

The Lexicon of a Pure Faith

A “lexicon” is something like a dictionary, but does not go into as much detail as the definitions; it is essentially a word-list of terms. These are often useful tools for translators, because they show how particular words in a foreign language are used in specific settings.

I have found it necessary to include a number of lexicon notes to promote a full understanding of Biblical doctrines. In addition, someone asked me a question a couple weeks ago about the way the word “Remember” is used in the Bible, and we’ll get to that as we go through this study.

What I am presenting for our consideration and education on this site is a list of words that appear in the Bible. These words were chosen because they are often misunderstood by even sincere students of the Scriptures, and this has led to some unfortunate misunderstandings of doctrine, some errors in the development of character, and the rejection of much light.

I would like to make it clear that this is no fault of the Scriptures, and no fault of even the translators (for the most part) who were writing to an audience that would have understood the terms used in a manner often different than we now do. *In other words, language does change over time; the meanings of words do change over the years, and if we wish to have a pure speech in this last generation, we must understand the “mind of Christ” as it is expressed in the Bible record.*

Now, the Word tells us that when the Almighty assembles His people and gathers the faithful nations, “then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of Yahweh, to serve Him with one consent.” (Zeph 3:9) This brief statement contains a number of important concepts.

First, we see that we are to have a “pure language,” and the word for *pure* there has the connotations of: *select, polished, chosen, purged, cleansed or made bright, tested or proven.* Second, we see that the result of such a manner of speech will lead men to “*call upon the name of Yahweh*” in a proper way, to praise Him and to seek His will. Third, we see another effect, that those with such a language “*serve Him with one consent.*” Now literally, and this is interesting, the word for “consent” there means “shoulder.” **The people of Yahweh with a pure language serve the Almighty with one “shoulder.”**

What kind of picture Does this raises in your mind?

As some of you may have suggested, it is a leaning in together against something... not so much on each other, but against a common burden.

Like if you want to move a boulder, a big rock, you put your “shoulder” to it. And all the people here described are as one “shoulder.”

Actually, in the Bible, the word “shoulder” has two uses. It means to work with a burden, to carry something, (Psa 81:6, Isa 9:4) and is also a measure of height. Today we would say that

someone is six feet tall; in the days of the Kingdom of Israel, to indicate that someone was very tall they would say things like, “from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people.” (1Sam 9:2)

So the people of Yahweh in the last days have a refined speech, and as a result they call on the name of their Father in Heaven in a holy manner, and they serve Him with one “shoulder,” with a unified effort to take “the burden of the word of Yahweh” (Mal 1:1) – another word for the Divine message – to the world. It is a measure of their stature.

Here is the list of words, with associated meanings by use, and a short explanation of why a proper understanding is important; and please keep in mind that this is not a complete list. If a word or a synonym occurs to you that you believe is often misunderstood, and not covered, make a note of it.

Ability

The Bible records a parable of Christ in which it was said, “And unto one [servant] he [the master] gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.” (Mat 25:15)

A person’s “ability” is what he is able to do, what he can do. What we need here is to understand how this word is used in its immediate context, because some confusion may result if various verses are not harmonized. For example, “I can do *all things* through Christ which strengtheneth me,” (Phil 4:13) and, “Yahshua said unto him, ‘If thou canst believe, *all things* are possible to him that believeth.’” (Mark 9:33)

And then there are verses that read, “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted *above that ye are able*; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.” (1Cor 10:13)

And again, “And over it the Cherubim of glory shadowing the mercy seat; of which we *cannot* now speak particularly.” (Heb 9:5)

And famously (for our ministry), “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for His Seed remaineth in him; and he *cannot* sin, because he is born of God.” (1John 3:9)

The first verse from Matthew, and various others like it, tell us that Yahweh will give men gifts according to their “ability.” But then there are verses that tell us we can do “all things” through Christ as we believe. And then we followed that up with several statements that would indicate there are limits to what we are able to bear, what we are able to understand, and what we are able to do.

In a more general sense, we read that there are things even Yahweh “cannot” do. He “cannot” be tempted by evil, or even behold it without covering Himself, (James 1:13, Hab 1:13) for example. So how do we understand this?

THE SOURCE OF EVERY CHRISTIAN, AND THUS THE CHURCH, IS YAHWEH

In the Scriptures, the word “ability” is used according to one’s sphere. By that I mean, when it says that we “can do all things,” this is within the sphere of Christianity. We can do all things necessary to maintain the standard Christ has set for us...it is not promising unconditional omnipotence to those who believe some arbitrary thing. For example, a man who believes he can fly may injure himself before too long. A man who believes he can swim across the ocean may find that his body disagrees with him when he is a few miles from shore.

But a Christian who believes, he is capable of doing all that is necessary to perform the will of the Father in Heaven. If Yahweh wishes us to fly, He can take us up to Heaven in a whirlwind. (2Kings 2:1) If He wishes us to cross the ocean from one continent to another, He can place us where He wishes. (Acts 8:39, 40) It is not the will of the Father that humans should sin, therefore abiding in Christ we “cannot” sin; and of course we will cover that more fully when we discuss what sin is. We are “able” to overcome every sin, but not in our own power, because our sphere is limited by our humanity (as was Christ’s in human form) but... just as He did it, so may we, by constant connection to the Father, and by trusting in the providences of His grace as described in 1Cor 10:13.

Now from the perspective of Yahweh, He is certainly “able” to do all things, but He restricts Himself based on His Own character. In other words, His character is holy, therefore He will not act in a manner that is unrighteous. His character is love, and He will not act in any way motivated by hatred. His character is so opposed to evil that there is no possibility of Him being “tempted” to do something contrary to His nature.

Ability, therefore, in regard to both men and Yah, is never used Biblically in an absolute sense, but always with consideration for the character of those involved, and the sphere of power in which he or she operates.

Now, I had considered writing “Anger” here, but I will cover that under Wrath later on. So we move on now to a word that was mentioned in our first entry:

Cannot

A born-again Christian, it is written, “cannot” commit sin. (1John 3:9) As we all know, this verse has been the subject of controversy among worldly Christians and lovers of sin. The reason is that the Bible makes no distinction between practical and theoretical possibilities. The expressions “cannot” and “will not” are used interchangeably, saying at times of various people that they “will not hearken,” (Lev 26:27) and of the same people that they “cannot hearken.” (Jer 6:10)

In matters of moral weight, if it is said that one “cannot” do something, it means that this is a self-imposed restriction. We know this, because humans were created in the “image” of God, (Gen 1:26 freely able to choose whom they would serve, whether to sin or to righteousness. (Josh 24:15, Rom 6:16) In other words, a Christian “cannot” commit sin because he has chosen to walk in the spirit, and not in the flesh, “That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” (Rom 8:4)

Just as it was with Christ, it is *theoretically* possible to do some known, wrong act, but it is a *practical* impossibility. Luke was speaking with someone recently about the Victory message, and he shared with me some of how the conversation went. The individual with whom he was speaking put it very well. He said, essentially, “There is no way I would commit a known sin.” That is exactly what the Bible means by “cannot;” that, “there is no way.” We may just as correctly say, “There is no way I would ever drink poison.” Of course we have arms capable of lifting a vial of poison to our mouths, and we have mouths and throats to swallow, but our very human nature restricts us (unless we are suicidal) from knowingly doing something that will result in our deaths. We may, theoretically, do such a thing, but there is “no way” we ever would. This is how the Bible, when speaking of moral issues, uses the term “cannot.”

Conversation

This is an interesting word. It does not require a lot of explanation, only a mention that in the language of the earlier translations of the Bible, this word did not mean (as it does today) merely that which you speak. It also means the way in which you act, think and the overall picture you present to others who are observing you.

In other words, when the Scriptures say, “But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation,” (1Pet 1:15) it does not refer merely to the spoken word (although this idea is definitely included) but to all manner of dealings including social, business and casual.

Dignity

This word is actually not very common in the Bible. It appears only four times in the King James’ Version, and all in the Old Testament. Twice, in Gen 49:3 and Hab 1:7, it has the meaning of “exaltation,” or “loftiness;” it has a similar meaning in Ecclesiastes 10:6, although it is there translated from another word. In Esther 6:3, it means “honor,” such as that which may be bestowed upon an important figure.

Modern use includes all those meanings, but also adds a connotation of composure; in other words, to handle something “with dignity” means to react in a calm and thoughtful manner. While not appearing in the following passage, Peter’s advice to Christians certainly comes down to a call for Christian dignity in our actions: “Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; having your conversation honest among the Gentiles, that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.” (1Pet 2:11, 12) Remembering what “conversation” means, we find this is certainly good – necessary – advice for all who would be witnesses of Christ Yahshua.

Faith

This one could also be listed as “belief,” because the word is the same in the language of Scripture. Simply put, the Bible uses this term in a very general way to indicate an individual’s assurance that something is a certain way, *and* the motivation that this provides for action. It does not always mean genuine or saving faith, only an acceptance of something as true. For

example, “Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well. The devils also believe, and tremble.” (James 2:19)

There are some religions that believe, or have faith (same word) that there is only one God. The Jews, the Muslims, and even some pagan religions, are monotheistic, or nearly so. They believe that there is only one God. That is good, so far as it goes, but as James points out, merely having faith in this one aspect of the Creator, that He is one, does not qualify one for salvation. The devils, the fallen angels, are also monotheists, because they know (from experience) that there is only one Elohim.

The Scriptures, however, speak about a very special kind of faith, a faith in, and of, the Savior; and this is the faith that leads to eternal life. We read, “But the Scripture hath concluded [grouped together] all under sin, that the promise by faith of Yahshua the Messiah might be given to them that believe.” (Gal 3:22) And, “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Yahshua.” (Rev 14:12)

Nowadays, even this kind of faith is poorly understood, because people will agree with the first part of the definition, that it is a conviction that something is true. They leave out, unfortunately, the second weight of meaning this term carried in the ancient mind, that belief was also a motivating factor behind actions. It is not enough, in Bible terminology, to accept something as true intellectually, and particularly so when it comes to the faith of Yahshua. Some will quote Romans 10:9 and think that this is the whole thought: “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Yahshua, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”

But Paul goes on to explain exactly what he means by “believe in thine heart,” saying, “For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” (Rom 10:10) True belief, according to the apostle, leads to two outward signs of its existence: *Righteousness*, which is “correctness of thinking feeling, and acting,” and *Confession*, an open testimony of our state. In other words, is religion, according to Paul, a “personal” thing in that it is to be kept private?

Not at all... the religion of Christ must be the most public of things, and only those who are ashamed of the things they claim to be true will use, as an excuse to remain neutral or silent, the statement that “Faith is a personal thing.” In a sense the statement is true, because we must accept it as individual persons, being individually saved... but that is where the individual nature of it ends. After that we are a part of a community, a fellowship of earthly saints with “an innumerable company of angels,” (Heb 12:22) and a royal nation whose greatest obligation is to teach the world what it knows about Yahweh, and openly so.

Fear

To the world, fear is associated with the desire to avoid something. The Bible uses the word in this sense when speaking of worldlings, as John writes, “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.” (1John 4:18) Love, pure and divine love, casts out all worldly fear. Yet the Bible also uses the word, when speaking of saints, of a different kind of fear than that which is cast out by true love.

In fact, to have both love and godly fear are a requirement for the service of Heaven. We read, all in one verse, “And now, Israel, what doth Yahweh thy God require of thee? But to fear Yahweh thy Almighty, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve Yahweh thy Almighty with all thy heart and with all thy soul.” (Deu 10:12) This is the verse partially quoted by Yahshua in Matthew in response to the question, “Which is the first [*i.e.*, greatest] commandment of all?” (Mat 12:28-30)

We are told to both love and fear Yah, and when used of the Redeemed, it does not have to do with “torment” as John describes of those not yet made perfect in love, but with worship.

The words *awful*, *terror*, *terrible* – these also might have had entries here, except that they are associated directly with fear, so they appear all together here. Awful originally meant, as you can still understand from its spelling, “full of awe,” or capable of inducing overwhelming feelings. It now has a strictly negative connotation in modern English. Terror, caused by something terrible, was likewise a word used to describe great feeling towards either something extremely good or extremely bad. This is why the translators could rightly describe Yahweh as a “terrible” God. (Deu 7:21)

Firstfruits

This word has a wide variety of applications in the Scriptures. It may mean the first of the crops to be harvested, a section of the land’s wealth that was specifically dedicated to Yahweh. We read of that usage here: “And Yahweh spake unto Moses, saying, ‘Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest; and he shall wave the sheaf before Yahweh, to be accepted for you. On the morrow after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it.’” (Lev 23:9-11)

The firstfruits were also a type of Christ. As the first, and best, of the harvest, Yahshua represented the “last Adam,” who would overcome where the former had failed, (1Cor 15:45) and in so doing bring with Him a “harvest” from the earth. (Rev 14:15, 16) Because of the “type/antitype” symbolism applied from the firstfruits to Christ, we are given the ability to clear up the length of time that Yahshua was in the grave, avoiding the “third day” vs. “three days and three nights” controversy altogether, understanding both of these to simply be different, idiomatic ways of saying the same thing. Paul writes of Christ, “For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.” (1Cor 15:3, 4)

There are no “Scriptures” that speak specifically about a human rising again on a third day. The only way we can understand this is to look for a symbol that *represents* Christ, and fortunately it is Paul himself who supplies it, writing in that very chapter that, “Christ [is] risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.” (1Cor 15:20) Going to the Old Testament to see what we can see about “firstfruits” and a “third day,” we read that on the “morrow after the Sabbath,” the “third day” (inclusive) from the Passover, the “wave sheaf” of the firstfruits was offered to Yah. (Lev 23:15)

The historian Josephus, who lived at the time of Christ, reveals that this was indeed done on the 16th of Nisan, three inclusive days after the Passover on the 14th. [*Antiquities of The Jews*, Book III, Chapter X, Paragraph 5]

So the Firstfruits may be the literal first part of the harvest. It may symbolically be applied to Christ. It may also, in a third sense, be applied to individuals who are worthy examples for others to follow. Paul commends a Church member by calling him “wellbeloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ.” (Rom 16:5) In another epistle he compliments “the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia” (1Cor 16:15) In Revelation, the prophet sees the 144,000 as “the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.” (Rev 14:4) In all these cases, the connotations of this word include primary, excellent, the very best of all that may be offered.

Forgiveness

Forgiveness is a word that is at once overvalued AND undervalued in much of Christianity. For some, God’s forgiveness is what “saves” them and assures them of Heaven. They believe that once an individual is forgiven, this means that they are made righteous. However, forgiveness is just that – a removal of the guilt of a crime or sin. When God forgives an individual, they are not automatically better or worse than they were before; it is merely that they are no longer held spiritually accountable for the sins that have been forgiven.

If a sinner requests forgiveness of God, and receives it, but returns to his sin, the Bible actually says that this individual is worse off than before. “But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, ‘The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.’” (2Peter 2:2) Forgiveness, therefore, is not a promise or guarantee of anything; it is a gracious gift of God. It is a wiping-clean of the slate in preparation for a new life. It is the way that allows a sinner to turn to God and be accepted through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, “Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.” (Rom 3:25)

Note that the forgiveness granted by God through faith in the Savior is for “the remission of sins that are past,” not for those of the past, present, and future, as some have mistakenly come to believe. Forgiveness is the “door” to salvation, in a sense, but once that door is open, then individual must walk through it, becoming converted, and a born-again child of God. Forgiveness that comes about after true repentance from sin brings the sinner to the place where they may be atoned to God, and it is in this atonement, in this reconciliation, that the life is changed, that sin is overcome in the present and future, that righteousness is cherished, and that redemption takes place. “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.” (Romans 5:10)

On the other hand, some undervalue forgiveness, and say, “Whenever I sin, I just ask God to forgive me, and He does it every time!” It is true that God will forgive sin when sincerely asked; however, those who rely on forgiveness as a means to continue in sin, rather than a chance to turn away from it, will destroy their own sincerity. They ruin their own ability to truly be sorry for the sins that they commit, and can no longer appreciate the salvation they are offered “having

their conscience seared with a hot iron.” (1Timothy 4:2) Forgiveness is not like a band-aid to be placed on cuts, it is an opportunity – purchased for us at infinite cost, the death of Jesus – to turn away from lives of rebellion and failure, and to live according to the perfect will of the Heavenly Father. (1Peter 4:1-2)

Grace

In modern Christendom, the word “grace” almost means, “Permission to do evil.” It is never openly defined this way, of course, but that is the connotation it is given. We hear, “Oh, we don’t have to obey [the law, God all the time, the Bible’s every applicable instruction, the Old Testament, etc.] because we are under grace.” I am sure we have all heard this, or versions of this, as we have spoken to others about the faith of Yahshua.

Biblically, however, Grace is far different from licentiousness, using Yahweh’s mercy as “license” to commit spiritual crimes. We are told that “Yahweh is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, *and* by no means clearing the guilty.” (Num 14:18a) Paul speaks of those who abuse the “riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance.” (Rom 2:4) This is very important! The grace of Yahweh, the undeserved favor, the un-earned gift of his mercy and longsuffering, is not given to men that they might sin, but that they might be led to repentance. This is true in two ways: first, it allows us to see His forgiving nature that we might desire to emulate it and surrender our previous life of sin; and second, it gives us time to repent, for a sinner is immediately worthy of death, “in the day”5:28 that he becomes guilty. (Gen 2:17)

If we understand these aspects of Yah’s longsuffering and mercy, then we realize that the grace by which these are provided is rightly described by Ezra when speaking of the earthly temple: “And now for a little space grace hath been shewed from Yahweh our Almighty, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a nail in his holy place, that our God may lighten our eyes, and give us a little reviving in our bondage.” (Ezra 9:8) Spiritually speaking, this is precisely what grace is to every human being.

Haste

This word imply means “speed.” It is not usually used in a negative context, as it might be today. If you say that one is a “hasty” person, or does something with haste, it usually implies that they were careless about their manner of activity, and in such a rush that they do not attend details with due care.

Biblically, it is a term applied to how Yahweh may answer His people, “Make haste to help me, Adonai, my salvation.” (Psa 38:22) See also Psa 22:19, Psa 40:13, 71:12, 116:11 and so on.

Hatred

This is an important one. There are some verses that use “hatred,” or some form thereof, in ways that can be potentially confusing, especially to newer Bible students. For example, Christ said, “If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.” (Luke 14:26)

Yet we also find, “So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.” (Eph 5:28) Yahshua Himself said, quoting the commandments, “Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” (Mat 19:19)

The absolute predestination people also get confused by statements that read, “Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.” (Rom 9:13) This can cause a stumbling block for those interested in understanding free will, because this statement is made about those individuals even before they were born. (verse 11)

Understanding the New Testament properly often (I might say always) involves understanding the mindset of the authors, and this means knowing what they knew about the Scriptures. For example, in Romans 9:13, Paul actually precedes that statement about Esau and Jacob by saying, “As it is written...” He is quoting from the Old Testament, and this passage specifically, spoken to Jacob (the nation of Israel): “‘I have loved you,’ saith Yahweh. Yet ye say, ‘Wherein hast thou loved us?’ ‘Was not Esau Jacob’s brother?’ saith Yahweh, ‘Yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness. Whereas Edom saith, ‘We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places,’ thus saith Yahweh of hosts, ‘They shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them, *Gaboul Rishah* [The Border of Wickedness], and, The people against whom Yahweh hath indignation for ever.’” (Mal 1:2-4)

Paul is using this passage (there is none other like it in the Bible) to explain how a people (not individuals) are chosen despite any obvious lack of merit. It is not at all speaking of Esau as an individual being “hated,” because Esau was rejected based upon character, and actions based upon that character, not upon some arbitrary pre-birth factor. We read that he, “sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.” (Heb 12:16, 17) The author there is not warning individuals about being Esaus from birth, but about “following peace,” walking in sanctification and “Looking diligently” that we remain in faith. If Esau was “hated” for some arbitrary reason, or some reason known only to the Almighty, this advice would be meaningless – we are told to avoid developing the character that Esau developed, becoming “profane” in nature. (Heb 12:15, 16)

Going a little further, in that context “loved” merely means chosen or selected, and “hated” merely means rejected as the recipient of a particular blessing. This is especially true when speaking of the rights of inheritance (as would be the case of Israel, who is the “inheritance” of the Almighty. (Isa 19:25, Jer 10:16)

We can illustrate this by looking at the original instructions regarding inheritances, which the Bible itself applies spiritually to the nation of Israel: “If a man have two wives, one beloved, and

another hated, and they have born him children, both the beloved and the hated; and if the firstborn son be hers that was hated, then it shall be, when he maketh his sons to inherit that which he hath, that he may not make the son of the beloved firstborn before the son of the hated, which is indeed the firstborn. But he shall acknowledge the son of the hated for the firstborn, by giving him a double portion of all that he hath, for he is the beginning of his strength; the right of the firstborn is his.” (Deu 21:15-17)

Now if a man literally “hated” one of his wives, as we would use the term today, he could easily disinherit her by putting her away. (Deu 24:1) Abraham did exactly this with Hagar and Ishmael (his actual firstborn), and he was not in violation of divine principle – and she was indeed called his “wife.” (Gen 16:3, 21:12) But here we see that the theoretical man in question retained both wives, favoring them both, but he “preferred” one over the other, and would wish to benefit her children particularly, as Jacob himself did, to the detriment of certain aspects of his family life. (Gen 37:3, 4)

Similarly, it is only if we do not “prefer” (not actually hate, as we would say today) our earthly families over Christ’s service that we are safe from temptation in that regard. Satan will assuredly seek to use friends and family against us to take us out of the Way, in many cases without their direct knowledge. It is only if the love of Christ is supreme in a person’s heart that he can be an effective evangelist to those emotionally close to him without being undone spiritually by the Tempter’s efforts. Does everyone understand this?

Humility

Another important entry. Worldly humility means refusing to acknowledge that which is good about yourself, and letting others do it for you. Now, it is certainly a good practice not to be boastful, and it is certainly true also that statements from others about you are more effective than statements you make about yourself. That is a Biblical principle: “Put not forth thyself in the presence of the king, and stand not in the place of great men; for better it is that it be said unto thee, ‘Come up hither,’ than that thou shouldest be put lower in the presence of the prince whom thine eyes have seen.” (Pro 25:6, 7)

Let others speak well of you, essentially. But now there is a way to take that to extremes in that, if we deny the things that Yahweh has made about us that are good and beneficial, this is actually a kind of dishonesty, and a faulty understanding of true humility.

Moses was able to say, “Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.” (Num 12:3) Job was able to say, “The young men saw me, and hid themselves; and the aged arose, and stood up. The princes refrained talking, and laid their hand on their mouth. The nobles held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth.” (Job 28:8-10) Daniel said, “My God hath sent His angel, and hath shut the lions’ mouths, that they have not hurt me, forasmuch as before Him innocency was found in me.” (Dan 6:22a)

And lest you think that this way of speaking passed away after the perfect example of Christ was given, Paul said, “Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.” (Acts 21:1) He also said, “Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me. Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.” (1Cor 4:16, 11:1) “Brethren, be followers together

of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.” (Phil 3:17) You know what they would have said of Paul if he made that statement today in Laodicea... But really, it would be just as true today as it was 2000 years ago – a Christian is worthy to be “followed” if he is walking in his integrity with knowledge of divine principles.

These are all examples of humility. Now, a good example in the Bible of pride is Lucifer, who said, “I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.” (Isa 14:14) The difference between Lucifer and Paul, between Lucifer and Daniel, Lucifer and all the others, is that although all these made great claims, the righteous make claims that are *true*. Moreover, Lucifer’s desire to be like the most high was based upon what he perceived as his own personal merit, whereas, the humans used as an example here ascribe their justification to Yahweh, who either gave them these gifts, or sustained them in the exercise of their abilities.

Yahweh said through the prophet Jeremiah, “But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am Yahweh which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth; for in these things I delight.” (Jer 9:24) True humility is being able to admit, and even rejoice in, the talents that we bring to the Body of Christ, but we “glory” that these things have come about, or have been made useful, only through our connection with Him. This is precisely what Paul was doing in his letters to the Corinthians and Philipians; he was saying, “imitate me” in these characteristics of Yahweh that I portray: lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness.

What about “teachableness”?

Teachableness is also a part of it, yes. In fact, false humility is often a barrier to being genuinely teachable. We’ve tried to teach some people, for example, the Bible’s statements on Victory. Some of the responses we have encountered have been like, “Well, I don’t think I am good enough for that kind of doctrine,” or “That’s too deep for me.”

This is not true humility... this is a rejection of Christ’s gift of faith and wisdom. The truly humble will receive instruction easily.

Jealousy

We all think of “jealousy” as something associated with the flesh, and in most cases this is a correct assessment, for when Paul is describing the “works of the flesh” he includes, “emulations” and “envying,” (Gal 5:20, 21) which have the meanings of “to be eager to imitate,” and simply “jealousy” in a more general sense respectively. Of course, to “imitate” the godly behavior of someone is not a bad thing; the connotation of that word is sort of like seeking to outdo someone in a rivalry. If you notice that someone can play the piano well, and you start taking lessons, not because you like the playing and want to be able to do likewise, but because you want to outperform the first individual, this is an example of “emulation.”

The actual word “jealousy” as translated in the King James Version, is never actually used in an explicitly negative way, except potentially once in Proverbs 6:34. In fact, there is actually a “Law of Jealousy” described in Numbers 5:11-31 in which a husband who is “jealous,” because his wife has had an affair can take her to the priest who, by the performing of a symbolic ritual,

can make divine pleasure manifest in her very flesh. There may be some benefit to studying the details of this ritual in light of spiritual “adultery” that a Church may commit, the fall of the Apostolic Church, or any other examples following the same principle.

Uniformly, divine jealousy is described as an enduring characteristic of Yahweh. It is borne out of a fervent love for His people, and a desire to keep them safe from evil influences. “Then will Yahweh be jealous for His land, and pity His people.” (Joel 2:18) Even humans may have a godly jealousy, which is a desire to protect the reputation, integrity and safety of something that is precious. Paul says to the Church and of the Church, “I am jealous over you with godly jealousy, for I have espoused you to one Husband, that I may present you as a chaste Virgin to Christ.” (2Cor 11:2)

In seeking to comprehend all the words in this lexicon, and “jealousy” is certainly a good example, see how it sounds with the word “godly” before it. Jealousy is a work of the flesh, if we look at it from a strictly human perspective, but “godly jealousy” is a vital aspect of divine love. Fear is the result of a kind of selfishness in the carnal mind, but “godly fear,” that is, “the fear of God,” is “the beginning of wisdom” (Psa 110:11) and “the beginning of knowledge.” (Pro 1:7)

Judgment

That statement at the end of the entry on humility made me remember this word. It is written in Jeremiah 9:24 that Yah delights in “judgment.” Yet in modern Christianity, “judgment” is the new expletive. Many attempts to bring useful reproof to a carnal Christian are met with, “Why are you judging me?” Even if it is not spoken, this is the true thought behind the resistance of rebuke – and it is a pride of “self.” This is similar to the “teachableness” that pastor mentioned earlier. The true measure of humility in respect to judgment is this: “Am I willing to accept reproof from individuals whom I do not respect, if their words have merit?” If you can honestly answer, “Yes” to that question, then you understand judgment in the positive way it is used in Jeremiah 9.

It is a misconception some have that the Bible does not tell us to judge one another. We are, in fact, instructed to do exactly that – only very carefully and with a spirit of love, and not of pride. Some say, “Well, Christ taught us not to judge, or we will be judged ourselves.” In saying this, they are not allowing the Messiah to finish His statement. It is true that Matthew 7:1 reads, “Judge not, that ye be not judged.” This is a “proof-text” that has been lifted (far too often) from its rightful setting.

“Righteous judgment” brings forth “justice.” That is how we know right and wrong... one of the definitions of “judgment.”

We see that demonstrated in Christ’s full statement of Matthew 7. Here is the full passage:

“Judge not, that ye be not judged, for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, ‘Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own

eye?' Thou hypocrite, *first* cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and *then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote* out of thy brother's eye." (Mat 7:1-5)

I added emphasis to the word "first" and the phrase beginning with "then." This is to point out something often overlooked – that Yahshua is not here stating a "rule," but giving a procedure: first this, and then that. If you only do the first thing, and ignore the second step, have you obeyed?

First, (and He is speaking here to *hypocrites*, as He later says) do not "judge" anyone – and that is an interesting word to look at, as we will do shortly. If you judge someone harshly, Yahshua says, you will likewise receive harsh judgment; if you judge someone fairly, you will receive the same. But then, the procedure He gives instructs us in how not to be a hypocrite, so that we can "judge" (in the sense of helping) others effectively.

If we first make sure we are clean of an evil before seeking to help another overcome it, we are not being hypocritical.

It is not love, but cowardice, indifference or hatred, that leaves a sinner unwarned. Yahweh said, "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)

Paul explicitly notes that matters involving Church members are to be judged *by* Church members. "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? And if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? How much more things that pertain to this life?" (1Cor 6:2, 3) And again, he asks the rhetorical question, "do not ye judge them that are within [the Church]?" (1Cor 5:12)

What the Bible teaches is that we are to avoid passing "judgment" on people outside the Body of Christ. Now, this does not mean we cannot seek to encourage them in doing right – but we are not to rashly conclude that they are deliberately being evil because of their lack of light. The word Judgment in the Scriptures can mean one of two things: either to simply decide between two or more options, this is what results in justice, as indicated before, or to pronounce "sentence."

For example, Paul says, "I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say." (1Cor 10:5) In other words, "Decide if what I say is right or wrong." In the other sense, the "Day of Judgment" is not a day of deciding, but a day of handing down sentences. "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these [false teachers], saying, 'Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.'" (Jude 1:14, 15)

To "execute judgment" is to pronounce or carry out a sentence. Even in English we speak about the "judgment of the court" to refer to the thing the court has decided, not the process of consideration.

The former, we are certainly to do – we are to constantly be “judging” whether or not things are good or bad, first in ourselves and then outwardly only afterward. Yahshua gives us the divine instructions in Matthew 7 regarding how to do this properly. The latter is reserved for the Almighty Himself, spoken of nations or individuals either directly, through miracles, or through agents such as prophets and angels.

The judgment of Yahweh, that is to say, the things He has decided, are not things to be feared by humans. If we love Yah, we desire to be judged by Him, that He may direct our paths. This is what we call “standing in the judgment,” letting Him refine us. And in so doing, we open ourselves up to others as well, inviting our brethren to participate in this process. Our New Moon doctrine is certainly a practical example of the fulfillment of this process.

Nothing scares a carnal Christian more than being “judged,” whether it be by God, by saints, or by worldlings, although they might not be inclined to care as much about the last of these three. Nothing is more sanctifying to the spiritual Christian than the act of entering into judgment amongst the current and future residents of Heaven, and letting the light of Yahweh’s wisdom strip away the dross to leave only precious gold behind.

Law

This is another one of those extremely important words that may have a variety of meanings based upon the context. It can refer to all of the Old Testament, including the prophets and the Psalms, for we read that, “Yahshua answered them, ‘Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?’” (John 10:34) That is actually from Psalm 82:6. Sometimes the term means only the first five books, or the *Pentateuch*: “And He said unto them, ‘These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.’” (Luke 22:44)

The “Law of Moses” is itself a tricky term, because it does not only refer to the law that Moses declared and recorded after his experience on Mount Sinai, but every instruction from Yahweh that Moses recorded, including those which preceded him, like circumcision. (John 7:23) This is important to the Sabbath question; some will say that since the 10 Commandments were part of the “law of Moses,” this automatically means it began and ended with the post-Exodus nation of Israel; but the “law of Moses” refers to even the everlasting covenants that were drafted before Moses, and those which continue into eternity. The Sabbath is certainly revealed to be one of these in Isaiah 66.

The “Law” can also be a general term for “instructions,” even temporary ordinances, or purely man-made rules that have no binding power on the righteous. The “law of commandments contained in ordinances” that was nailed to the cross (Eph 2:15) was clearly not the 10 commandments, as can be easily shown from the context. The law that was nailed to the cross contained those traditions and teachings that kept the Jews separated from the Gentiles (verses

11, 16) but the instructions given by Moses, particularly those in the Decalogue, were never intended to separate Jews from Gentiles but to bring them into one nation. (Isaiah 2:3, Mic 4:2)

Even the feasts were not exclusive, but “when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the Passover to Yahweh, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof.” (Exo 12:48) In Esther, “many of the people of the land became Jews,” (Est 8:17) and in the book of Acts the traditional teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees was stripped from Peter, who testified, “in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him.” (Acts 10:35) This was nothing new, nothing unique to the Christian age, as the Old Testament verses make plain.

Love

Here is another word with a number of meanings. In the Old Testament, it is usually translated from the Hebrew word *ahav*, which means just about what it does in English, and can have emphasis on love between humans, love between man and God, and love for even objects and concepts, like a love of justice or a love of venison. (Gen 27:4)

The New Testament (Greek) term is a little more specific, depending on what word is used in the original language. There are several words for “love” in Greek, but two are generally used in Scripture.

There is a love that means brotherhood, familiarity, similarity, and is used usually when referring to earthly affection. For example, “If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.” (John 15:19) “Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another.” (Rom 12:10) This word is *phileo*.

Then there is *agape*, that divine love that is impartial, but encompassing. This kind of love is not exclusive of other kinds. Two brothers, who share *phileo*, may also share *agape*, if they know the love of the Savior. Husbands are likewise told to have *agape* for their wives, (Eph 5:25) although their love would also include an intimacy unique to that couple.

This is the kind of love that Yahweh has for men, and that men who are redeemed have for Him. In translating the commandments into the common tongue of that day, this is the word that is used: “Yahshua said unto him, ‘Thou shalt love [have *agape* for] the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love [have *agape* for] thy neighbour as thyself.’” (Mat 22:37-39)

The meaning is generally made clear to English readers by means of the context, and sometimes words based on *phileo* are simply translated into the phrase “brotherly love” (Rom 12:10, Heb 13:1) to avoid any ambiguity.

Lust

This word, today, has a strictly negative connotation. It is one of the “seven deadly sins” of some Christian traditions. Originally, the word was morally neutral, and simply meant “to have a strong desire for.” There are occasions in the Bible when the word that is translated as lust (*avah* in Hebrew, *epithumia* in Greek) has completely positive connotations, such as here: “And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after; for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth; and thou shalt eat there before Yahweh thy Elohim, and thou shalt rejoice, thou, and thine household.” (Deu 14:26) Another place is here: “And [Yahshua] said unto them, ‘With desire [*epithumia*] I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.’” (Luke 22:15)

Some feel condemned, and guilty, because the traditional meaning of “lust” is applied to Biblical passages that are thus given undue emphasis. Most famously, “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, ‘Thou shalt not commit adultery,’ but I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.” (Mat 5:27, 28)

This does not mean, as some have taken it to mean, that a man cannot find a woman attractive, or vice versa. It does not mean that *natural* desire between males and females is somehow less than pure. What the Scriptures condemn is termed in another place as “inordinate affection,” (Col 3:5) and addresses almost exactly what the 10th commandment already does – a desire that goes beyond mere attraction, but a consuming urge to possess. Control of the thoughts and the imagination is certainly a duty of the Christian, (2Cor 10:5) but we are no more to live in fear of condemnation for our thoughts as we are to live in fear of spiders, snakes or scorpions. (Luke 10:19)

Mercy

Many confuse this term with *leniency*, when the latter word is used in a somewhat negative sense. Yahweh is merciful in that He is longsuffering, and provides every opportunity for men to find salvation. (Psa 86:15) He paid an infinite cost in the death of Yahshua to enable humanity to find repentance and acceptance. (2Cor 5:19, Rom 5:8) Yet the Scripture declares Him to be “longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation.” (Num 14:18)

The sins of men may be *forgiven*, but they are never *overlooked*. It is true that Yahweh will sometimes punish men “less than our iniquities deserve,” (Ezra 9:13) because it is the “goodness of God leadeth [that] thee to repentance.” (Rom 2:4) Yet while Yah is patient, and will not chastise us more than we can bear, He does not remove the consequences of our actions in most cases, and allows us to reap what we sow. (Gal 6:7) Does everyone understand the distinction between forgiveness and having wrongs overlooked?

Yahweh is interested in our characters. If, when we discover we have done wrong, we confess and repent of that action, the character is cleansed, and grows. But if our wrongs go unacknowledged, and there are no consequences, then exactly the opposite takes place: the soul

is corrupted, and growth is stunted. The character of Christ is not developed by those who do not understand their responsibility as a child of the Most High, and they will not be able to stand before the Throne. (Isa 33:14)

Just as “love” is often confused with “sentimentality,” which consists to a large extent of positive feelings, so mercy is often relegated to an emotion rather than a principle. If we wish to be merciful as our Father in Heaven is merciful, it does not mean we must overlook the faults of others and let not only ourselves, but others, be abused in our presence. We must not allow those we love to abuse themselves either, by continuing unwarned in a wrong course of action... this is not true mercy. (Ezek 3:18) Yahshua loved the Pharisees whom He rebuked; Peter and Paul loved their former brethren whom they chastised for their rejection of the Messiah. These things were necessary for them to understand, if they had any hope of inheriting life. In the long run, the most merciful thing we can do for the world is to do just as we are called to do – to testify of Christ, and to hold up His character before the world, saying, “This is what the Almighty requires of His people, all who will be saved from the destruction to come.”

None/No one:

The Bible uses this and other collective terms in some unusual ways. For example, collective terms are often used as a “representative set.” Here is one example: “we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; as it is written, ‘There is none righteous, no, not one. There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.’” (Rom 3:9-12)

Taken by itself, this passage and others like it is sometimes used to say that humans are not only depraved, but that this is the only possible situation for human beings, even after salvation. Thus, they conclude, a concept of “victory over sin” is an ideal at best, and a delusion that steals hope, at worst. But those who think this have simply never experienced true freedom before; and they compound their problem by using their past experience to judge not only the promises of Scripture, but also the experiences of others who have accepted those promises.

Although Paul says “no one” in the passage from Romans 3, he does not mean “no one under any circumstances,” for we need only keep reading to see his own qualifier: “But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets, even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Yahshua the Messiah unto all and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference [between Jew and Gentile]. For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Yahshua.” (verses 21-24) Paul goes on to explain that by the law all are guilty, and none may be made right by a decision now to keep the Law (if such a thing were even possible). It is only by faith that we may both be justified and obey.

Nevertheless, although none may be justified by the law, and none of themselves seek after Yah, the Scriptures do speak of those who seek the Almighty. “Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek Yahweh their Elohim, and David their king; and shall fear Yahweh and His goodness in the latter days.” (Hos 3:5) Promises are offered to those who seek, “for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek

Him.” (Heb 11:6) Christ instructs us to “seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” (Mat 6:33)

This is not a contradiction, it merely incorporates the idea of Grace, which we studied last month, and makes note of the fact that because of this gift we have the opportunity to be drawn to Yah’s character and seek Him.

Perfect

As we have seen in previous studies (and a number of articles focusing on other subjects) the word “perfect” may carry with it two well-defined meanings. In both the major languages of the Bible, Hebrew and Greek, these meanings come through.

The first meaning involves a standard that may vary according to an individual’s understanding and the light that he or she has received. But, and this is very important, do not confuse *variable* with *subjective*. An individual does not merely decide what he or she ought to do and then set out to attain a self-imposed goal. It is Yahweh who guides His people, as it is written, “the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.” (Jer 10:23b) Based upon the leadings of Yah, each individual has a degree of righteousness that is expected. They have been permitted to know things about the character of the Almighty, and themselves, and there are tendencies to subdue and promises to claim.

This kind of perfection, which we rarely label “perfection” at all due to the possibility of confusion, is represented by the Hebrew word *tam*. We read that Job was “was perfect and upright,” (Job 1:1) because he was fulfilling all his known moral obligations, with nothing lacking and no defilement. The corresponding word for the New Testament is the Greek *teleios*, which is used in such verses as, “If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man; and able also to bridle the whole body.” (James 3:2b) It does not say the man may not have more to learn. Job certainly did; but as Christ instructed, (Mat 5:48) we are to have no moral lack.

There is another word for perfection that men do not claim while they are yet undergoing the process of sanctification on earth. It means “completeness,” “perfection” in the absolute sense. Where this word appears in Hebrew, *tamam*, we find David praying, “Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me; then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.” (Psa 19:13) This result of being kept from presumptuous sins results in a condition of perfection that the Psalmist describes as “upright.” While already “upright” in the sense that he was “a man after [Yah’s] own heart,” (Acts 13:22) he had more to learn before being ready for Heaven. The Greek word *teleioo* fills this role in such New Testament passages as, “And these [heroes of faith] all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise, God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.” (Heb 11:39, 40)

Paul uses both these terms in one passage, as most of us have already seen, to illustrate the growth process of the Christian. He writes, “Not [considering] as though I had already attained, either were already perfect [*teleioo*]; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect [*teleios*], be thus

minded; and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.” (Phil 3:12, 15, 16) While heading toward the degree of absolute perfection, we may claim to be among those who “be perfect” by putting away the past and reaching forward, by allowing Yah to continually show us the path ahead, and by standing fast in what we have already attained.

Predestined/Predestinated

This word, and its older form “Predestinated,” is a source of much controversy in Christendom. Are some individuals destined to be saved, and some destined to be lost? The answer, interestingly enough, is “Yes,” but there is a very important qualification to attach to that answer.

What the question usually means, when it is asked, is, “Are some human beings *arbitrarily* chosen to be saved or lost?” The answer to that new, more specific, question becomes a very clear, “No.” The Bible absolutely refutes the idea that Yahweh chooses certain men for destruction even before their birth. But now, we must look at the verses that some will use to teach exactly that concept.

Here is one: “As it is written, ‘Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.’” (Rom 9:13) Some take this verse, and much of Romans 9, to mean that Yah has chosen some individuals before their birth to be saved or lost. This is not the case at all. Romans 9 is not speaking of individuals, but of nations. The Almighty never said (so it is not “written”) about Jacob or Esau (the men) that he loved one or hated the other... Paul is not quoting from Genesis but from the prophet Malachi, who records a theoretical conversation between Yahweh and His people: “‘I have loved you,’ saith Yahweh. Yet ye say, ‘Wherein hast thou loved us?’ ‘Was not Esau Jacob’s brother?’ saith Yahweh, ‘yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness.’” (Mal 1:2, 3)

Clearly, this is speaking about the nation of Israel (named for Jacob) and the nation of Edom (named for Esau). The heads of the nations gave their character to the people of their land to a degree, and this is the reason why one was accepted and the other rejected. The individuals themselves were chosen or rejected based upon how they responded to the grace offered them, and we read that Esau lost his earthly inheritance, a symbol of the Heavenly, because he was a “profane person,” caring more about the comforts of this life than the dignity of the priesthood as it pertained to the next. (Heb 12:16)

The word “predestinated” itself features heavily in an epistle of Paul. This is a long passage, so I will post it all, and let me know when you are finished:

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Yahshua the Messiah, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as he hath chosen us in Him before the

THE SOURCE OF EVERY CHRISTIAN, AND THUS THE CHURCH, IS YAHWEH

foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Yahshua the Messiah to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved.

“In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace; wherein He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself:

“That in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him; in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will, that we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ.

“In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory.” (Eph 1:3-14)

Clearly, Paul is focusing strongly on the idea that salvation is initiated by Yah, and not in the mind or heart of any human. He makes it plain that men are saved by the will of the Creator, and not by the merits of any human being. Men are “chosen” from the foundation of the world... but the question is, “*Why* are some men chosen and some men rejected?” That is the big question, and one we have in common with those who believe in an arbitrary election of grace.

Those who believe in absolute predestination in a Calvinistic sense say that God chooses based on some criteria we do not know, or on no criteria at all; He simply points His finger and says, “That one.” This is not what the Bible teaches. While Paul’s words are certainly profound, they are not in conflict with other passages that tell us that we may choose (by the gift of grace) to serve the Almighty. Mankind is “totally depraved,” as the phrase goes, which is why an additional factor – grace – must be provided that men should have a hope of Heaven. As Joshua said to the Israelites, “choose you this day whom ye will serve.” (Josh 24:15) Every book of the Bible provides men with a moral choice, either explicitly worded or implied by the content. Every book of the Bible affirms that men are free to choose, and Christ taught us to, “lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven,” because “no man can serve two masters.” (Mat 6:20, 24)

Yahweh is shown to “predestinate” those whom He “foreknows.” (Rom 8:9) The Almighty knows ahead of time who will be saved and who will be lost; it does not say that He predestinates those whom he “fore-saves,” or “fore-selects.” The selection itself (also called

being “ordained before” in 1Cor 2:7) is based upon His knowledge, not His activity. Paul Himself tells us, in Ephesians 1, that those who are selected are those who hear the word and believe. These are the ones Yah draws to Himself but, and this is very important, He is seeking to draw all. He is “not willing that any should perish,” (2Pet 3:9) and this is spoken in the setting of not only the saints, but also the wicked. (verse 7) Christ intended that His sacrifice should “draw all” unto Himself; (John 12:32) and again this was not spoken in terms of only the elect, but for all who were present, even those who did not understand His ministry or work. (verse 29)

A lot more may be said on this topic, but what it boils down to is this: there IS an election of grace according to Yahweh’s purpose and pleasure, but it is not random. It is not based on some divine principle that is higher than the human mind can grasp, or else the vast number of moral lessons and instructions to reject evil and choose righteousness would be perfectly meaningless. While there is indeed an election, the apostle Peter tells us in no uncertain terms that the election is not based on nothing, and not based on factors over which we have no control, for he gives us clear instructions, saying, “Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things [described above], ye shall never fall.” (2Pet 1:10) If this verse is seen in harmony with Paul’s statements, the matter becomes perfectly plain.

Remember

This word joined the list because someone asked me a question to the effect of, “If the Scriptures teach that our sins will not be remembered, how will we know who we are in Heaven, and does this mean that God forgets some things?”

The word “remembered” in Scripture may be very simply explained as this: “considered,” or “contemplated.” After the Flood, Yah said, “The bow shall be seen in the cloud, and I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh.” (Gen 9:14, 15) This does not mean that He would literally forget (as we use the term today) not to flood the world until He saw a rainbow; it means that this would be a visible sign of the promise, something that may be contemplated as a “token” of the covenant. (verse 13)

We read also, “Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions; according to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness’ sake, O Yahweh.” (Psa 25:7) “I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.” (Isa 43:25) “For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.” (Heb 8:12)

These verses do not mean that we will actually forget what happened on earth. A number of passages tell us that our knowledge will be increased, not decreased, as here: “But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face; now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.” (1Cor 13:10, 12)

The Book of Hebrews includes the passage, “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.” (Heb 12:1) Looking back at the previous chapter to see what the “wherefore” is about, we realize that the author is including also the number of the saints that died before Christ came. In the world to come, the followers of Christ and, in a special sense, the last generation of saints, will have much to teach those who have preceded us by way of the grave. In the resurrection (this passage is not addressing life after death, as some would hold) the 144,000 will have a special place, having followed the Lamb “whithersoever He goeth,” (Rev 14:4) and reflecting the light of His character most clearly.

That these individuals who learn are called a “cloud of witnesses” is significant, for they will not know, by observation, things about us that we do not know about ourselves by experience. Paul writes, “Know ye not that we shall judge angels?” (1Cor 6:3) Clearly, we will have access to the events of even the spiritual plain as it pertains to this age.

Repentance

The Bible speaks of two kinds of “sorrow” for sin. Paul discusses them in his letter to the Corinthian congregation, writing, “Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry [by my rebuke], but that ye sorrowed to repentance; for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of, but the sorrow of the world worketh death.” (2 Corinthians 7: 9, 10)

For many, repentance is the “sorrow of the world.” It means a feeling of guilt, shame, or sadness that accompanies reflection on sinful actions.

While this is, indeed, the natural reaction of an awakened conscience to the reality of sin, if it goes no further, or only leads to a temporary avoidance of those actions, this is not true repentance. Temporary rejection of sin because of emotional agitation is not a sign of true righteousness, because it is ultimately a selfish act – the individual avoids what “feels bad.” If, however, the individual decides that God’s will is best, that His Law is holy when used properly, (Romans 7:12, 1Timothy 1:8) then he may make a resolute decision to abandon sin, and live according to righteous principles. The emotional feelings of guilt and sorrow may awaken this desire; however, as Paul writes only those who sorrow “after a godly manner” benefit from the experience.

The verse directly following the one quoted above show the results of true repentance: “For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.” (2Corinthians 7:11)

True repentance is a vehement, zealous, careful turning from evil. It is an absolute “clearing” of one’s self from the offending actions, and a resolute determination to be “approved” after putting away the transgression. Repentance must accompany forgiveness, for nobody can “earn” God’s

approval by good works; God's grace must be offered and accepted, and then the forgiven one may walk in repentance, doing good because of his faith that he has been cleared of the sins from which he has turned away.

Replenish

This is a word that has some importance to the discussion of how literally the first chapters of Genesis are to be taken. The verse at the center of the matter is found generally in the older translations to read, "And Elohim blessed them, and Elohim said unto them, 'Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.'" (Gen 1:28)

This is not an instruction to fill an earth that was once already full of life. Individuals who hold the gap theory, or other alternate view of Creation than is plainly revealed in Genesis, believe that dinosaurs and so on are the creatures of a previous age that was destroyed before men. We believe that "all things" pertaining to the physical universe were created in six days, as both Genesis and Exodus tell us.

The word for "replenish" in Hebrew comes from the word *maleh*, which means to simply "fill." We need not even go to the original language for this if we understand that replenish comes from an older term *replene*, not re-plenish, or to "plenish again." *Replene* comes from Latin to Old English by way of French... and in its earlier forms meant only "to fill," even if it is the for the first time. Even today, when we say something is "replete," we mean it is full, such as "replete with wisdom;" and there is no connotation there of having once been full, then emptied, then filled again.

Salvation

While some people generally have a good grasp of what this word means, it is a good idea to clear up what this word ought not to mean to the Christian. Salvation should never have, as its primary meaning, "Going to Heaven," or even worse, "Avoiding Hell."

It is true that there are some Christians, and I have met a few, who believe that the reason a Christian is "good" is because he is seeking to avoid punishment. Such a person has never met Christ, because while the Bible says that fear of punishment may be necessary initially to wake an individual up from Babylonian stupor, (Jude 1:23) this is not enough to sustain an individual in justification.

If anyone wishes to understand the details of salvation, I would suggest to write us and let us know to send you relevant studies to the issue.

Sin/Sinner

We have touched on the definition of "sin" a few times. Most will see it as "breaking a rule," but the one verse that actually gives us a definition provides a meaning that is far deeper than this. If salvation, which we studied above, is based on faith and not works, then being condemned also must relate to something deeper than mere outward activities in the physical world.

The verse is this one, “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law, for sin is the transgression of the law.” (1John 3:4) As we have seen before, the phrase “transgression of the law” is a single word in Greek, *anomia*, and it does not mean “a breaking of the rules,” but rather, “a condition of lawlessness.” It is a state of being, rather than a guilty disposition due to actions taken or omitted. It is a matter of the heart and one’s faith, and this state naturally reveals itself outwardly in words and actions.

Similarly, when Christ says, “that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man,” (Mat 15:11) this means that the defilement made apparent is the existing condition of the heart, “for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.” (Luke 6:45) Furthermore, the words themselves have power, for what we testify becomes true... therefore if our hearts were initially upright, but we had not a testimony that we have overcome the world, our words will instruct our hearts, and our true condition will eventually match that which we speak outwardly, “For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.” (Mat 12:37)

We must see how a testimony of having overcome sin is vital to our growth, and those under inspiration have said, “Take the word of Christ as your assurance. Has He not invited you to come unto Him? Never allow yourself to talk in a hopeless, discouraged way. If you do you will lose much. By looking at appearances and complaining when difficulties and pressure come, you give evidence of a sickly, enfeebled faith. Talk and act as if your faith was invincible.” [*Christ’s Object Lessons*, page 146, paragraph 5] If even Adventists, who have had the benefit of these instructions, do not do this, what hope is there for the world? By our actions, the saints must show the on-looking universe what sin is, in precisely this way – by showing them the dignity of man when it is absent.

By implication, then, a “sinner” is one who, because of the condition of his heart and the weakness of his testimony, cannot apply the Blood of the Lamb to his life. Remember that the redeemed overcome the powers of the world by these three things: “by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death” (Rev 12:11) There is no way to recover or “improve” upon this condition... there is no way for a transgressor to evolve into a faithful servant any more than a snake can become a bird. But we may experience a transformation, which is a very different thing. A transformation is a *creative* act, and we become adopted (which is a formal procedure, not a gradual process) as “sons of God,” (John 1:12) and this results in an entirely new being, “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” (2Cor 5:17)

Torment

This expression only occurs in the New Testament. Some verses relating to humans that contain this word are: “And in hell [the rich man] lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.” (Luke 16:23)

“The same [who receive the Mark of The Beast] shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb; and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night,

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who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.” (Rev 14:10, 11)

“And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.” (Rev 20:10)

As you can see, understanding this word is important for discussing the state of the dead and the ultimate fate of the sinners.

The word itself means just as one would expect based upon its modern, English use: pain or great discomfort.

To go over Luke 16 very briefly, we know that this is a parable, since it is said in several verses that when Christ was with a crowd He always spoke in parables, (Mat 13:34, Mark 4:34) and we know that the audience for the Luke 16 passage consisted of His disciples, some Pharisees, and perhaps various other onlookers. (Luke 16:14) We know that the name “Lazarus” appearing in the passage does not mean it is not a parable, since names do indeed occur in Biblical parables. (Num 23:7, 24:3)

We know, further, that parables are intended to convey a moral lesson, and frequently involve scenarios that are not literally true. (Mark 4:31, Judges 9:8) The matter of the rich man’s “torment,” therefore, speaks of a moral condition that will meet its natural end in the lake of fire, when both death and hell are cast into this final place of destruction. (Rev 20:14)

The passage in Revelation 14 is not parabolic, but prophetic. While it does use symbols, they accurately reflect the events portrayed. What is important in that passage is that it is never said that a human’s torment goes on forever. The results are forever; and here the symbol of the “smoke of their torment” is used. The burning of sacrifices in the Bible is used in such a way in verses like Leviticus 2:16; and the smoke is referred to as “a sweet savour, an offering made by fire unto Yahweh.” (Exo 29:18) The destruction of sinners is the final revelation of the result of transgression to the universe, and this is a lesson that will never be forgotten. (Nah 1:9) The sinners themselves, however, “shall be stubble, and the day that cometh shall burn them up,” saith Yahweh of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.” (Mal 4:1)

Now in Revelation 20, it appears to be saying that Lucifer, a created being, is tormented for eternity along with the beast and the false prophet. This is another area where a little understanding of the original helps a bit. First, there is a comma issue. The passage in the King James version gives the impression that Lucifer is the subject of the phrase “tormented day and night for ever and ever.” If we move the comma, however, it reads:

“And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.” (Rev 20:10)

In other words, the beast and false prophet, that are not creatures at all, but systems, suffer everlasting destruction akin to the “everlasting shame” that some in Daniel’s described judgment

face. It is an eternal rejection of the principles espoused by these systems, and not the everlasting pain of those individuals involved in those systems.

But, is there justification for shifting the comma? There is... in the Greek language, the verb “shall be tormented” is plural; it refers not to Lucifer (singular) but to the beast and false prophet (plural). While it is linguistically possible to include Lucifer along with the beast and false prophet in this “torment,” to do so would be to come into conflict with the stated judgment of Satan as declared by the prophets in earlier books. “I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee.” (Ezek 28:18b) Once again, by harmonizing all the verses that refer to a single incident, we can obtain a complete picture.

Worship

This word is very important for our understanding of the Book of Revelation. When people read this word, they immediately get the idea of kneeling before someone or something and bowing with a visible sign of deep reverence. This is a reasonable conclusion, because the word for “worship” indeed comes from a root that means “to bow down,” in Hebrew or “to kiss the hand” in Greek, and in general this is how it is used in Scripture.

It does not only refer to outward signs of reverence, however. We read, “And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, ‘If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand...’” (Rev 14:9) We know that men do not generally “worship” kingdoms or organizations, but they give allegiance to them, and pledge themselves to be servants of the principles they espouse. In this sense, to “worship” a system means to become identified in philosophy with such a system, to come into a state of agreement. Idolaters “worship the work of their own hands” (Isa 2:8) not because they think their hands have any special power, but because they are in agreement with the power that their image supposedly represents.

Wrath

There is an earthly wrath and a divine wrath, just as there is a distinction between the earthly and heavenly in terms of such matters as love and jealousy. Knowing how to distinguish the two is a key element of reading the Bible for principle, and drawing from it an accurate picture of the character of Yah.

The Wrath of Yah does not involve hatred or unjust anger. It is a principle, like His love, that is impartial and always mitigated by as much mercy as possible. In many cases, as is stated explicitly, the “wrath” of the Almighty is simply His withdrawing His protection for a time so that we can reap the natural consequences of errors. We read, “‘For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee,’ saith Yahweh thy Redeemer.” (Isa 54:7, 8)

Toward His people, the wrath of Yahweh is a corrective force. We read that “No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable

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fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.” (Heb 12:11) Christ also said, “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous, therefore, and repent.” (Rev 3:19)

Toward those that are not His people, the wrath of Yahweh is still a merciful act, but it is an active “pouring out,” and the mercy manifests itself differently. First, it ends the sinful life of those who would only continue to suffer spiritually under the power of the Tempter. We read of that here: “And Yahweh shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.” (Rev 21:4)

While this passage is referring primarily to the saints, we understand that there will be no more death, sorrow or crying anywhere; the redeemed have no need for sorrow, and the lost have no capacity for it, being destroyed. “We know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now,” (Rom 8:22) but this is only a temporary state until the “new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered [see the entry on this word above], nor come into mind.” (Isa 65:17)

In a secondary sense, the destruction of the wicked is a mercy to the rest of the creation. As long as there is suffering anywhere in the universe, the sympathy of the redeemed, who have hearts of perfect love, would be pricked by that suffering. Simply being “in Heaven” does not immunize one to the pain of others. Christ was in the Eternal Kingdom, and He could not bear the pain of men on earth; He came down in order to make atonement between us and the Father. (Rom 5:11) The idea, then, that there will be an eternal torture of the lost while the saved ones are either ignorant, insensitive, or comforted by some warped idea of “justice” is simply not a proper reflection of the facts of a holy character. But if we truly understand the “Wrath” of Yahweh, then all His dealings with humanity make sense, and reflect the perfection of His character.



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