**“The Cloud of Witnesses”**

**Is Waiting for Us!**

**[This article is a sequel to “`Of Whom the World is Not Worthy’ – A Look at Hebrews 11” and “A Letter to the West from Persecuted Believers in China”… The two transcripts of these podcasts - Podcast XXXVI Parts I and II - are under the Mikvah of the Heart of Elohim, January 8, 2018. This article will become Podcast XXXIX on January 21, 2018]**

 **Acts 1:8-11**, *The Scriptures*: “Be you shall receive power after the Set-Apart Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be My witnesses in Yerushalayim, and in all Yehudah, and Shomeron, and to the end of the earth. And having said this, while they were looking on, He was taken up, and a cloud hid Him from their sight. And as they were gazing into heaven as He went up, see, two men stood by them dressed in white, who also said `Men of Galil, why do you stand looking up into heaven? This same יהושע who was taken up from you into the heaven, shall come in the same way as you saw Him go into heaven.’ ”

 **Hebrews 11:36-40:** “…And others had trial of mocking and floggings and more, of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned. They were tried. They were sawn in two. They were slain with the sword. They went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being in need, afflicted, mistreated, OF WHOM THE WORLD WAS NOT WORTHY – wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes of the earth. And having obtained witness through their faith, all these did not receive the promise – Elohim having provided what is better for us, that they should not be made perfect (*complete*) apart from us.”

 **Hebrews 12:1-4**, The Scriptures, 1998: “**We too, then, having so great a cloud of witnesses all around us, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race set before us, looking to the Princely Leader and Perfecter of our belief** (*faith*)**, יהושע,** who for the joy that was set before Him endured the stake, having despised the shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of Elohim. For consider Him who endured such opposition from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and faint in your lives. You have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.”

 **Those that have gone before us are our cheer-leaders**! They’ve been through horrible tribulation and have come out having overcome--victorious and praising Elohim. They look to us to complete the body of believers, and we look to them as our examples of faith. But, also, we must look to the Captain of the Host, to His example of suffering patiently to accomplish the goal for which He was sent by His Father. We each have a goal set before us – given to us by His Father – our Father, our Abba.

 **Hebrews 12:5-14**: “And you have forgotten the appeal which speaks to you as to sons, “My son, do not despise the discipline of יהוה, nor faint when you are reproved by Him, for whom יהוה loves, He disciplines, and flogs every son whom He receives. If you endure discipline, Elohim is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom a father does not discipline? But if you are without discipline, of which all have become sharers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. Moreover, we indeed had fathers of our flesh disciplining us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? - For they indeed disciplined us for a few days as seemed best to them, but He does it for our profit, so that we might share His apartness. And indeed, no discipline seems pleasant at the time, but grievous, but afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. So, strengthen the hands which hang down and the weak knees, and make straight paths for your feet, lest the lame be turned aside, but instead, to be healed. Pursue peace with all, and **pursue apartness without which no one shall see the Master**.”

 Note: *The Scriptures’* footnote on “flogging”: “This is the purpose of disciplining us, `flogging us,’ to set us apart, so that we bear the fruit of righteousness. He did the same to Israel – see **Deuteronomy 8:2**. If we do not allow Yahuwah in us to bring us to set-apartness so that we bear the fruit of righteousness, it would prove to have been all in vain – we shall not see Him.”

 In the true new birth, in response to true repentance and faith in the shed blood of Yahushua Messiah for our salvation, and in His resurrection for our eternal life, we are transported out of the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of Light, and thus we joyfully walk in the Kingdom by obedience to the commandments of the King – Yahuwah! This refers to His written commandments in His Word and His personal commandments to us as His Spirit directs us into His perfect will for us. (See **Colossians 1:13 and I Peter 2:9**)

 **Proverbs 3:11-12,** **KJV**: “My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, neither be weary of His correction, for whom the Lord loveth, he correcteth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth…”

 The word “chastening” in Hebrew means: “chastening, chastise, correction, discipline, disciplines, instruction, punishment, reproof, warning.” It is Strong’s Hebrew Dictionary #4148 “musar.” The two most common translations of “musar” are instruction and discipline. Truly it in knowing our weaknesses, our sins--our proneness to leave the narrow path--that humbles us to repent and return to submission to the Master! Whatever it takes to break our stubborn will is what He has to do because He loves us. It is better to submit to Him and not have to be chastised with the rebellious.

 **Hebrews 13:12-14**: “And so Yahushua also suffered outside the gate, to set apart the people with His own blood. Let us, then, go to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach. For we have no lasting city here, but we seek the one coming.”

 Set-Apartness is not an option if we’re seeking the “one coming”--the one in **II Peter 3:10-14** and **Revelation 21 and 22.** We are either all Light, or we’re moving towards the “all Dark.” Gray is a mixture. Yahuwah will not allow darkness in His Presence, neither can He accept a mixture in His Presence! We’re either in the Kingdom of Light or in the Kingdom of darkness. They are like two magnets that can’t get close to each other because their forces repel each other.

 When we are born again and receive His Spirit within our spirit, we begin to produce the fruit of the re-born spirit – the nature of Yahuwah. Without continuing the process to subdue the rebellious mind/flesh/carnal nature and submit it to the control of Yahuwah’s Spirit, we’ll begin falling into the darkness until it finally engulfs us IF we do not repent and return to the Light quickly. Light exposes; His Light that purifies.

 The witnesses wait for us! As **Hebrews 11** describes, it appears that most of these who wait for us are those in **Revelation 7:9-17 and Revelation chapter 15** – the martyrs. They cheer us on! They long to be united with us! And, their unity with us in faith strengthens us to carry on, to endure, to overcome, and to receive the reward of victory, just as they have. At times, I’ve had a “messenger” (not an angel) come with warning or exhortation from Abba. I strongly feel their entrance, their message, and their exit. The “witnesses” from the past can be sent by Yahuwah in this manner.

 Those who lived before Messiah came had the promise of Messiah, the promise of salvation through the blood of the Lamb and of eternal life through resurrection. The walked by faith. They always knew that their salvation was because the innocent died for the guilty--that was the purpose of animal sacrifice, to show the horror of sin, to show that innocent life had to die in order to take the punishment due to the guilty sinner. The great substitution=salvation was set in place in the Garden, as Yahushua killed an animal to clothe Adam and Eve’s nakedness.

 **II Corinthians 5:21**: “For He *(Yahuwah)* made Him *(Yahushua)* to become sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of Elohim.”

 On the stake, as with the lambs and goats, bulls and pigeons of the pre-Messiah days, Yahushua took our sin upon Himself and died with it. Once dead, He descended into Hell and took the keys of death and hell away from Satan. Seventy-two hours later He arose victorious over Hell, death, sin, Satan, and all his forces. His victory gives us the authority over “all the ability of the enemy” - so that we walk victorious in this world, submitted absolutely to Him as our Master.

 **Leviticus 17:11**: “For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your life, for it is the blood that makes atone for the life.”

 **Hebrews 9:25**: “And according to the Torah, almost all is cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness,” no atonement.

 Today, as in the days of Messiah on earth, religious fools still teach that good works can save us. This is blasphemy against Yahuwah from **Genesis 3 to Revelation 22**! Either one trusts the blood of the Lamb of Yahuwah to save them, or they are damned into the lake of fire. There is no such thing as being “good” without Him!

 This is why our mandate from the Master is: “Go into all the world and preach the Good News…” **As Acts 1:8** tells us, begin with your hometown, then to your county or state, then to your nation, then to the uttermost parts of the world as the Spirit leads you. We can do that via internet now, but also, we need to start out by prayer for the lost daily, walking our neighborhoods and work places, around schools, around malls, etc., asking for opportunities to share the “Good News of the Kingdom,”--how to enter it (true new birth) and how to remain in it (obedience to the Commandments of the King).

 The witnesses are cheering us on. It was because they were set-apart to Yahuwah according to His commands in **Leviticus 11:44-45; 19:2, 20:7-8, 26, I Peter 1:16, Hebrews 12:14b, Revelation 22:11b**. Unless we are set apart as He is, set apart unto Him, more set-apart as we see the Day approaching, we shall not see Him.

 This describes religious fools of our day who have claimed salvation through Yahushua, yet they reject and deny Him later because of the intellectual beguiling and seducing of religious spirits working to their destruction: **Jude 1:4**: “For there are certain men who crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the favor of our Elohim into lasciviousness and denying the only Master, Elohim, and our Master Yahushua Messiah.” While they appear to be righteous, they are masquerading--as **II Corinthians 11:13-15** tells us, they are servants of Satan.

 The many witnesses before His first coming believed in the promise of Messiah. The witnesses after His coming have witnessed to the Person of Messiah. There is only One Word of Elohim, personified in Messiah, thus no such thing as an Old vs. a New Testament. From beginning to end is Yahuwah. From beginning to end is Yahushua Yahuwah! But, the witnesses did not obtain the promise before Messiah came. Now they look to us in these last days to COMPLETE, to FILL UP, the Book of Life. We’re the ones who will go through much worse than they did! Thus they cheer us on!

 **Matthew 24:21-22**: “For then there shall be great pressure/affliction/distress such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, or ever shall be. And if those days were not shortened, no flesh would be saved, but for the sake of the chosen ones those days shall be shortened.”

 What is being planned by the fallen ones and those they possess, is the destruction of the entire earth, including all of its people. Unless there is a translated remnant (**Daniel 11:32b**) of the chosen ones, the “chosen ones” of Satan, now nearly two hundred million worldwide under the Beast/anti-messiah, will accomplish their goal. (**Revelation 9:16**)

 I strongly urge you, if it is at all possible for you, to get Russ Dizdar’s two books *The Black Awakening* and his new one *Expelling Darkness*, which is a manual on spiritual warfare. Russ is a brother who is 24/7 in the midst of the battle, and has been for over 35 years. I have been in the midst of a similar battle in my own life, and now in the lives of my children and grandchildren, as well as for the lives of many other precious brothers and sisters in the faith, for nearly 52 years. Thus, I know that this brother is precious, and I pray for his protection. It is a miracle he is still alive to teach Yahuwah’s people. We are in a war. Those that refuse to fight with “the weapons that are not carnal, but mighty to the pulling down of strongholds,” are already conquered by the enemy. They are already in the enemy’s great vacuum cleaner--sucked up by oppression with deception, on their way to the preverbal dung heap--if they do not wake up and repent!

 **The cloud of witnesses received Yahushua into heaven**!

 Did you ever wonder why Luke mentioned that “a cloud hid Him from their sight?” If He just went up into the sky and a cumulous cloud blocked their seeing Him, why would Luke even bother to say that? He said that because the cloud was the cloud of **Revelation 7:9-17** who went to escort Him into the Triumphal Entry we read about in **Psalm 24**! HalleluYah!!!

 This cloud is connected to Messiah’s ascension 40 days after His resurrection, and to **His return with the cloud of all of His set-apart ones in the resurrection of the born-again.** Here are Scriptures on the cloud that will include us! Read each carefully – go to the chapter itself and read in context.

 **Matthew 24:29-31:** “And immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give its light and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken, and then the sign of the Son of Adam shall appear in the heavens, and then all the tribes of the earth shall mourn, and they shall see the Son of Adam coming on the clouds of the heavens with power and much esteem, and He shall send His messengers with a great sound of a trumpet and they shall gather together His chosen ones from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” Notice! His coming is after the end of the tribulation – He ends it!

 The “clouds of heaven”: Clouds of those who were dead but resurrected, and those who are alive and remaining--caught up to meet Him, and them, as He descends.

 **Matthew 26:64**, Messiah speaking to the High Priest answering his question about Yahushua being the Messiah: “Yahushua said to him, `You have said it! Besides, I say to you, from now on you shall see the Son of Adam sitting at the right hand of Yahuwah, and coming on the clouds of the heaven.”

 **Mark 14:62**: “And Yahushua said, `I AM! And you shall see the Son of Adam sitting at the right hand of Yahuwah, coming with the clouds of the heaven.”

 **Luke 9:34-35:** “And as he *(Kepha)* was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them. [Messiah, Eliyahu, and Moshe] And they [Kepha, Yochanan, and Ya’cob] were afraid as they entered the cloud. And a voice came out of the cloud saying `This is My Son, the Beloved. Hear Him!’ ” (Also **Matthew 17:1-8**)

 **I Thessalonians 4:16-18:** “Because the Master Himself shall come down from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the chief messenger, and with the trumpet of Elohim, and the dead in Messiah shall rise first. Then we, who are alive and remain shall be caught away together with them in the clouds to meet the Master in the air--and so we shall always be with the Master. Encourage one another with these words.”

 **Revelation 1:7:** “See, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye shall see Him, even they who pierced Him…”

 **Jude 1:14**: “And Enoch, the seventh from Adam also prophesied of these saying `See, Yahuwah comes with ten thousands of His set-apart ones.”

 **I Thessalonians 3:12-13**: “And the Master make you increase and overflow in love to each other and to all, as we also do to you, to establish your hearts blameless in set-apartness before our Elohim and Father at the coming of our Master Yahushua Messiah with all His set-apart ones.”

 **Zechariah 14:5**: “…and Yahuwah my Elohim shall come – and all the set-apart ones with You.”

 **Revelation 11:12,** regarding the rising of the two witnesses into heaven just before Messiah descends: “And they heard a voice from heaven saying to them, `Come up here!’ **And they went up into heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them**.”

 THE CLOUD OF WITNESSES WENT TO RECEIVE ELIYAHU AND MOSHE!!!

 **Revelation 14:14-16**: “And I looked and saw a white cloud, and sitting on the cloud was One like the Son of Adam having on His head a golden crown and in His hand a sharp sickle…And the One sitting on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth and the earth was reaped.” This passage speaks of the vengeance that Yahushua takes on behalf of the cloud of witnesses as He descends--**Revelation 7:7-17 and chapter 15**!

 I’ve seen the cloud of witnesses three times, two in vision, one with my natural eyes. Here I briefly relate 1) a vision and 2) a physical seeing. I’ve written this before, but it fits here again to encourage you! I know they are cheering us on! Be encouraged!

 Example #1: I was in Aqaba, Jordan. I looked out my kitchen window at the Red Sea, Egypt and Israel on the other side, and down the way to Saudi Arabia. I was talking with Abba. All of a sudden in a vision, I saw myself mounting a horse and beginning to ride. I rode and rode, out into the wilderness of a forest. I then realized I was all alone. I was concerned about my friends who I thought were also mounting horses with me. Where were they? I saw in a vision within the vision some of them talking and laughing, holding their horse bridals, but not ready to mount. I thought about slowing down to wait for those who had left after me. But, in my spirit, I knew I could not stop, not get off my horse, not even look back to search for them with my eyes. I began riding faster. I saw to my right a train on a remote track, traveling at the same speed as my horse. I looked over and saw Yahushua was the engineer. He smiled and waved. I kept going faster and faster. Then up ahead of me I saw what looked like an old American western town in the 1800s. Along the dirt streets of the town I saw many people dressed as they dressed in the early 1800s. They were men, women, and children. I saw them smiling and clapping, and cheering me on. They appeared “opaque,” like spirits, only with clear form. This encouraged me so much that I rode straight into the town. Then the vision cleared. He was showing me these last days, when we need to stand alone if necessary and go forth even if no one goes with us!

 The song “I Have Decided to Follow Jesus” has a verse that says “Though none go with me, yet I will follow.” In following the Master, He was with me--the engineer of the train—therefore, I was able to go into the cloud of witnesses in victory!

 Yahuwah said to Jeremiah when he was very discouraged: “Let them return to you, but do not return to them.” Don’t look back! “Remember Lot’s wife!”

 It is a lonely walk at times, especially as we near the last of the last days. But, if we see the cheering of this purified remnant, purified by tribulation, then we have hope of joining them if we do not break our speed going forward! (**Exodus 14:13-16**)

 Example #2: I was in Kampala, Uganda. I had hurt my ankle and was in a lot of pain. My ministry partner and pastor I worked with were out doing open-air preaching. I was lying on a bed covered with mosquito netting that had holes in it. Roaches were crawling all over me, coming through the holes. Forget the mosquitoes – the roaches also carried filth and disease, and far most nasty than a mosquito. I was in a deep depression. I felt my spirit begin to leave my body and descend into the depressive darkness. Quickly, I looked up and saw the cloud of witness above me with my natural eyes. I even saw my own parents holding hands, looking in their 30s. Today I’d say I went into an extra-dimensional state of being. A man stepped out of the cloud. I knew he was the Apostle Sha’ul (“Paul”). He came and knelt by my bed. I turned towards him to hear him. He explained to me **II Corinthians chapters 4 and 6, and 11:22-33**. Sha’ul told me that in going from point A to point B in our work for the Master, oftentimes we have afflictions. He told me of being in the sea a day and a half with little hope in the natural for survival. He told me that what was important was finishing our course, finishing the work He has given us to do. Read the book of *Acts*! It’s our faith-manual!

 I was very encouraged by what he said. He went back into the cloud, and it vanished. I was back in my three dimensional world. Immediately, the pastor and my friend came back from preaching. I got up off the bed with great energy flowing through me. I told them to find me a place below the platform and I was going to preach. I went to preach the next day. Many were saved, even young Muslim men. I have a picture someone took of me preaching that day. Oh how I love to preach salvation messages, especially including His second coming!

 Do you notice that in both my experiences, the cloud of witnesses cheered me on!

 In another vision, I saw myself climbing a very high mountain. I got near the top but exhaustion hit, and I could no further. All of a sudden Yahushua appeared by my side. He put His arm around me and we walked together the rest of the way to the top. He told His disciples: “I am with you always, even to the completion of this age,” i.e.” the end of the world” as we know it. The whole of it boils down to our abiding in Him.

 **Psalm 91:1 with John 15:7**: It is in abiding in Him that we are never separated from Him! The witnesses abide in Him in heaven, but some on earth also, like them.

 When we abide in Him, we have immediate access to all that He is. You will never receive the promises of **Psalm 91** unless you live in **Psalm 91:1 and John 15:7**. There has to be the **John 17** unity with Them, for this is how we are unity with each other. Many want to ride their horse, but they get too caught up with the chit chat of the world, and so lag behind that they may never make it to the finish line.

 We are in a race! The cloud of witnesses cheers us on to the finish line. You’re not alone! Messiah once said: “I am alone, yet not alone – My Father is with Me.”

 **I Corinthians 9:14**: “Know you not that they which run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may win.”

 **Hebrews 12:1**: “…let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Yahushua, the Author and the Finisher of our faith.”

 Yes, He knows we are flesh, and He has mercy on us. But, He also gives us His Spirit so that we might be empowered far beyond our fleshly abilities. We are extra-dimensional people through our eternal spirit. It is in this abiding in the extra-dimensional third heaven, that we are empowered to win!

 We are a family, written into the Book of Life before the foundation of the world. If we do not join together as one family through the eternal Spirit of Yahuwah, the “body” or congregation of Messiah cannot be complete--the Book of Life will have erase marks in it (**Revelation 3:5**). They wait for us – yet are with us in spirit and in truth.

 Resolve to be in that cloud that will come as He descends. It’s not by a religious belief, or the performance of works, but by real faith that we latch onto the Master and are subservient to Him in every thought, word, deed, action, and attitude.

 We thank of our Abba for this wonderful “cloud!” Resolve today to be a part of this cloud, either by death or by life at His coming! Your life will be radically different if you see that this “cloud” is including you!

Shabbat Shalom, in His love, with expectant hope and faith,

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