James and Paul are in agreement that faith is the justifier. James is merely pointing out that there is faith, and then there are claims of faith. The mere claims would be "faith only," which he concludes by saying is not sufficient.

But that faith which is true, and pure and genuine, this is the kind that can be (and always is) "shown" by works, because it does not exist merely as a theological position, but rather a life guided by spiritual principles, which inevitably manifest as obedience to the tenets of righteousness.

Faith without works is merely lip-service to the religion of Yah, but faith that shows itself through works, which James is describing, is the kind of faith that Paul holds forth in his own writings, and the two witnesses agree in one... one who holds this faith makes the claim in sincerity, "I do always those things that please my Father." (See John 8:29) It is a pleased Father who says to His child, "You are the revelation of my righteousness on the earth, holy and pure and just."

Where did the idea originate, then, that obedience, even in the absence of faith, requires a judgment that one is just?

The originator of sin said, in his temptation of Christ, "All these [kingdoms] will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." (Mat 4:9) Satan knew that Christ would never acknowledge him as a creator or father, never as a god... but if Yahshua would be induced even to carry out the act of prostration, of bowing down, it would be sufficient for the disruption of the plan of salvation.

It was Satan who said, "I will exalt my throne above the stars of God [...] I will be like the Most High." (Isa 14:13, 14) He desired the position, the authority, the legal power to rule; in this he wished to be "like" the Most High. He did not, however, speak of mercy, of love, of character, in his boastful declarations. These things were not a part of his reasoning, for the Law has ever been the point of contention within the Great Controversy. Satan induced men to break the law of Yahweh, first by disregarding the first restriction in Eden. (Gen 2:17) This would, he reasoned, lead to the destruction of those created in Yahweh's image. The rebellious angels were cast out of Heaven for their disobedience. It is only fair, then, only lawful, to expect that if mankind should disobey, they would also be subject to judgment. That the Father and Son had pity on fallen man, and devised a divine plan to save them, enraged and confused the demons, for no sacrifice was to be offered on their behalf, but man would be provided an opportunity to survive even without the fruit of the Tree of Life.

From the beginning of Christ's early work, the fallen angels sought to distress and trouble Christ, even if they could not directly destroy Him. The revelation of His character would not turn them from their course; in Heaven they had beheld the Son of Yahweh in His angelic purity, and yet they rejected His appeals to submission and unity. Nothing He could accomplish in the flesh, then, would avail their salvation. His death on the cross would have benefitted them nothing.

Human beings, on the other hand, were deceived by one far more cunning, far older, and one experienced in sin. He who is infinite in mercy was moved by the theft of their innocence, and began to work to secure their restoration. Of this spirit it is written, "Justice and judgment are the habitation of Thy Throne; mercy and truth shall go before Thy face." (Psalm 89:14)

"And in mercy shall the Throne be established: and He shall sit upon it in truth in the tabernacle of David, judging, and seeking judgment, and hasting righteousness." (Isa 16:5)

Despite the work of the Father and Son, Satan's efforts to destroy the plan of salvation has continued down through the generations. While those who accept Yahshua as Savior and Lord are given the "mind of Christ," by which their thoughts, and therefore their actions, are made righteous, the Enemy seeks to implant false thoughts and faulty beliefs, in order to prevent the redeemed, if it were possible, from receiving the benefits of Yah's blessings.

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." (1Tim 4:1)

For example, the Scriptures say, "... Whosoever is born of God sinneth not," (1John 5:18) and when this knowledge is received by one in whom the mind of Christ resides, it becomes belief, faith, and produces a life of holiness. This is the message of victory over sin, and of righteousness by faith.

Satan will implant false beliefs to counter its power:

"This is possible, but not a present reality." "The words of the Bible have been misinterpreted." "Only fanatics will take a doctrine like this literally." "Of course, we should try to be sinless, but every now and then the dead flesh controls my life."

These are the doctrines of devils, for they dilute, and in practice destroy entirely, the power of the Spirit that inspired John's words. At the heart of every transgression is a false thought. Mankind is, ultimately, a rational creature – was created to be a rational creature – and only acts irrationally if the thinking is flawed by deception or self-deception.

Paul says, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Yahshua the Messiah is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (2Cor 13:5)

What the Apostle is describing here is thought processing. If an error is pointed out in one's character or behavior, the individual committed to righteousness seeks not merely forgiveness, but repentance – a turning away from the behavior and the thought that led to that behavior in the first place. This requires one to understand his own motives, and how they became manifest in unwise or unrighteous activity.

One who acts upon greed or envy has been deceived into disbelief in the Scripture that says Yah "... hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness..." (2Pet 1:3)

One who acts in wrath has been deceived into disbelief of the Scripture that says, "Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools." (Ecc 7:9)

One who acts for vengeance or sorrow has fallen for a snare of the Enemy that destroys confidence in the Scripture, "Great peace have they which love thy law, and nothing shall offend them." (Psa 119:165)

We could do this for every ungodly act, and for every unrighteous motive. At the root of each is a belief that something the Scriptures tell us about the Father and Son is incorrect or inapplicable on a personal level. The error arises from a belief that one does not have something Christ has given, needs something that Christ has promised, or retains something from the unconverted past that Christ has taken away. The demons intend that the spirit of rest, that the gift of the Sabbath peace, should be disturbed, and the individual induced to sin. Fortunately, those who have received Christ Yahshua have been given even the means to overcome these evil doctrines. They have the Spirit of the Father and Son to cast light upon their path, and they have the fellowship of the saints.

"And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." (Heb 10:24, 25)

A well-known Scripture among the brethren reads, "And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ:" (Eph 4:11, 12)

The saints encourage, rebuke, and correct one another, and more intensely as the Day of Judgment approaches, sharing knowledge, speaking blessings, and driving sanctification forward within the fellowship. It is here that the cunning of the enemy shows itself dramatically, for he has devised traps within traps, and snares within snares...and he does so according to the legalism that forms the foundation of his philosophy. If he can get mankind to accept a lie – any lie – then he has placed his victim beyond (he believes) the grace and mercy of the Creator.

Thus, when a repentant human attempts to find the root of faulty behavior when it is identified, agents of the Wicked One are sent to dig deep ditches on either side of the narrow path that Yahshua has called His people to walk. Consider an example...

Suppose a saint has, for a time, maintained a habit of disorganization. He believes in Yahshua, and has walked according to what he knows, but has never before considered, and therefore not been convicted of, the importance of being organized in the way he stores his possessions and arranges his household. A fellow Christian may say to him, "Brother, the Scripture tells us that Yahweh is a God of Order. We believe that the angels sent to minister to our salvation find it difficult to enter a messy, untidy home. Would you consider spending some time in prayer asking Yahweh to reveal this truth to you?"

For the 144,000, there are no "small matters of faith." What sounds like thunder, like nonsense, to the rest of the world, is the preparation for the perfect society of Heaven. Thus, our brother does not reject the counsel, but takes it to earnest prayer in order to find the fault in his thinking, the "false thought" that has produced the objectionable behavior.

Satan, the ultimate legalist, immediately goes to work. He tells the brother, "You have two choices. You can accept that you are untidy and disorganized. If you do that, however, you are proving that you do not have Christ within you, for you know that Christ is organized and controlled in all things. Thus, you are admitting you are a violator of the Law, and condemned as a sinner.

"The other choice is this... your brother has misjudged you. A little disorganization cannot be contrary to the Law of Yahweh, or else you would surely have learned this by now. Perhaps it is a violation of the Law to be extremely untidy, but the Son of God is living in you, and would certainly have prevented you from going beyond the boundaries of Christian duty. You are perfectly 'Okay' with God."

If the brother accepts the first option, he will believe Himself a Lawbreaker, and Satan will use this to inspire doubt and discouragement. If the brother accepts the second option, he rejects the counsel, but he remains a Lawbreaker in actuality, and his continued violation of principle will keep him from truly being sanctified.

What is the way of escape?

The truth is that Satan's very premise is faulty. When dealing with temptations, even when analyzing one's self, it is important to remember that "...[Satan] 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)

The murder, the lie, is in the very first statement, "You have two choices." The Enemy reveals a ditch on one side of the road and then says, "This is a ditch." Conscientiously, but ill-fatedly, many run away from the original error and right into the snare awaiting them on the other side. There is only one choice for the Christian, and it is neither of those that Satan suggests; the Way that Yahshua has set before us is the Way in which we walk. Between the two errors is the truth, for one must accept the counsel while at the same time rejecting the accusation, the condemnation that the demons attach to it artificially, legalistically, not knowing the mercy of Yah.

We read,

"If a soul commit a trespass, and sin through ignorance, in the holy things of Yahweh; then he shall bring for his trespass unto Yahweh a [sacrifice] unto the priest: and the priest shall make an atonement for him concerning his ignorance wherein he erred and wist it not, and it shall be forgiven him." (Lev 5:15, 18)

This is good news. Yah does not condemn one who, through legitimate ignorance, was deceived into committing a transgression. It is true that many are destroyed because of ignorance, (Hos 4:6) but Yah's mercy triumphs over judgment in that He gives them opportunities to put away their lack of knowledge. He sends, as the Scripture says, "teachers ... for the perfecting of the saints." He does not cast away the ignorant, only those who, in the face of truth, prefer their defect to the knowledge of righteousness.

Mercy allows a choice, but Satan says, "What does the Law say about mercy? What does the Law say about choices and the opportunity to learn?" He cannot see the heart of his Creator, for his own opportunities were squandered before Eden.

But if what we have read thus far is good news, then here is news that is very good:

"And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, 'My father:' and he said, 'Here am I, my son.' And he said, 'Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?' And Abraham said, 'My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering:'" (Gen 22:7, 8)

A sacrifice is needed for the forgiveness of sins. A sacrifice is needed to restore fallen man to purity and the joy of salvation. And yet, fallen man is not required to provide his own sacrifice, his own lamb for the burnt offering. What lamb, indeed, could atone for the sin of a human soul? What life, whether animal, human, or angel, could substitute for the violation of the perfect Law?

Mercy says, "I have provided a Lamb." Yahweh says, "I have provided my Son."

Men may accept the reality that they have transgressed the law without accepting the condemnation that Satan would add. Men may accept the correction of their brethren without fear of failure, accusation, or criticism.

Yah does His perfect work in us, creating us immediately as new creatures, but working with the new creature to shape it, as a potter shapes clay, into a vessel for His perfect glory. To do this, the claims of the Ultimate Legalist must be refuted. The transgressor stands guilty, but not condemned...

Hear the proclamation of mercy: "Guilty, but not condemned."

Adriel777: Amen!!!

The legalist cannot understand the distinction. Satan cannot understand the distinction, but Yah says, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." (Luke 5:32) Yah's Spirit says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1John1:9) This is the right way to use that verse, in the context of thought-processing, not, as some would use it, as a rejection of the Victory over sin and self that Yah has given to us through the sacrifice of His Son. Yah has provided us a Lamb, a Sacrifice; that He may endure the contradiction of sinners against Himself, (Heb 12:3) that we may receive His correction without condemnation, and His purifying flame without being consumed by the Heat.

We dwell with a Consuming Fire, and yet we are not destroyed...we rest, we Sabbath in His mercy, and thus we can see, with a pure and fearless eye, that which He would have us put away that His name may be glorified on the earth. The 144,000 may honestly

behold themselves in the mirror of Christ's righteousness and, as they do not look away in shame and selfish pity, they are transformed into the very beauty that they see. The Ultimate Legalist is cast down, and mercy triumphs over the wickedness of Satan's deceptions.

Let us, as we continue to walk in the Narrow Way, consider these things aright. May we, beholding the face of Yahshua before us, rejoice always that He has said to us, "Come up here, and sit with Me in my Throne."

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

Lucan: C

Zahakiel: Go ahead.

Adriel777: Amen!

Elyna1: Amen.

Marie: Amen

Lucan: I have noticed a related deception that is rather unique to Adventism. That is in relation to the 144,000, the investigative judgment, and the idea of being perfected before the close of probation. Many conservative Adventists become fearful and unbelieving because of an acceptance of the condemnation thought. Many liberal Adventists see this, and dispense with the entire system of truth altogether.

Of course, without the victory message, it will be hard for any to see the true path in the middle... We have some quotes from Mrs. White that Satan may use to fuel such a deception, such as not receiving the seal of God while our characters have one spot or stain upon them, etc. But, it is the "character" that she writes of being cleansed; it is the defects of "character," not of "action," that are left with us to remedy. That is the work of thought processing.

Now, Satan might attempt to convince some to focus on the outworking of the actions, lest they fail of probation's mercy. But, that is a misdirection; one of the false "two choices," and one that leaves the true issue uncleansed if chased after. It is necessary to trace any wrong actions to their underlying thought and belief. And we are blessed to be free from any fear in this work; for, "...if in anything ye be otherwise [than perfect] minded, Yah will reveal even this unto you." (Phil. 3:15) <end.>

Zahakiel: Right. And what you're describing is a collective failure of thought-processing on a church-wide scale. They wholesale fall into one pit, one doctrine of devils or the other, and thus we end up with this division that diligently steers clear of the balanced path in the middle because they don't understand, among other things, the proper place of faith and works.

Any others?

Adriel777: C

Lucan: C

Zahakiel: Go ahead, Jody.

Adriel777: I am very grateful to Yah for continuing to shed more light on this most important aspect of our sanctification, and very appreciative to my Brothers David and Luke for being his vessels to bring this knowledge to us. 😊

Naraiel: Amen.

Zahakiel: (Was that the end of the comment?)

Adriel777: Ah, yes it's been a while. End. 😊

Zahakiel: Ok 😊

Barb: Amen

Zahakiel: Go ahead, Bro. Luke.

Lucan: You mentioned a church-wide scale, which raises another thought. One manifestation of "ultimate legalism" is to view correct doctrines and actions (i.e. the seventh-day Sabbath, state of the dead, etc.) as preventing the fall of a Church, or revealing the seal of Yahweh upon its members, in the absence of right character. <end.>

Zahakiel: As in, "We have the right beliefs, so we have to be the right Church." I can see that, yes.

Are there any others with thoughts to share?

All right, then I will ask Bro. Luke to offer a closing prayer.

Lucan: Dear heavenly Father. We thank you for the gift of your Son; His life, His righteousness, and His mind. We are blessed to examine ourselves, and to know that You are within us...

Adriel777: Amen

Elyna1: Amen

Lucan: As we know that You are within us, we know that we are within You, and that we are one with each other...

daphna dee: Amen

Lucan: As we cleanse our characters of every inconsistency with Your perfect pattern, may the world see the love and perfect peace you have freely given. In the name of Yahshua we pray, amen.

Zahakiel: Amen.

daphna dee: Amen

Peter: Amen

Barb: Amen

Elyna1: Amen.

Adriel777: Amen

Naraiel: Amen.

Kim: Amen

Pastor Chick: Amen.

Ruthline: Amen