

## Two Spiritual Poisons

### Introduction

Qinael: Most holy and loving Father...

We thank you for the opportunity to join together and present ourselves to you as a body today

We are ever blessed by the tools for cleansing and examination that you have given us, including the New Moon

We ask that each one receive a blessing and insights into your character, that we may grow together into the fullness of Christ.

In the name of Yahshua we pray, amen.

Zahakiel: Amen.

Naraiel14026: Amen.

Barbli: Amen.

Naraiel: Amen.

Eagle: Amen.

Peter: Amen.

Adriel: Amen.

Daphna: Amen.

CrystleM: Amen.

Zahakiel: Today's study is entitled "Two Spiritual Poisons." We have been going over a lot of previously written materials in our last few Sabbath Studies, particularly that which is written in The Highway of Holiness. I would like to continue that trend here, by introducing a topic that we have probably touched on a few times before, but in a relatively new context.

One of the things that I hope we will find worthy of note is the cure for spiritual poison and, to give away the ending right up front, it is "communication." We have been studying communication in particular recently, and in a sense all along, so this is certainly a relevant matter. In obeying the voice of the Father, in being true to His covenant, in speaking often one to another, in uplifting one another Heaven-ward, we will find that we automatically overcome the issues that I am addressing this month.

But we will look at them here, because we need to be constantly aware, and often reminded, of why communication is important, and what it is that it protects us from experiencing. It is my hope that this study will have two benefits to the people of Yah. First, we will be able to rejoice in the blessings of our

Father in Heaven, seeing that His promises are true and His warnings effective. And second, that we will be encouraged to greater heights of effectiveness and dedication in our communication with one another, and also with those still in the world. We must be aware that speaking with those in the world about matters such as this is not dangerous or something to be avoided – in fact, we have been instructed to do just that – as long as we are sure that there is no log in our own eye.

### What is A Spiritual Poison?

Zahakiel: We find this verse in the Old Testament, “Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.” (Exo 22:18) I have heard it said, by several people, that the word “witch” there was originally intended to indicate a poisoner, rather than a practitioner of supernatural arts. Having seen the arguments on both sides, however, it is clear to me that the original language does indicate “witch,” just as it is translated into English.

In terms of doctrine, however, the distinction isn't all that relevant. As we know from the incident at the battle of Ai in the Book of Joshua, when one Israelite's sin caused the defeat of the entire army, any kind of spiritual impurity, even something as “tame” as covetousness, can lead to widespread ruin. In other words, if we read the Bible for principle, and understand what it is that Yah is seeking to accomplish among His people, we end up avoiding “foolish questions, and [earthly] genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law.” (Titus 3:9)

One of the comments I wished to make last Sabbath, had we not branched off a bit from the main subject matter, is regarding the right place of “doctrine.” We have always taught that doctrine is not an end in itself; in other words, having the “right doctrines” does not make us special in any way, except that it leads us to the right character – the character of Yahshua. For example, we should not rejoice that we know which day is the right Sabbath. We rejoice in the right keeping of the Sabbath day, because it contains the blessing of Yah. We do not rejoice that we believe the Trinity to be a flawed picture of the Godhead. Instead, we rejoice in the knowledge of the Father and Son, which knowledge they share with us by Their Eternal Presence and Holy Spirit. This is a somewhat subtle distinction, but it is an important one.

The Pharisees had the right day for the Sabbath, but it did not lead them to the right character. The Jehovah's Witnesses reject the Trinity, but they are not closer to the truth than any Protestant religion, nor any more free from sin. Ultimately, it is not “having” the right doctrine that is important, it is the beliefs and practices that the doctrine produces. It is not understanding the truth that leads to salvation, but it is following the truth to the goal of Christ-likeness. The Bible puts it simply, “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers [or knowers] only, deceiving your own selves.” (James 1:22)

This is not to say that doctrine is not important; it is necessary to know truth in order to follow it. But our rejoicing must not be in having the right doctrine, or even the “true Church,” but in understanding that these are our Father's tools, given to us in love, and necessary for our development, growth, and life everlasting.

Now, I spend some time on this, because I want you to clearly understand what a spiritual poison is, and what it does. There are many ways that we can endanger our lives. We can take physical damage from a weapon or an accident. We can be deprived of some necessary resource like water or air. Our bodies can

wear out from age or illness. But poison injures in a very unique way from any of these. It may act quickly, or it may act over a long time, but in general it does so without any outward sign of its presence until it is too late to do anything remedial.

Let's apply this spiritually. We have seen how the process of growth works in Christianity. As I have explained above, Christian growth consists of learning the truth (by study, by self-examination, by revelation, by the actions of the Spirit through the saints, etc.) and then following that truth by adjusting our beliefs and practices toward the perfect character. Spiritual poison is anything that disrupts this process, just as natural poison disrupts the normal functioning of a body, and may do so over time with little sign of its presence until it has done great damage.

While it may seem to be a good thing that the poison takes time to work, and does not instantly cause a falling-away, this time-factor, when combined with the difficulty of its detection, actually renders it more dangerous. One who is poisoned becomes, by extension, a poisoner himself, and we cannot allow one who poisons (by whatever means, including rebellion, which "is as the sin of witchcraft" – 1Sam 15:23) to "live." I am not, of course, advocating the stoning of offenders. I am speaking spiritually here, and I trust you will follow my meaning. Stoning or exile was the means under Moses of cleansing the camp of Israel. In this generation there are other methods prescribed by the Almighty. The reason, however, has not changed. As with Achan, (Joshua 7) the poison can spread quickly, undetectably, and damage the entire community.

Are there any comments or questions at this point?

Adriel: No.

Eagle: No.

Peter: It is very true.

CrystleM: No

Zahakiel: I would like to speak to some specifics this month, and I have singled out two varieties of spiritual poison for discussion here, because I think that they are two of the most dangerous ones, and also the most subtle. Because they are subtle, even the very Elect must be on guard against their entrance into the community of the Saints.

### Bitterness

Zahakiel: The first spiritual poison is called "Bitterness." Perhaps not coincidentally, many actual poisons are bitter to the taste. The Scriptures tell us:

"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." (Heb 12:14) This is a wonderful verse to confirm the Adventist view of the plan of Redemption. Rather than simply speaking a prayer and entering into a covenant-less, non-committal, false sense of security, the Scriptures present us with the doctrine of being "born again." We are born of the Spirit when we are justified – declared just. But thereafter we live the life of Christ in our mortal bodies, and "follow" after. Yahshua did not say, "Take up the cross and stand where you are." No, He said, "Take up your cross and *follow me.*"

The false doctrines have the Christians standing still with a cross in their arms, and if they slip back a bit, that is okay too. But the Bible tells us that we must follow after: the path of peace, the path of grace, the path of sanctification – which is the word that is translated as “holiness” in Hebrews 12.

We are told to follow the path of sanctification, but we do not often continue reading (in the studies where that verse is used) to the next statement. Hebrews 12:14 and 15 read together: “Follow peace with all men, and holiness [or sanctification], without which no man shall see the Lord; looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.”

Bitterness is a barrier to sanctification, and it not only prevents the one who is initially poisoned from growth, but it can also cause “many” to be defiled. Do you see how this fits in to what we were looking at earlier?

Peter: Yes.

Adriel: yes, I think so

Eagle: Yes, makes sense.

Zahakiel: One of the most dangerous things about bitterness... well, first, let us define carefully what bitterness is.

In terms of the emotions and the spirit, bitterness can be described as a feeling of hostility. It does not boil over into the violence of open anger, at least not at first... and at that point it is no longer bitterness anyway. Bitterness is the simmering of hurt feelings that leads to a sensation of isolation, and that (isolation) is one of the most dangerous things about this poison. We read:

“For Yahweh saw the affliction of Israel, that it was very bitter, for there was not any shut up, nor any left, nor any helper for Israel.” (2Kings 14:26)

Affliction is one thing. We may feel hurt, we may be injured, and if it is obvious to ourselves or others, we may have a tendency to reach out and receive help. But a bitter affliction, or an affliction of bitterness, this is a terrible sickness, because it stirs up feelings of wounded pride – and that pride often says, “I must deal with this myself,” or worse, “The others do not care enough about me to truly help,” or even worse, “The others are responsible for the way I am feeling, so why would I seek help from them?”

You see, once an offense is taken and not openly laid out, immediately rebuked, once it becomes bitterness through lack of communication and mutual love, Satan can do terrible things. And those things usually begin with isolation. Satan takes away our “helpers” if we should ever entertain bitterness. He seeks to make sure that whatever the initial problem was, (and it can almost always be cleared away very quickly) it will never be resolved, because bitterness removes the one thing that can resolve it – communication with the others involved.

Now, Satan does not mind communication at all... certainly not. If one who seeks to follow the Messiah is wounded, Satan rejoices when that individual communicates; but only, with everyone except the right audience. This is, after all, how bitterness spreads. Matters that arise among the fellowship of the Saints

can do great damage to the Gospel if, instead of following Gospel order, we go to our friends, our family members, the media, the courts of law...

But so important is Gospel Order, going first to the one with whom we seem to have an issue, that Yahshua says that this must come *first*, even before our routines of worship. "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift" (Mat 5:23, 24)

"But," some may ask, "isn't the worship of Yahweh, and our duties toward Him, always to come first in every way?" Well, what do you think about that? Why is this verse true, even despite the duty we have to put Yah first?

Adriel: Because we can't truly worship Yah if we are bitter.

Zahakiel: Right.

It is important that we worship Yah with our entire hearts, and conflict, resentment, bitterness... these are things that poison our minds against the purity of worship, and the heart full of joy.

Peter: It says only the pure in heart shall see god,

Zahakiel: Yes.

You will notice in Matthew 5 it says, "that thy brother hath ought against thee." This is important... because it means that there is responsibility on both sides. If we feel temptations to bitterness against an individual, we must go to him or her immediately, so that our worship will not be tainted. That is obvious. But at the same time, if we know that someone may have some issue against us, it is also our responsibility to attempt to make it right, rather than sitting back and waiting, or hoping, that they will come up to us.

Eagle: Amen.

Zahakiel: In doing this, we are like our Father in Heaven. How do I mean this? That other person may not know how to deal with his or her emotions and temptations in these matters. We see this all the time. Sorrow manifests itself as anger in the unlearned. Disappointment quickly becomes disgust in those who are not near to the heart of Yah. Heartache can become mistrust. This is exactly the state in which humanity found itself when Yahweh reached down to us with undeserved love and sent us His Son. He loved us first, revealing Himself and at the same time teaching us how we can respond to love. If we reach out to those who may have an issue against us, and we reach out in love, we may not only reconcile with them on the specific matter that has arisen, but we may actually be teaching them more about how to actually and properly express that love.

Bitterness is not always easy to identify. This is exactly why infinite Wisdom has placed a guard on both sides of it... with the one who is embittered, and with the one toward whom the individual feels bitterness. We can be sure that, in the fellowship of the Saints, the Spirit of Yah will reveal problems as they arise, and that it is the responsibility of all to bring these things into the light, bring these things into communication, that the darkness can be cleared away.

Are there any questions here?

Qinael: No.

Peter: No.

Adriel: No.

Eagle: The "the fellowship of the Saints" demonstrated all that you have just said to me anyway, during Sabbath's chat. Amen!

Adriel: ☺

Daphna: comment

Zahakiel: Ah, yes. While this study was started before last Sabbath, I was blessed to see how it could apply.

Daphna: I am glad that we can express our doubts and disagreements and not keep them inside that the church says to do so and Yah says that is the way we should to so

Daphna: thoughts

Daphna: It is such blessing

Zahakiel: Very good, yes.

Zahakiel: The Church is designed by Heaven to be the place of growth and education, and that can only be possible if it is safe for all to bring their true selves.

Daphna: Yes.

### Guilt

Zahakiel: The second spiritual poison I would like us to look at today is "guilt." There are two kinds of guilt the Scriptures describe, of which we may read here:

"Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry [by my previous, strongly-worded letter], 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." (2Cor 7:9, 10)

One who rebukes sin, as Paul did in his letter to the Corinthians, is always taking a risk of sorts by doing his duty. He risks further offending and isolating the individual who is the subject of the rebuke... because just as with bitterness, this is what Satan tries to accomplish. Again, he isolates. Duty demands that sin BE rebuked, or course; if it is not and is allowed to continue, it will result in the death of the individual anyway. It is very like surgery... we must make a cut – and this always involves risk – but it is necessary to facilitate healing.

A lot of what determines whether or not the subject survives the operation is what kind of guilt is allowed to develop. There is guilt that leads to repentance, and there is guilt that leads to further destruction. Guilt of itself is neutral, it is a feeling of shame for some reason. If the shame is hidden, it will not lead to repentance. If we cover our guilt, do not confess it, and maintain it despite a rebuke, then the “old man” beings to justify the thing that caused the guilt in the first place.

Let’s look at the earliest example of this to demonstrate what I mean. In the Garden of Eden, after Adam and Eve had transgressed the one requirement of their continued life and happiness, they immediately felt the sensation of guilt. They knew they had done wrong, but instead of repenting – which involves confession and rejection of the source of the shame, instead they hid. Do you see how this works? If the guilt is not confessed, it will cause separation, just as bitterness will.

Daphna: yes

Eagle: Yes.

Peter: Yes.

Zahakiel: Adam hid. Now, if we find that we have done something wrong – and for the born-again this will be largely the discovery of an unintended sin, but it also applies to those in the world who desire to cease from known sins – we will experience a sense of shame. This is natural. What do we do? The tendency of the carnal mind is to hide, to either not discuss the problem at all, or to find a way to believe that what we have done is not really so bad after all. “Everyone does it,” or “Who are you to judge me,” or “I just can’t talk about that,” are examples of hiding behavior. These statements come from someone who is experiencing “the sorrow of the world” that “worketh death.”

But the spiritual mind makes a decision to endure the pain. It says, “I know I have done a wrong, and it is embarrassing, but I will stand before Yahweh, who has promised to cover my nakedness so that I will not be ashamed.” This requires love, and trust of the Father in Heaven. While there are indeed unpleasant sensations, for the born-again believer these are soon swallowed up in love and acceptance. This is the power of repentance, that it restores that unity of spirit between our Father and ourselves.

When Adam was confronted with this experience, he hid. We must never hide from Yahweh, or even from one another. And while you would think that the CSDA members, and those who are well-studied with us, would be able to recognize this temptation, I believe that it is a surprisingly effective tool against which we must be vigilant. We must be diligent in our efforts to cleanse the camp, beginning with our own hearts.

Guilt that is hidden has several effects, all of which are terrible. It breaks down communication (because the others will judge me to be inferior). It leads to an avoidance of fellowship (because why would I want to be around people whose very presence reminds me of my own failures?). It can lead to bitterness (because they should mind their own business OR they should be spiritual enough to know about my problems and help me). Guilt and bitterness are close to each other, but they are distinct issues. Guilt is generally about one’s own activities, and bitterness is generally toward someone else. The results, however, and the sense of isolation they produce, are quite the same in many ways.

Are there any questions at this point?

Qinael: No.

Eagle: No.

Daphna: No.

Adriel: No.

Peter: No.

### Identifying the Poisons

Zahakiel: How do we identify these spiritual poisons of Bitterness and Guilt? I have a few written down, but perhaps you can add to them. How do we identify bitterness?

Some ways are these:

- a) The individual withdraws from regular fellowship or, if they do attend, they seem to be less involved than before. One of the worst things about bitterness is that it tends to spread, not only from person to person, but from target to target. In other words, if I allow bitterness to develop between myself and one other person, not only will others begin to feel bitter due to the natural results of that, but I may begin to feel the same sensation toward others. This affects one's relationship with the entire congregation very quickly.
- b) The individual begins to speak ill of one or more people, either openly, or by implying things about them.
- c) The individual begins to manifest defects of character that were not noticeable before. Again, bitterness, being a spiritual poison, will disrupt the growth process, and will begin to affect the character to some degree.
- d) If the bitterness the individual feels is against you, he or she will avoid you. Matthew 5 says that if you know someone has something against you, go and attempt reconciliation. There is, therefore, going to be away that we will know if we are the subject of someone's bitterness, even if the signs are subtle, and require prayer to discern.

Any other ideas?

Daphna: To know oneself is important

Zahakiel: Yes, very.

Well, what about guilt? Certainly, if WE are suffering from guilt, we will know it. Even if we are in denial about the exact nature of what we are tempted to hide, we will find ourselves withdrawing from the gathering-together of the saints, and making excuses for our actions.

Eagle: Does guilt turn into anger if not properly dealt with?

Zahakiel: I think that any negative emotion can hide behind anger. That is sort of the default "shield" to cover up addressing the real core, which can be embarrassment, sorrow, hurt, etc. In fact, I would say that when someone is angry, unless it is "righteous indignation" against some evil thing, it is not the true problem at all, but rather a cover for the actual issue.



Peter: Lack of communication between parties...Not as often as it use to be... excuses for not being able to communicate. Not willing to take the steps to resolve the problem.

Zahakiel: What is that in response to, Bro. Peter?

Peter: Bitterness.

Zahakiel: As in how to identify it?

Peter: Yes

Zahakiel: Ok.

In terms of identifying guilt in others, this is really quite difficult, because the blame is turned inward, rather than against someone else as in the case of bitterness. The outward symptoms, if they do appear, will probably be fairly subtle, but may be similar to those we have discussed just now, except that we will not necessarily sense a feeling of hostility toward anyone else.

With guilt, the hostility is directed at the self, and requires prayer in terms of how to approach it. Even so, when Achan committed the sin of covetousness, Yahweh revealed it in a very unusual way, in a way that was not immediately relatable to the actions of that one man. In other words, when there is poison in the camp, *something* will begin to go wrong, and we may not always have the discernment to immediately identify the cause of the effect. The best thing to do is, when we see problems arising in Israel, go immediately to prayer and ask, as Joshua did, that the Almighty reveal the source of the affliction. Once it is revealed, all that remains is the cure.

#### Conclusion: Curing the Poisons

Zahakiel: As I said at the very beginning, the cure for spiritual poison is communication. There are probably many other poisons we could discuss, but the two I have chosen are, I believe, sufficient to allow us to “read for principle” on these matters.

Note that I do not speak, as the world often does, of a “treatment.” Yahweh deals in cures. He says, “I am Yahweh that healeth thee,” (Exo 15:26) not, “I am Yahweh that treateth thee.”

Adriel: Amen.

Peter: Amen.

Zahakiel: The Word of Yahweh deals in cures that actually resolve the damage done by sin, and allows us to put away the cause, and handle the consequences, for time and for eternity. And what that Word says is that we must communicate. We must be open and honest – we must commit to being open and honest, so that the bitterness does not spring up, and the guilt does not overtake us. These things are worthy of study for the saints, for they are Satan’s most effective means of seeking to isolate the Elect one from another, and all from Yah.

But the focus must ever be the cure, communion with the Father and Son, and communion with the Body. Yah does not want His children to be in any pain. Why should a God of love ever want such a thing for anyone, much less His chosen people? But He also requires that we grow into responsible maturity, and

that involves taking control of our own feelings and reactions by the power of grace that He has given to us.

Eagle: Amen.

Zahakiel: Yah wants us to be clean, pure and joyful. Indeed, He has already pronounced us so, but it can only be unto us in practice as our faith will allow. It can only be unto us to the measure that we are willing to receive these things.

Let us, therefore, be in constant watch-care of our own souls, seeking to find any root of bitterness or worldly guilt. And let us also be sensitive to the reactions of others, for the Spirit may reveal to us (without us actively looking for problems in others, of course) a soul in pain due to poisoning. Finally, let us pray for the camp of Israel as we travel through this last wilderness, for Canaan lies ahead, and Satan is working his wrath as best he can, and bringing against us his most powerful and subtle weaponry, for he knows his time is short.

Are there any final questions or comments before we close?

Adriel: No.

Eagle: No.

Qinael: No.

Zahakiel: All right. I will ask pastor to offer the closing prayer.

Pastor "Chick": Dear Father in Heaven...

Impress upon our hearts and minds the seriousness of this lesson...

Thank you for sanctified communication, as we learn more of it day by day...

Bless all here with the revelation of the spirit of New Moon...

In the name of YAHSHUA, our Messiah, AMEN!

Zahakiel: Amen.

Adriel: Amen

Peter: Amen.

Qinael: Amen

Eagle: Amen.

Daphna: Amen