

**Lucan:** It's time to begin. Bro. David, will you please offer the opening prayer?

**Zahakiel:** Dear Father in Heaven, We thank you for the many blessings we have experienced in the week that has passed. We thank you that, by your grace, we may draw warmth from the coldness of others, and peace from their unrest. May the Sabbath blessing rest upon each one gathered here, and may each receive that which was prepared for us from the foundation of the world, as we ask it in Yahshua's name. Amen.

**Pastor Chick:** Amen.

**Lucan:** Amen

**Adriel7777:** Amen

**Barb:** Amen

**Elyna:** Amen.

**Nattie:** Amen.

**Lucan:** Tonight's study is called "The Field or the Flock," for reasons which will become evident at the close. I would like to open with a verse that, on the surface, seems unrelated to this imagery:

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." (1 John 4:1)

We are here given the instruction to test, not the orthodoxy, but the spirits of those who claim to be of our Father. We may note that the following verses provide the "testing message" for spirits in the days of John:

"Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that [spirit] of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world." (1 John 4:2, 3)

It would not now be safe or true to conclude that every spirit saying "Christ is come in the flesh" is of God; there are very few, even among the most apostate professors, who would teach otherwise. Yet while most will assent that Christ came to earth in a physical body, it is no longer the confession of coming in HIS body's flesh that is of note, but the confession of Christ having come in OUR flesh.

"Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." (John 14:23)

And, we may read the means through which He does this:

"I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. At that day ye shall know that I [am] in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." (John 14:18, 20)

This passage is speaking of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter; or the "Advocate" as it reads in certain translations. While Christ Himself came to earth in His own physical body – "in the flesh" – He now comes via His Spirit to dwell in our own physical bodies – "in the flesh." As with His life, so with ours; the result is the power of God unto salvation, manifest in a life of complete victory over sin. Yet the profession of this means little without more to the test; therefore John tells us this in the same chapter:

"We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error. Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love." (1 John 4:6-8)

And once more:

"Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit." (1 John 4:11-13)

We may see, then, that to "test the spirits to see whether they are of God" is simply to test the spirit to see if it is the Spirit of God. We see further that the test of the Spirit of God, as opposed to all other spirits, is that it is manifest in love:

"And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." (1 John 4:16)

We may know whether one dwells in God, and God in him, by whether they have love. It is not love for the truth that is the test, though this is of itself a good thing. The foolish virgins have a love for the truth, yet this is insufficient of itself. Nor is it love for holiness that is the test; this may just as easily be the fruit of fanatic zeal or self-righteousness.

We may note this commentary from the Testimonies; it is a bit long, so please let me know when you have finished reading:

"No matter how high the profession, he whose heart is not filled with love for God and his fellow men is not a true disciple of Christ. Though he should possess great faith and have power even to work miracles, yet without love his faith would be worthless. He might display great liberality; but should he, from some other motive than genuine love, bestow all his goods to feed the poor, the act would not commend him to the favor of God. In his zeal he might even meet a martyr's death, yet if not actuated by love, he would be regarded by God as a deluded enthusiast or an ambitious hypocrite." [AA 318](LMK)

**Barb:** F

**Pastor Chick:** F

**Adriel7777:** F

**Elyna:** F

**Zahakiel:** F

**Nattie:** F

**daphna:** F

**Lucan:** To be a "deluded enthusiast" or "ambitious hypocrite" is a terrible position to be in, for they think themselves to be right; and we may note that a correct faith, miracles, liberality, and even martyrdom are no assurance against this condition.

Yahweh tells us plainly the type of love that is the "testing message," the revelation of whether it is Yahweh's Spirit that sits on the throne of the heart, or whether one is regarded of Him as belonging to the categories described above:

"If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also." (1 John 4:20, 21)

The matter in question is as deep as salvation; Yahweh is love, and Yahshua is love. Their Spirit is therefore love; if one does not love their brother, we know that "he that loveth not knoweth not God." Said in another way, "He that hath the Son hath life; [and] he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." (1 John 5:12)

The love here spoken of is not an invisible one, known only to a chosen few who share it. Neither is it a chiding, contentious spirit under the label of "love," seeking to correct others through fault-finding with the excuse that it is for their own good. Rather, we read in Yahshua's prayer for His people:

"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, [art] in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." (John 17:20, 21)

Some have advanced the thought that, as time nears its close, the people of Yahweh will be less organized. Some have even proposed that all organization and bonds of fellowship are to be broken down, with the last generation consisting of those with no visible Church relation whatsoever.

Yet Christ does not here speak of oneness as being limited to the Apostles, who were indeed visibly and publicly united. He prays not "for these alone," but for them who believe through their word. If you have believed in Yahshua through the Scriptures, which are the testimony of the Apostles, you are specifically named in this prayer by the Savior. And His prayer for YOU therefore is "that they all may be one," not in some mystical and invisible, unknowable way, but "that the world may believe." The world cannot believe what it cannot see; a love and unity that is not revealed openly is not love or unity at all, and frustrates the prayer of Christ.

"And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." (John 17:22, 23)

The Savior here repeats Himself; and we will be returning to these two verses through the rest of the study.

It is through the glory of the Father, given to the Son, and given to us through the Son, that Christians are one. This glory is His character and His Spirit; His glory is His love. This love is not manifest in the Father being unknowingly associated with the Son in some behind the scenes way. Theirs is not an invisible union that lacks communication, cooperation, and organization. A relationship that is hidden and not made open before the world is not a marriage. To be "one" in such a way is fornication; and we know this is not the way in which the Father and Son are one:

"And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matthew 3:16, 17)

We see here the Father's public, open endorsement of the Son, with their relationship declared before the world. We read again:

"Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, [saying], I have both glorified [it], and will glorify [it] again." (John 12:27, 28)

We may see that the Father and Son announce their union to the world; they reveal it openly in character and in truth, in word and in deed. From time immemorial, the Father and Son have taken counsel together, planned together, and cooperated in action for the salvation of mankind. And what is the prayer of the Son for each one who accepts the words of Scripture, save that "they may be one, even as we are one?" It is "even as we are one;" even as the Father and Son are one.

This is not the unity proposed by those who would draw apart followers after themselves, and call the Church something that is only invisible without gospel order and discipline. This is not the nature of the unity between the Father and Son; therefore, it is a false teaching of the unity between their children. Let all who proudly profess their belief in the "One True God" mark this well.

And what purpose would there be for this increasingly common false teaching?

To know the purpose of the error that diverts from truth, we must only look at the purpose of the truth, and what it is designed to accomplish. Yahshua tells us this plainly in the next words: "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one."

We find a second witness to this in another Scripture:

"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: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:" (Ephesians 4:11-13)

The purpose of gospel order, and the visible unity it requires to function, is the perfecting of the saints. And not only the perfecting of scattered individual saints, but to be "made perfect in ONE." If the saints are therefore divided, with one believing this thing and another that, their love cannot be revealed, the saints cannot be perfected, and the "body of Christ" does not bring forth her fruit – "that the world may know that [the Father] has sent [the Son], and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."

To those who would propose that the 144,000 are those who have no Church fellowship with one another, let their description be marked:

"And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God." (Revelation 14:5)

How is it that these are to be "without fault" in the final generation before Christ's return? Shall we conclude, against the word of Scripture and the prayer of the Redeemer, that it is to be accomplished without unity, without cooperation, and without revealing their love to the world?

It is the beast and its image that seek to prevent the gathering of the 144,000 by preventing any who would "buy or sell," lest the 144,000 should be "redeemed (lit. 'bought') from the earth." (v.4) It is Satan that seeks to prevent the perfection of the saints, by preventing the unity of the saints, and thus leading the world to doubt that the Father has sent the Son. We may begin to understand the true origin of the doctrine of a spiritual-only church, and the urgency of the apostle Paul's appeal:

"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and [that] there be no divisions among you; but [that] ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." (1 Cor. 1:10)

The love of Christ is revealed in unity, because the love of Christ naturally desires unity with itself. The Father and the Son desire unity with one another, because they love one another. To have the love of the Father and the Son is to love and desire unity with both Them and all others who share that love.

The unity of the world is a forced and contrived thing, based on the opinions and beliefs of self. The unity of the Gospel is founded and revealed in love; it is the natural outworking of the thing.

"And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare [it]: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." (John 17:26)

The Father is Love; the Son is Love. If the love of the Father dwells in us, Christ dwells in us through their Spirit. This love will always be revealed in being "one, even as [they] are one;" it will be revealed in being "made perfect in one." It will always be so because "this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also" (1 John 4:21); and "this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." (1 John 5:3)

It is for this reason that love is the very first aspect listed of the fruit of the Spirit. (Ref. Gal 5:22) Those who seek to push away others who do not see matters just as they do, who fault-find and accuse, show that they do not have the Spirit of love that seeks to find and redeem the lost sheep.

There are many who believe despite this attitude that they will be known as righteous by teaching true doctrines, by having their positions sustained by the Scripture, and by being ready for a martyr's death rather than yielding. Yet while these things are valuable in finding the people of Yahweh, these are the Savior's words:

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all [men] know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." (John 13:34, 35)

"As I have loved you;" the love Christ has for us is the love we are to have for one another. If our love does not match the pattern of the Savior, it is not worthy of the name, and does not reveal our union with Him. The love Christ has for us is not hidden in a dark corner, buried away; it is revealed to the world, naked and bleeding for all to behold.

"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels." (Rev. 3:5)

The love of Christ for us is such that it is confessed before the entire universe; it is etched in the hands of the Son of God for all eternity. It is such that yes, the very Name He bears proclaims His love for, and unity with the fallen race: "Yahshua," or "Yah saves."

Shall our name not do the same?

"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 10:32, 33)

Shall the remnant people of God deny one another in name and in deed, yet claim to be showing the love that Christ has shown to them? This is the test of the spirits, whether

they are of God. Has Christ, in all of His love and unity with the Father, "come in the flesh?"

If He has not come in the flesh, the fruit will be of the flesh; "for ye are yet carnal: for whereas [there is] among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?" (1 Cor. 3:3)

If He has come in the flesh, the fruit will be of the Spirit, walking not according to the flesh; "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, [art] in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." (John 17:21)

Yahweh is calling His people out of Babylon; yet He does not call them to wander.

"Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:" (Genesis 12:1)

"Unto a land that I will shew thee" is the instruction; while the vineyard of Yahweh has changed appearance often, those who labor in it diligently are of the same Spirit, and share the same love. It is unto this land that Yahweh calls all who come out of Babylon; He is showing it today.

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." (Revelation 22:17)

I would like to close the message tonight with a short parable, from which the title of this study is taken:

In a great city there were many sheep kept by cruel overseers. One day they heard a voice from heaven saying, "come out of her my sheep, and join to my flock." Some of the sheep heeded the call, and escaped from the city into the surrounding fields.

Once free, the sheep had to consider where to find the flock. Many concluded that the "flock" consisted of those who were in the fields, wherever they may be, who had obeyed the voice to come out. Yet there was a little flock that followed closely with the Shepherd who had issued the voice; these roamed the hills seeking others to join them, and the Shepherd who led them.

Many of the sheep had obeyed the voice merely for love of freedom and hatred of oppression; these loved the field and had no desire for the flock, nor for the voice beyond its calling them out. Others had entered the fields merely to gather sheep after themselves. These would not join, and persuaded others against joining the little flock, claiming it was not the true flock or Shepherd leading them. Still others became discouraged while seeking to find the little flock, and returned to the great city in disappointment.

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Some had fled for love of the One speaking, and followed Him wherever He went. These were the ones who pressed eagerly into the little flock, known by their love for the Shepherd and one another.

Are there any comments on the study tonight?

**Adriel7777**: Amen

**Elyna**: Amen

**Lucan**: If not, I'll ask Pastor to offer the closing prayer.

**Pastor Chick**: Dear Father in Heaven. We are blessed and thankful to be secured in the little flock, persecuted and hated for Your name's sake as we demonstrate before the world our love for sinner and saint and reflect the perfect unity of our Father and His Son.

May our Sabbath rest be a tool in the quiver of YAHWEH that converts many to the little flock preparing for the soon coming of our Savior and King. In Yahshua's holy name, Amen.

**Barb**: Amen

**Zahakiel**: Amen.

**daphna**: Amen

**Lucan**: Amen

**Adriel7777**: Amen