

Disapproving the Approved

Introduction

Qinael: *Most holy and loving Father,*

We thank you for this time of cleansing and examination for the building of your temple.

We ask for your presence with us, guiding our hearts and minds into all truth.

In the name of Yahshua we pray, amen.

Pastor “Chick”: Amen.

Peter: Amen.

Adriel: Amen.

Eagle: Amen.

Abraham: Amen.

Pastor “Chick”: Amen.

Barb: Amen.

Peterson: Amen.

Giselle: Amen.

Jaime & Maria: Amen.

Daphna: Amen.

Zahakiel: Amen.

Elyna: Amen.

Zahakiel: Happy New Moon to all. This month’s topic is called “Disapproving The Approved,” and it involves one of those subtle temptations that may come upon the elect as they walk the path of sanctification.

We will begin with this passage, “‘For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,’ saith Yahweh. ‘For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.’” (Isa 55:8, 9)

In another place we read, “O Yahweh, how great are thy works! Thy thoughts are very deep. A brutish man knoweth not; neither doth a fool understand this.” (Psa 92:5, 6)

And again, “Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of Yah that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” (1Cor 2:12-14)

Over and over, the Scriptures tell us that although we were created in the image of Yahweh, even the perfect cannot understand His thoughts. For those who remain carnal, and are not converted by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the thoughts of Yah are not only above theirs in glory, but also entirely alien to the way that their minds work.

As the world slipped deeper and deeper into corruption and sin with the passing of the generations, the image of Yah that would allow us to even begin to approach His divine mind faded away, until the apostle wrote that, “friendship of the world is enmity with God [...] whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.” (James 4:4)

The world has its “good things” for those who are of the world, and its “good things” for those trying to be spiritual, but unless we have the “mind of Christ,” we will most assuredly fall victim to the snares of Satan who is, after all, called “the god of this world.”

The messengers of Yahweh have a burden to bear to this world, and that burden is not often an easy one. The messengers of Yahweh are to speak the “good things,” not of this world, not even of the “spiritual things” of this world, (a term I will look at shortly) but the good things of the Most High, the good things of the Father and Son, and this often places them at odds with those things that the world approves. The reasons why the messengers of Yah must give a straight testimony, and bring rebukes often more pointed than those borne by John The Baptist, is not because they wish to be harsh or unyielding in their pronouncements. Not at all; it is because they, having seen the beauty of holiness, and the things that Heaven approves, cannot help but see the sharp contrast between Yah’s judgment and man’s best judgment – and hasten to warn their brothers and sisters out of love and utmost concern.

The Things of Flesh

Zahakiel: We can start with the “easy” examples of this: the Things of The Flesh.

The Scriptures tell us, “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.” (1John 2:15-17)

Of course, by the term “the world,” John is not referring to the natural world. He is not talking about the flowers, the ocean and the sunset. He specifies that “all” that is in the world consists of things like the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. The word used for world there is not primarily used for the planet earth, as we would use it in English today. Its primary meaning is, “the way things are in this time and place.” We would say, “Look at the state of the world,” for a similar meaning. We are not talking about the things that Yah has made to be an adornment to this planet, but about the things that sin and corrupted humanity have made the world into.

The lust of the flesh is to do the desires of the flesh. These are the things that Paul talks about in the passage that describes various works of the flesh: “Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like.” (Gal 5:19-21)

For the Christian, of course, these things are not what we seek, and in fact would disgust us to contemplate. The truly born-again Christian has already put these things from his heart, and they do not trouble him once he has been educated to their nature. I speak, to be clear, of the truly converted Christian – the one who is Spirit-filled and dead to self. Many who name the name of Christ do, indeed, struggle with these things, and that is because they have not committed – have not covenanted – to be dead to such matters.

And one might say, “But even the world does not approve these things.” Yet the world does approve many of these things indeed – fornication is praised while abstinence until marriage is considered old-fashioned and peculiar. Lasciviousness, revelry and drunkenness make one the “life of the party.” Heretics are seen as bold and independent-minded, having put away the foolish superstitions of the past, and under the right circumstances even murderers can be seen as heroes.

The other things, if not openly praised in all circles, are at least tolerated and ignored. Envy, after all, is a necessary component of the world’s version of ambition. Adventist writings have some things to say about this. The Spirit of Prophecy writings tell us, “[In Heaven,] every faculty will be developed, every capacity increased. The acquirement of knowledge will not weary the mind or exhaust the energies. There the grandest enterprises may be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations reached, the highest ambitions realized, and still there will arise new heights to surmount.” [*The Great Controversy*, Pages 675-677]

Have you all read this before?

Pastor “Chick”: Yes.

Adriel: I’m not sure.

Abraham: Yes.

Barb: Yes.

Eagle: I will read it.

Elyna: May have in the past...

Zahakiel: I ask, because I long to share with you the joy that these few sentences cause within me. It may seem like a small thing to some, but to know that our Father in Heaven does not stifle, but rather encourages and rewards, creativity, places the true vision of Heaven in stark contrast to those who teach that obedience, humility and self-abasement are the only virtues worth mentioning.

Eagle: Amen.

Zahakiel: “We must follow the leader,” the cults say, and they strip away any spark of individuality and creativity in their members, as these things are a threat to their human-based authority. “We must not seek out too much knowledge,” some denominations teach (or at least imply with their attitude) because they believe that Yah does not honor the wise.

It is true that *worldly* wisdom can be worse than useless, and the Spirit of Prophecy also said that the Seal of Heaven will not be placed on anyone with *worldly* ambition, but it is most important that we realize that these things are merely the dark reflections of actual holy attributes that we are expected to develop and employ to the glory of our Father.

The ambition of the world is not a quest to better one’s self in spiritual things, but to acquire wealth, to increase possessions, and to gain respect of one’s fellow man, regardless of who must be inconvenienced in the process. To be very pointed, this is *Satanism* in its purest essential sense – not the worship of Satan, but the religion that Satan himself holds – the self before all others and all else. The attitude of entitlement (“I deserve the things I have, and so much more than I now have”) in which the modern man lives is near and dear to the Enemy’s heart, and is the basis for the cult of self, the rise of the importance of “self esteem,” and even the culture of lawsuits that plagues many first-world countries, the Second Beast of Revelation being the prime example (and no coincidence there).

Pride, ambition, self-esteem, these are things the world approves. But Heaven does not approve of these things as they are currently defined, and the messenger of Yah will find himself or herself the “odd man out” when these matters are being discussed. We all know the verse, “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Mat 16:26)

We have also heard the passage, “Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are motheaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth; and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you.” (James 5:1 – 6)

While all the world, including the religious leaders like the Pharisees and Sadducees, were courting the attention of the rich and influential, James was doing just what I am talking about today – he was disapproving the approved. He was revealing Heaven’s judgment on those things that man had judged “good,” and all but the righteous would be led to shun him because of it.

Now, there’s nothing particularly wrong with having wealth. Job, Abraham (and his descendants) and the Kings of Israel were all fabulously wealthy, but James is speaking of those who had become rich by abusing the just, and hoarding their substance for themselves (“for the last days”) while the work of the Gospel needed support. The ambition to become rich is the cause of sorrow; as Paul says, it is not money, but “the love of money [that] is the root of all evil; which, while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” (1Tim 6:10)

In standing against these things of the world, we also must be disapproving of the things that the world approves.

Are there any questions so far?

Pastor “Chick”: None.

Barb: No.

Elyna: No.

Adriel: No

Peter: No.

Eagle: No.

Abraham: No.

The Things of the Spirit

Zahakiel: Now, in this next section we will discuss the Things of The Spirit. This is where Satan has his snares ready for the very elect, because these are things that, on the surface, were all things as they appeared, actually blessings.

On Christmas day, we celebrate the birth of Christ. On Easter Sunday, we celebrate the resurrection of our Savior, and remember His triumph over death for our sakes. These are the holidays, the holy-days, of modern Christendom. And yet, while the spiritual world of this earth approves of these things, Creation Seventh Day Adventists, like a few other movements, (the minority) disapprove.

What could be wrong with celebrating these sacred days? For one thing, we are not instructed to call attention to these matters at particular times of the year. The time of birth of Christ is not mentioned in the Scriptures; even Luke's Gospel, so meticulous about dates and sequencing, does not mention it. We cannot believe that Luke was unable to find out... yet he saw fit to leave this out. There must have been some inspired reason for this, just as Moses' burial place was not made known to Israel, lest they make of it a shrine.

Yah has His reasons for all that He does, and He has given us things to celebrate. We are to celebrate spiritual things, and signposts in the Plan of Salvation, at the harvest. We are to celebrate on the times of nature's pattern on this earth, for these are the symbols that Yah uses to draw our attention to eternal matters. The resurrection of Messiah is tied to the cosmic calendar, for just as His death was on Passover, so was His return to life on the day after the Sabbath, when the wave sheaf was raised as an early offering to the Tabernacle on earth.

In addition to the lack of positive instruction, we also have the Scriptures telling us to avoid the very things that these "holy days" have come to espouse – easily-identified pagan rituals re-titled with Christian themes. We find an emphasis on the self, on excesses of food and commerce, and assaults on temperance. We are not to learn the way of the heathen, Jeremiah tells us, yet this is precisely what the ancient and now-fallen Church has done, and her daughters (and, more recently, her sister) follow in her footsteps.

Even these "spiritual days," which the more sensitive of Christians do try to layer with some thoughts of holiness, are not truly designed to draw one any closer to Yahshua and Him crucified. Or if they were originally, they were designed by man, and quickly fell prey to corruption. "Not even the celebration of His resurrection?" some may ask. Not even that, for it has become so comingled with rabbits, eggs and chocolates that any lesson of the true character of Christ cannot possibly escape contamination. We must disapprove these things that the world's spiritual organizations approve.

Even our attitude toward the blood family is different from most Christians. Even the Bible speaks of responsibility for one's family, making this a subtle subject indeed. After all, it is written, "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." (1Tim 5:8) Certainly, as we covered in a study not very long ago, if there are people dependent upon us, family members who depend on us for their livelihood, then we must take that responsibility seriously – regardless of their spiritual condition or leanings. If they ask of us, we must freely give. Even if they do not ask of us, we know our role as providers if we are the heads of households.

Yet Christ said, and it ought not be ignored, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me." (Mat 10:37) "And He said unto another, 'Follow me.' But he said, 'Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.' Yahshua said unto him, 'Let the dead bury their dead, but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.' And another also said, Lord, 'I will follow thee, but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.' And

Yahshua said unto him, 'No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.'" (Luke 9:59-62)

These are powerful teachings, and for some they are hard sayings. None of us will nod joyfully at the prospect of having the family be at the center of a choice between priorities, or rejoice in the thought that we may have to be separate from them in order to fulfill the great commission. It is unfortunate that we may even be called to make decisions like this – but Yah knew what He was doing when He asked Abraham to sacrifice His son. Yah knows what He is doing if any of us are brought near unto similar trials, and I mention this example precisely because over the years in this movement several of our number HAVE been put in similar positions. Our loyalty to the Most High must be absolute, or we do not help our family members heavenward anyway. They MUST see our commitment to the Gospel above all else, or no gifts of our time, devotion, money, or our personal presence, will benefit their souls in eternity. Even Elijah, whose work is to turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children, and the children back to the fathers, must acknowledge the wisdom of these words.

The world, and its most spiritual representatives, will place great emphasis on the family. We are not against such thoughts in principle, but Christ's words stand, and the inspiration of later prophets tell us that we are not to "wait" for family members to be saved before entering into our own covenants with Christ. Nor can anything be placed above Yah in our affections. As many denominations rightly say, "Salvation is an individual thing." While they may use it with the intention of separating the salvation experience from Church and Tribal membership, we use it in the right way – to draw attention to the intensely personal experience Christ has with each and every one of us, *because* we are members of His divine Body, the united and holy Church.

Elyna: Amen.

Zahakiel: We can extend our work and love for our earthly families to "good works" in general. We strongly disapprove of the beliefs and practices of the Sunday-keeping Churches, and yet who has done more for the world, having build schools, and hospitals, and other beneficial structures, than the Roman Catholics? Who have healed the sick, and fed the orphans, and cared for the widows, more than they? We cannot deny that they have done many good works... of course not. But we cannot be blinded either by the approval of the world to the great evils that they have also done in the name of Christ.

And more than what they have done in the past, to this day they reinforce concepts that lead one further and further away from Yahshua. The perpetual sacrifice of the Mass, the emphasis on the sin-repent cycle that keeps one tied to sin, the introduction of pagan practices, the destruction of marriages in (for one thing) the way that priests are expected to live... these things have produced as much sorrow, death and suffering as any hospital or school can alleviate.

Yah does not judge either individuals or organizations based on how well they balance good works vs. evil. Even if the Churches that have done good works in the world could balance their evil with good, it is not the evil they have done that determines how much good they need to do. No, the perfect character of Christ is that which must be balanced by our souls, and is the only standard that Heaven holds.

We as individuals must also confront these things in our lives. Are we approving what the world approves? Are we doing "good" when we should be doing "righteousness?" Those are often two different things in this confused world, so much so that some can claim they have heard the word of God

telling them to actively avoid and work against His own Body (which is also a case we have encountered more than once).

We have had those among us in the past who have claimed that God “told” them to depart from our ranks. We had one visitor to our feasts who was perpetually praising the holy nature of our characters, and the mark of Christ on our faces... but as soon as she realized that we disagreed with her on a couple of minor doctrines, she immediately decided that we were not Christ’s children at all, and abruptly departed our company.

Apparently, the voice of our Father in Heaven can give an uncertain sound to some people... or He can change His mind quickly. But more likely than these, those who are used to approving what the world approves are simply not trained to recognize the true voice of the Almighty, who never contradicts His own principles, and who has a people that He has designated as the channel of truth for this world. Yah does speak to His people, and He rarely tells one messenger one thing and another something else entirely. Yah tells hundreds of people a day to join the mainstream SDA Church (they believe) and tells many also to depart it. They are all convinced, in their deepest selves, that they are hearing the Judge from Heaven... but some of them are wrong. And oh, how fearful it must be to consider that they have not truly been hearing the voice of Yahweh when making their decisions... it is indeed a fearful thing to consider.

But the children of Yah need never experience that fear for more than a moment of fleeting temptation. All that Yah says, all that He needs us to understand, He will confirm through the mouth of two or more witnesses, and this prevents us from running about led by private and personal interpretations. Let us not be afraid to lay our thoughts before the brethren for consideration, and let us trust the One Spirit to approve what Heaven approves... although It will disapprove that which only the world considers “good.”

Elyna: Amen.

Zahakiel: Naturally, the things I have been discussing also involve doctrines. Has not the Holy Spirit (some will claim) inspired the great men of the past to develop the doctrine of the Trinity, of everlasting Hell, of the immortality of the soul? They certainly thought so, and sincerely believed it, I do not doubt. But they erred, because their consciences had not been used to disapproving the approved things of the world, and going to Yah’s side. They erred, because they trusted in their own wisdom, and did not let the still, small voice speak to them from the mouth of the cave.

We must be wary... I do not say we must be paranoid. But we must be wary with those things that the world approves.

Are there any questions or comments here?

Pastor “Chick”: None.

Barb: No.

Eagle: No.

Adriel: No.

Elyna: None.

Abraham: Only – well spoken.

Peter: Praise Yah for these timely reminders.

Conclusion: Pleasers of Men

Zahakiel: Then let me begin my conclusion with this verse: “Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God. And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men, knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance, for ye serve the Lord Christ.” (Col 3:22-24)

In another place it is written, “And [Yahshua] said unto them in His doctrine, ‘Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and love salutations in the marketplaces, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts, which devour widows’ houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation.” (Mark 12:38-40)

What is it that can make us pleasers of men, those who seek the admiration and approval of human judgment? I think there are three main things, all of which we must be diligent to consider in our own experiences. This is an invitation to step higher in the examination of our own motives.

First, it may be simple inertia. We are so used to doing things a certain way, a “safe” way that will not draw too much attention to ourselves, that we simply keep on going in that direction, blind to the light that shines in our path and shows us the better way. We must always be willing to examine our habits, our practices, our traditions, to see if they are truly approved, not by mankind, but by Heaven. Yah will call us to do extraordinary things, but we cannot afford to be spiritually lazy, and we cannot grow complacent where we are. We cannot keep doing what we are doing simply because unconverted men may tolerate or approve our course. We must seek Yah’s best, and diligently accomplish it.

Second, it may be ambition, which we have touched on before. If we seek and obtain the approval of others, we can “get ahead” in life, since we will have cultivated the “right” friends and connections. Those who seek wealth and popularity will have a difficult time standing for principle, and disapproving the approved things. They will not want to get on anyone’s “bad side,” or seem like one who sits in judgment of others, because that’s not what successful people do, as the world counts success.

Third, and related to both the above, is fear. We may fear the judgment of others. We may fear being seen as unusual, or strange. We may fear losing friends, or repelling acquaintances, if we are firm as steel to principle. We risk alienating our families (after all, Yahshua told us that we may have to make a choice in this regard) if we let the dead bury the dead, and put our hands to the plow without looking back. We may fear being misunderstood if we criticize those venerable old institutions: figuratively, the earthly family, but literally, those organizations and Churches that have done so much “good” in the world, as the world counts goodness.

But what does the Scripture say? We must put aside fear. We must let perfect love cast aside fear, and draw us ever upward to the saints, to the angels, to the holy and un-fallen beings who share in the judgment of Yahweh, and approve what He approves. We must risk the judgment of mankind if we would stand in the judgment of the Almighty.

Pastor “Chick”: Amen!

Zahakiel: We must (and all of us have had experiences with this) run afoul of well-meaning family members and friends offering advice in order to do righteousness in the earth. We must seek first the

Kingdom of Heaven, and Yah will add unto us those things that He approves, those things that He knows will be best for our eternal, and even sometimes our present, happiness.

Let us examine ourselves, then, and see that we are diligent to approve the Heavenly, the holy, the enduring... and when we see contrasts with that which the world approves: the earthly, the corrupt, the temporary, let us go boldly to the Throne of Grace for courage, for eloquence, for conviction, to draw the attention of our beloved fellow men to these differences as well: to disapprove the things that they, in their ignorance, have approved as praiseworthy. I will conclude with two passages that I consider relevant here, both from the Book of Philippians:

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.” (Phil 4:8, 9)

“And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Yahshua the Messiah, unto the glory and praise of Yah.” (Phil 1:9-11)

Peter: Amen.

Pastor “Chick”: Hallelu-YAH!

Elyna: Amen.

Zahakiel: Are there any questions, comments or discussion to be had on today’s topic?

Pastor “Chick”: Is this a new study or development of a previous one?

Zahakiel: It touches on things we’ve looked at before, but it is new.

Pastor “Chick”: OK, and it is effective.

Zahakiel: Amen :)

Peter: I see from this study that we have to be more blunt in our dealings even if it seems to them that we don’t love them we must live as Christ instructed us to live in the last days as his children.

Zahakiel: Who is the “them” you have in mind there?

Peter: “Them” would be the world or those whom you come in contact with in your daily lives.

Zahakiel: Ok. And yes, that is often the case, as we see even in examining the Gospels.

Pastor “Chick”: Actually, I had not expected a study for this New Moon, as we had some unfinished “business” from last month... but, this kind of study is relevant to the spirit and process of New Moon, and I can see the inspiration of it.

Zahakiel: Right... I thought to write a short one, but this was the result :) I think we should still have time to meet afterwards to clear those other matters up.

Elyna: I thank Yah for bringing this topic out, a good reminder of Who we should honor and what not to.

Zahakiel: Right.

Are there ny other questions or comments?

Pastor “Chick”: None.

Barb: Good study.

Peter: No.

Adriel: Agreed, good study.

Daphna: Thank you for the study, and Praise Yah that He gave you this message.

Eagle: Very timely study, especially for me. Thank you.

Zahakiel: Amen.

All right, if there are no further comments or questions on this, I will ask pastor to close the study with a prayer, and then we can move on to the matter of the unfinished business mentioned earlier.

Pastor “Chick”: Let us pray in closing this portion.

Dear Father in Heaven...

We have approved what You approved and disapproved what the world approves. In doing so, we have suffered in the flesh, but we have been given new life in the realm of the spirit. May we ALL continue walking in the direction and path of that which is approved of Heaven.

In YAHshua’s name, AMEN!

Peterson: Amen.

Barb: Amen.

Zahakiel: Amen.

Eagle: Amen.

Adriel: Amen.

Abraham: Amen.

Elyna: Amen.

Peter: Amen.

Daphna: Amen.