

Questions or comments are welcomed.

PATHWAY OF LIGHT STUDY COURSE

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“But the path of the just is as a shining light, that shines more and more unto the perfect day.” (Prov 4:18)

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour:”

Study 9, Chapter 4

We have an enemy that is seeking our complete destruction. It is of supreme importance that we realize this and understand the reality of the battle and what it involves. We all realize, as we have been considering, that the enemy we fight against is the prince of darkness called Satan (or “ha satan”, meaning “the adversary”). He is also called the devil, the prince of darkness, the god of this age, etc. He walks about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. We must know how to fight this battle that we might indeed overcome, for to not overcome this enemy would be to lose our souls. And if we are Yahweh’s true children, His elect, He will not allow that to happen. That is why it is stated emphatically that, “Whosoever is born of Yahweh overcomes the world, and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcomes the world, but he that believes that Yahshua is the Son of Yahweh?” (1 John 5:4-5)

However, that does not mean our own free will does not enter into the matter. We must will to fight and must be fully determined to win. Yahweh knows those who are His even before they are ever born. He knows those who will respond to His call and to the amount of effort He sees is right to use in order to bring them into His fold. And He also knows who they are that will not respond to whatever He sees would be right for Him to do in order to win them. Therefore, He chooses accordingly. As we have seen, Yahshua said, “My sheep hear my voice and they follow me....”. Yahshua also said, “No man can come unto me except the Father draws him, and I will raise Him up at the last day.” (John 6:44) We may speak more on the subject of election and predestination at a later time.

For now, in relationship to this spiritual battle we are in, I just note that the human will is involved in the matter. We must choose, that is, make a decision of the will, to follow Yahshua, for we are drawn, not forced, to the Savior. “The Spirit and the bride say come...and whoever will let him take of the water of life freely.” (Rev. 22:17) The Father, by the Spirit, draws, but the individual must exercise his or her free will by responding. The righteousness of Yahweh is revealed in the gospel “from faith to faith”.

We must begin in faith, and continue in faith, for “just shall live by faith”. (Rom 1:17) In fact, as we have previously considered, what we are in is called “the good fight of faith”. That faith is first of all faith in Yahweh, and secondly faith in the truth of the gospel.

Our battle is against Satan, but, as we have also considered, as the god of this age his primary instrumentality is this world system. He uses the things of the world to seek to draw us back into a life that leads to destruction. The system of this world is diametrically opposed to Yahweh and His kingdom of “righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit”. (Rom 14:17) Therefore, Satan wants us to be taken up with the world and the things of the world and to bring us into bondage to them. He uses the world to attract us as by using evil spirits he works on our natural desires through the thought processes of the natural mind. Satan’s ally in all of this is our own natural man, our fallen human nature with its fleshly appetites and desires. We have considered this to some extent in a previous study, but should pursue it further.

What we need to consider further is that, because Yahshua became our substitute, our old natural self must be considered totally dead. Even though we must live a so-called “good” or “decent” and “morally clean life”, that in itself is not enough. Yahshua said, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me”. (Matt 16:24b KJV) As we read in Luke 9:23 He said, “... If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.”

This is in keeping with the gospel. Since we have died in the death of Yahshua, then, by our union with Messiah we are dead to sin, to the world system, and to our own selves. This is demonstrated by our immersion in His name for the remission of sins. If we truly believe and accept His death and resurrection as ours, then, it becomes our responsibility to live in harmony with that truth. In other words, we are to walk in the light of the gospel, which means to walk as one who is dead to self and all that appeals to the natural man, but alive in the new resurrected life of Messiah. It is by the power of His resurrection that we are enabled to break the yoke of bondage to sin.

If Yahshua has come to indwell us by His Spirit – the Holy Spirit of Yahweh – we have, thereby, become joined together with Him as a new creature in Messiah. It is this indwelling of Messiah that enables us to begin to walk in, and grow in, this new life of becoming more and more like Him. He alone is our hope. In Colossians 1:26,27 the apostle Paul speaks of, “... the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his holy ones: to whom Yahweh would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Messiah in you, the hope of glory:”

The problem is that sin still dwells in our mortal bodies. As already pointed out Satan uses demons, or evil spirits, to work upon a child of Yahweh. They cannot gain “possession” him or her in the sense of their losing control of their will to an evil spirit. But they will effect the thought processes, by injecting thoughts into the mind in an

attempt to affect the appetites and desires in such a way as to bring us into bondage to them. They will even arrange situations in such a way that the things of this world are brought to our attention and used to tempt us to sin.

The field of battle is essentially in the mind. Thus we read that in this warfare there is to be the, "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of Yahweh, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Messiah." (2 Cor 10:5) Peter tells us that we are to, "abstain from fleshly desires, which war against the soul." (1 Pet 2:11) Those desires are stirred up by thoughts in the mind. He also says, "Forasmuch then as Messiah has suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that has suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of Yahweh." (1 Pet 4:1,2) We can, and must, have such a mind that is willing to suffer in the flesh in resisting sinful appetites and desires

The armor we must have to be successful in this battle for the soul is a mind that is willing to suffer in the flesh. . It is not easy to say no to one's own desires, but our mind must be set to do so. We must have a mind that like that which Messiah had. We must be willing to "endure the cross" (or stake of impalement) for the sake the joy that is set before us. We must be willing, if need be, to resist "unto blood, striving against sin", as indicated in Hebrews 12:4. It is thus a mind that is divorced from worldly self-interest and is fully set on the will of Yahweh.

When Yahshua said that to come after Him we must deny ourselves and take up our cross and follow Him, He clearly meant that we must become dead to our own wants and desires. And we must die to self every day. We are not to be taken up with seeking to gratify ourselves, but to live for Him moment by moment. If we truly live in this way it will eliminate the world amusements that so many believers seem to be very occupied with. We are told, "Whether therefore you eat, or drink, or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of Yahweh." (1 Cor 10:31) And again, we read, "For you are bought with a price: therefore glorify Yahweh in your body, and in your spirit, which are Yahweh's."

If we truly deny ourselves there will be no more self-seeking, self-glorification, self-ambition, etc., etc. We will not be given over to sports, amusements, or other worldly pursuits. Instead we will find all our satisfaction in seeking to do His will. As Yahshua said to the Father, "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." (Psa 40:8)

Some think that because they have embraced the truths of the Sacred Name, the 7th day Sabbath, and various other truths that others do not seem to know or lay hold of, they are true believers. However, you can have every doctrine correct and yet be living for self. In fact, you can have pride in your understanding (and acceptance) of these doctrines and, thereby, feel you are part of the in-group when in fact your very pride is an abomination in the sight of Yahweh. What Yahweh wants is those who not only see and accept the things which are true doctrines, but those whose lives are just totally wrapped up in Him and His will. He wants those who so love Him, and are so taken up with

thoughts of Him, that they no longer have any real concern about themselves except to be vessels that show forth His virtues and instruments in His hands for the accomplishment of His will.

However, it appears that some believers, though of course not “possessed” by demons, nevertheless, have demons, or evil spirits, that have taken up residence in their flesh. They claim the right to live there because of the sins of the believers’ fathers (ancestral curses), or because of their having at some point dabbled in strange practices forbidden of Yahweh (such as occult practices), or their having given themselves over and over again unto various lusts or wrong manners and attitudes. Having evil spirits dwelling within their flesh makes it extremely hard for them to live fully unto Yahweh even though it is in their hearts to do so. Such believers may even be battling against certain sins over and over again without ever seeming to be able to gain complete, lasting victory. The demons claim the right to live in the flesh of that individual believer until they are made to leave by being cast out, or by that believer sufficiently doing what James says when he writes, “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” (James 4:7)

To say a believer cannot have a demon, or even demons, residing in their flesh and troubling them is to be ignorant of what is going on according to the experience of many who have been greatly blessed by becoming delivered of evil spirits sometimes even after years of struggle against certain sins. I again emphasize that I am not speaking of what is commonly called “demon possession”. Rather I am saying an evil spirit, or spirits, can take up residence in the body of the person in the same way that a disease can, or that Paul says sin dwells in our flesh, which he calls, “this body of death”. In fact, they are most likely behind much, if not all, of the disease with which mankind, even believers, suffer.

I plan to continue on this subject concerning this aspect of the battle against this world system and the god of this age in the next lesson.