

167 – I see you

Before I close tonight, I want to share with you that I see a dramatic shift in the shape these “*Light Up the Scriptures*” have taken over the past several months. We are engaged not so much in dissecting the word of God but in learning about its practical application in a way that I see it infusing itself into us. I’m excited about that, but I also am impressed that it is vitally important for each of us not just to hear but integrate what we know into who we are.

So, I’m asking you over this next week to send me scriptures that you find particularly instructional, practical, and applicable to the body of the Messiah today. I know we have covered many Scriptures like this in the past, but my desire is to bring them together into a single study or a collection of studies. I’m betting that each of us finds particular Scriptures to be helpful and timely in knowing how to live from day to day. I’m sure you can think of half a dozen right off the top of your head. Well, start an email to me that you save in drafts and add to it as Scriptures occur to you throughout this next week. Send the email on Monday night or early Tuesday morning, so I can look through them and see what the Lord would have us do with what I pray could become a vast resource not only for all our personal walks, but perhaps to the rest of the world in a book, an audio, a devotional guide. I’d be thrilled for you to send so many that we have to use a dozen LUTS to capture all of them, and that they could make a valuable collection to bless the lives of the other 7 billion, many of whom don’t even know the Lord, let alone His word, let alone its vital aid to human life in this wicked eon.

Again, I pray you begin an email when we finish tonight, add scriptures throughout the week, referencing book, chapter, and verse, together with the actual quotation. If you aren’t using the CLV’s, be sure to give me the version you are using – and just a heads up, the Complete Jewish Bible and a

few others too, is not friendly toward free use of its texts, so if you use that version, it'll be changed to the CLV.

This has the potential of being a really cool thing for us and the world.

When I was a kid I used to think that I was hidden – even invisible – if I couldn't see anyone. I figured if I can't see them, they can't see me. When my kids were little, they played the same game thinking the same thing. It seems that we treat the Father that way too, sometimes, as if somehow there are things He doesn't see or hear. Maybe if all the lights are out, and we're altogether quiet, even in our own thoughts, our Father might not see or hear us.

O course, the truth is that we are utterly exposed to Him all the time. He not only sees and hears everything, but the Father hears our every thought.

The story of Jonah always baffled me; how a guy who surely would have known better, thinks he can physically run from an all-knowing, all-seeing, all-powerful Elohim is pure stupidity, but Jonah tried it anyway, and we all know what happened.

Bible Gateway's *Scripture of the Day* was **Jeremiah 23:24**. I snagged it from the CLV and added **verse 23**.

²³ Am **I Elohim^f nearby, averring is Yahweh,**
And not Elohim^f afar?

²⁴ **if Can a man be 'concealed in places of concealment**
and I' not 'see him? averring is Yahweh;
Do I not fill' 'the heavens and 'the earth? averring is Yahweh.

Psalm 139 says:

- 4 **For** though there **be no declaration** ⁱon my tongue,
Behold, O Yahweh, You know it all.
- 5 **Back and front, You have besieged me,**
And You ^lset Your palm upon me.
- 6 **Marvelous** is such **knowledge** ^fbeyond me;
It is impregnable; I ^lcannot reach to it.
- 7 **Whither** could I ^lgo from Your spirit,
And whither could I run ^laway from Your presence?
- 8 **If I should climb** to the heavens, **You are there,**
And should I ^cmake my berth in^d the unseen,
behold, You are there.
- 9 **Should I wear** the wings of dawn,
Should I indeed **tabernacle** in the hindmost sea,
- 10 **Even there Your hand,** it would ^lguide me,
And Your right hand would ^lhold me.
- 11 ⁺If I ^lsaid, ^ySurely darkness, it [~]snuffed me up[~],
And night ^Qis belted[~] about me,
- 12 **Even darkness, it is not darkening** ^fto You,
And the night, as the day, is ^cgiving light;
^{as} **Darkness is as light.**

It's one thing to be utterly exposed before the Father and the Lord, Who love us, fill us with the Father's Spirit, make their abode with us, and encourage us to and "**come to me**" and to "**walk worthily of [our] calling.**" Living in the Father's and the Lord's presence does more to inspire us to give up our rights to ourselves, strip off the old humanity and to put on the new humanity, and come into the full stature of the Complement of the Messiah, I believe, than it inspires fear and anxiety. I pray that this is true for you too, that somehow,

I don't mind that the Father see, hears, and knows more about me; about all I do, say, and think, than even I may be willing to acknowledge to myself.

The Scriptures don't stop at the Father's scrutiny, however.

Hebrews 12:1

we also, having so vast a cloud of witnesses encompassing us

I have to say that, even though I haven't thought about the constant reality of what Hebrews 12:1 says, I have found it a little unnerving when I DO think about it. I want to look at this in context tonight, however, because while this image of a vast cloud of witnesses is important, even more so is WHY a cloud of witnesses encompasses us and who are they?

The entire 11th Chapter of Hebrews is known as the "faith chapter." The author of the epistle cites 17 "by faith" statements; "By faith, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Moses, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Rahab" ... 2 women and 8 men, plus Egypt, the Red Sea, and Jericho. Then the author admits that he or she doesn't have room to include all the other examples of faith: in verses 32 and on, we read:

32 And what still may I be saying? For the time will be lacking for me to relate concerning Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, besides Samuel also, and the prophets,

33 who, through faith, subdue kingdoms, work righteousness, happened on promises, bar the mouths of lions,

34 quench the power of fire, fled from the edge of the sword, were invigorated from infirmity, became strong in battle, rout the camps of aliens,

35 women obtained their dead by resurrection. Now others are flogged, not anticipating deliverance, that they may be happening upon a better resurrection.

36 Yet others got a trial of scourgings and scourgings, yet still more of bonds and jail.

37 They are stoned, they are sawn, they are tried, they died, murdered by the sword; they wandered about in sheepskins, in goatskins, in want, afflicted, maltreated

38 (of whom the world was not worthy), straying in wildernesses and mountains and caves and the holes of the earth.

39 And these all, being testified to through faith, are not requited with the

promise of God concerning us

40 (the looking forward is to something better), that, apart from us, they may not be perfected.

Chapter 12

1 Surely, in consequence, then, we also, having so vast a cloud of witnesses encompassing us, putting off every impediment and the popular sin, may be racing with endurance the contest lying before us,

2 looking off to the Inaugurator and Perfecter of [the] faith, Jesus, Who, for the joy lying before Him, endures a cross, despising the shame, besides is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

Now, watch this: Keep the vast cloud of witnesses encompassing us in mind; put those witnesses in the context of all those who were included in “by faith” list in Chapter 1, even if only by inference, and then look at **Hebrews 1:13-16**:

*13 In faith died all these, not being requited with the promises, but **perceiving them ahead and saluting them**, and avowing that they are strangers and expatriates on the earth.*

*14 For those who are saying such things are disclosing that **they are seeking** for a country of their own.*

15 And, if, indeed, they remembered that from which they came out, they might have had occasion to go back.

*16 Yet now **they are craving** a better, that is, a celestial; wherefore God is not ashamed of them, to be invoked as their God, for He makes ready for them a city.*

I have always thought that the vast “**cloud of witnesses**” in Hebrews 12:1 referred to celestials. It can’t refer to humans, I reasoned, because they are all asleep. Today, however, I realized that the vast “**cloud of witnesses**” refers to the men and women throughout the Scriptures – and perhaps throughout history – who died “**in faith**.” They died while believing the promises made to the fathers of the faith. Some people we may know died in faith the same way: believing the promises, perceiving and saluting them; not seeing them fulfilled, and looking into the future, craving a better, that is, a celestial.

In other words the **vast ... cloud of witnesses encompassing us** is first a figurative image, not a literal one; it represents all those who died in faith. The testimony of their lives of faith is what **Hebrews 1:39-40** refers to:

***And these all, being testified to through faith, are not requited with the promise of God concerning us
40 (the looking forward is to something better), that, apart from us, they may not be perfected.***

Our role as sons and daughters of YaHoVeH through Yeshua's faith is impossible to minimize. **Hebrews 1:40** says, **apart from us, they may not be perfected**. Remember that Hebrews was written by a Hebrew to fellow Hebrews, so the US can't refer to non-Jews; however, as my Brother in the faith, Harold Smith has to remind me sometimes, of what the Apostle Paul wrote in **Galatians 3: 27-29**

***For whoever are baptized into the Messiah, put on the Messiah,
28 in Whom there is no Jew nor yet Greek, there is no slave nor yet free,
there is no male and female, for you all are one in the Anointed One, Yeshua
29 Now if you are the Messiah's, consequently you are of Abraham's seed,
enjoyers of the allotment according to the promise.***

When we apply the exclusion of race, gender, or position, in the Messiah, and recognize the implications of being also "**of Abraham's seed**" and "**enjoyers of the allotment according to the promise,**" we can participate fully in knowingly displaying the Father's multifarious wisdom that IS to the celestials.

Somehow, to me, this raises the stakes of our walk, of our accountability for our walk. Barbara has said many times to me, "We are the Lord's arms and legs; we are here doing and saying what He can't, because He is at the Father's right hand, and we represent Him on the Earth until He returns.

You and I are speaking for Yeshua to all we meet. We are speaking for Him even in our self-talk. Just like Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:20:

"For Christ, then, are we ambassadors, as of God entreating through us. We are beseeching for Christ's sake, "Be conciliated to God!"

We represent the Lord and the Father in every aspect of our lives, whether we know it or not, believe it or not, and whether we like it or not. We asked Him to live in our hearts, we received the Spirit of Holiness, which the Father poured out at our own request. We may not have understood what we volunteered for, but we sure as shooting raised our hands and as much as said, “*Here am I, send me.*”

Today, we purport to proclaim His goodness to those with whom we come in contact. We may not be heralding the evangel by preaching in a pulpit, but we certainly are by living our lives knowing that we are doing all and saying all that pleases Him, what vindicates His character, and validates His purpose, exactly as Yeshua did. We are realizing – and we will yet realize literally – what the men and women of faith throughout the Scriptures and, indeed, throughout human history, wherever and whenever someone honors the Father by deciding to trust Him – in this “**present wicked eon**,” as Paul called it – that may not be easy, but as we have studied over many months, it is quite simple.

Recently a dear brother in the Lord and I were talking, and I was reminded to encourage us both with the Scripture from **Psalm 46:10**, that most people know to read, “**Be still and know that I am God.**” You may remember that when we looked at this verse in the CLV, translated from Hebrew, it reads, “**Relax and know that I am Elohim.**” My friend and I agreed that those six words form the substance of living in the Father’s presence *and* peace. When we KNOW that He is Elohim, we can relax; it’s only when we forget He is Elohim that we sink into striving, or worry, or anxiousness, or even sadness, just like the rest of a lost world full of people who don’t know Him at all, let alone know that He is Elohim. Elohim is a word that only exists in Hebrew. Isn’t that fitting? I’m so glad that the first chapter of book, Go GOD! establishes His name correctly. Elohim means “Subjector-to.” That Father is the One Who subjects and to whom all is subjected ultimately. It makes me absolutely apoplectic when I hear preachers discuss His so-called “permissive will” verses His “ideal will,” as if they know that those two terms are legitimate. Neither of those terms appears in the Scriptures, however.

Christians have long had the habit of making YaHoVeH Elohim look like a reflection of themselves; they give Him the same qualities as human beings. Humans can't make their minds up, so neither can the Father. We let things slide, so we assign the Father a "permissive will." We get angry, so we see Him as angry. We think of love in certain ways, so we decide that's how the Father is too. We make figurative images into literal ones – like turning the Hebrew "*sa-tan*" into the Christian *Satan* – or worse, the Devil. We look at "*so vast a cloud of witnesses*," and turn it into a crowd of dead people watching on Heaven's big screen TV. We have to earn everyone else's approval, so we must have to earn the Father's approval too, completely discounting His grace and dishonoring the atonement through the Messiah's blood.

It's kind of amazing, really, that anyone relates to the Father at all, and I thank God for the intimate walk we have with Him today – intimate by our standards of course.

I don't want to forget to revisit Hebrews 12:1, because even though we now know that the vast cloud of witnesses encompassing us is a figurative reference to men and women of faith who came before us, there is still a literal application to the celestials. We find it illustrated well in 1 Peter 1:12, but to get to it, we really need to read from verse 3. Let's go through this together, but as we do, take it into your heart and spirit. Breathe it into your lungs and let it attach itself along with the oxygen to your red blood cells, and be transported into every organ, every tissue, and every fiber of your body; let it speak to your mind of who you are to the Father; let His love and His fondness for you bind the broken places and encourage you to be, do, and have all for which He has brought you into the world by His sovereign will and word.

1 Peter 1:3-25

3 Blessed be the Elohim and Father of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah, Who, according to His vast mercy, regenerates us into a living expectation,

through the resurrection of Yeshua the Messiah from among the dead,
4 for the enjoyment of an allotment incorruptible and undefiled and
unfading, kept in the heavens for you,
5 who are garrisoned by the power of Elohim, through faith, for salvation
ready to be revealed in the last era,
6 in which you are exulting; briefly at present, if it must be, being sorrowed
by various trials,
7 that the testing of your faith, much more precious than gold which is
perishing, yet, being tested by fire, may be found for applause and glory
and honor at the unveiling of Yeshua the Messiah,
8 Whom, not perceiving, you are loving; in Whom, not seeing at present,
yet believing, you are exulting with joy unspeakable and glorious,
9 being requited with the consummation of your faith, the salvation of your
souls.

10 Concerning which salvation the prophets seek out and search out, who
prophecy concerning the grace which is for you,
11 searching into what or what manner of era the spirit of the Messiah in
them made evident, when testifying beforehand to the sufferings
pertaining to the Messiah and the glories after these.

12 To whom it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to you they
dispensed them, of which you were now informed through those who are
bringing the evangel to you by holy spirit dispatched from heaven, into
which **messengers are yearning to peer.**

13 Wherefore, girding up the loins of your comprehension, being sober,
expect perfectly the grace which is being brought to you at the unveiling of
Yeshua the Messiah.

14 As obedient children, not configuring to the former desires, in your
ignorance,

15 but, according as He Who calls you is holy, you also become holy in all
behavior,

16 because it is written that, Holy shall you be, for I am holy.

17 And if you are invoking the Father, Who is judging impartially according
to each one's work, you may behave, for the time of your sojourn, with
fear,

18 being aware that not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, were you ransomed from your vain behavior, handed down by tradition from the fathers,

19 but with the precious blood of the Messiah, as of a flawless and unspotted lamb,

20 foreknown, indeed, before the disruption of the world, yet manifested in the last times because of you, who through Him are believing in Elohim,

21 Who rouses Him from among the dead and is giving Him glory, so that your faith and expectation is to be in the Father.

22 Having purified your souls, by the obedience of truth, for unfeigned fondness for the brethren, love one another out of a true heart earnestly,

23 having been regenerated, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of Elohim, living and permanent,

24 because All flesh is grass, And all its glory is as the flower of grass.

Withered is the grass, And the flower falls off...

25 Yet the declaration of the Lord is remaining for the eon. Now this is the declaration which is being brought to you in the evangel.

Neither the faithful of old, nor the celestials who have been around as long as dirt, and whom you would THINK would know, DIDN'T know what our lives were about, until the Apostle Paul revealed the secret of the Father's purpose of the eons to head up the all in the Anointed One. I can only speculate about the curiosity among the celestials as to how these puny mortals received so much of the Father's focused attention and love. We must be a great source of wonder to them, or at least entertainment.

Father, I pray that the witness of our lives is more than pleasing; I pray that it is fitting of the *majesty* of Your character and Your purpose. Father, above all I pray that we would remember 6 simple words that You spoke to David, and that we would live by them:

“Relax and know that I am Elohim.”

In Yeshua's name, all your children in the sound of my voice say. Amen.