

“Walk Before Me and Be Perfect”

By

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More than a Journey—an Invite to Intimacy!

We read in Gen. 17:1:

And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before Me, and be thou perfect.

Mark the age attained—in his 99th year when God gave this special revelation and message to Abraham after they had had a relationship for a quarter of a century, 24 years! God called Abraham at age 75 out of his family and his country into a land He said He would show him. ²And [there] I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: ³ And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. ⁴ So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran” (Gen. 12:1-4).

Already, Abraham’s father, Terah, had emigrated from Ur of the Chaldees, his native land, to Haran with his family, including Abram and his wife Sarai (Gen. 11:26-32). It seemed Terah had an inkling of God’s call to Abram to separate himself from his kindred and country and anticipated him by leaving Ur with his family.

But actually Abraham had earlier received God’s call to get out of his country and family into the land He would show him while he yet lived in Mesopotamia, the Ur of the Chaldees. Stephen revealed this in his address to the Sanhedrin, the council of Jewish leaders questioning him:

² And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran,

³ And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee.

⁴ Then came he out of the land of the Chaldaeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell (Acts 7:2-4).

So Terah's emigration from Mesopotamia and God's call to Abraham were not a mere coincidence. An unseen divine hand clearly influenced Terah's decision, but he had no specific message from God, and he went as far as Haran where he settled with his family.

For Abraham, only a distance had been covered; only a move made. He had not yet fulfilled the call and command of God to separate himself from his family and kindred—his familiar environment. He carried out the command only after the death of his father in Haran. Thus Abraham was already walking in obedience to God when He appeared to him (in Gen. 17) and called on him to walk before Him and thereby become perfect. In demonstration of faith and obedience 24 years before (Heb. 11:8), Abraham had deserted family and land and clan gods (Josh. 24:2-4); he had turned his back on the world so he could focus on the call of God.

But now Yahweh sought to place the relationship on a higher notch; He sought an intimate relationship with Abraham.

He desires a similar relationship with us. He wants to bond with us, and we with Him so we may become "perfect". By *perfect* He means to be "complete, whole, entire, sound, wholesome, unimpaired, upright, undefiled, blameless, innocent, having integrity" (Strong's and BDB).

The word is an expression of all that God seeks in us, all that He wants us to be. And it's by walking before Him; living in His presence; delighting in His way. It's having a formal relationship with Him. It's an invitation to enter into a covenant with Him so He can do us good beyond our expectations:

² And I will make my covenant between Me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.

³ And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying,

⁴ As for me, behold, My covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations.

⁵ Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee.

⁶ And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee.

⁷ And I will establish My covenant between Me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.

⁸ And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.

⁹ And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep My covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations.

¹⁰ This is My covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised.

¹¹ And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you (Gen. 17:2-11).

The overwhelming power of His presence and the awesome force of His words caused Abram to lie prostrate before Him in worship. He was no equal of His. He was in the

presence of the Creator God, the King of kings and Lord of all. Yet this mighty God had ‘condescended’ to make a covenant with him!

Theophanies—manifestations of the divine in glorious human form—are rare in our day. But that does not make God any remote from us. God in Jesus has dwelt among us as a human being. But He is even closer now after His ascension! He now lives in our hearts by His Word and Spirit (Rom. 10:7-8; Col. 1:27). And the terms of His covenant are within us as well – inscribed in our hearts and minds by His Spirit! Certainly, more exciting than a one-time *Theophany*!

Yah Demands Total Dedication

In the Abrahamic covenant, God is the covenant proposer, and He begins on an impressive note: His covenant is a gateway to a stream of mouth-watering promises! A father of many nations, hence the change of name from Abram (exalted father) to Abraham (father of a multitude); a progenitor of kings; the privilege of an eternal covenantal relationship with God whereby God would be their God forever; grant of land, Canaan, “for an everlasting possession”.

The covenant Abraham and his descendants were to keep and which itself was the sign of the covenant was the rite of circumcision. In Gen. 15 we learn of a prior covenant God made with Abraham. The covenant in Gen. 15 was essentially a promise by God to lease the land of Canaan to Abraham and his descendants. There, the onus and spotlight was God to fulfill His promise. But here in Gen. 17 God asks Abraham to assume a covenantal responsibility—to carry in his flesh a sign of His covenant with him. The sign was to be a constant reminder of his pact with God; the cutting of his flesh denoted the offering of a part of himself to God; a dedication of himself to God.

In God’s covenant with us, a renewal of the same Abrahamic covenant, circumcision is still the sign of the covenant but in a deeper spiritual sense.

Circumcision now represents dedication to God; a token of our relationship with Him. It represents true obedience to God; it’s unvarnished loyalty to God. It’s obeying God from a sincere heart. It’s the mark of a true Jew, a true descendant of Abraham (Rom. 2:25-29; 1 Cor. 7:19).

And it’s also a spiritual act of grace whereby Christ puts off the body the sins of the flesh by the shedding of His own blood depicted as “the circumcision of Christ” (Col. 2:11).

The effect is the same: purity and dedication.

It’s God’s purpose for us to live in His presence in perfection. It may have been quite a while—perhaps 5 years or 10 years since we heeded God’s call to come out of the world and be separated unto Him. But now God requires a higher level of commitment. In that commitment is our perfection. The perfection is a reflection of His own flawless nature. As

Christ exhorts us in the *Sermon on the Mount*, we must be “perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matt. 5:48).

It’s a call to assume God’s perfect image of righteousness and holiness (Eph. 4:24). On the surface, this sure seems an unimaginable feat, but it’s still a feasible goal because we are not entirely on our own. We live in His presence, and He is the source of our power.

Yahweh before whom we live is the Creator God with no beginning and no end. Limitless in power, and the riches of grace and mercy, He is able to make us perfect like Himself!

Only we need to have the faith of Abraham that what God has promised, He is also able to perform (Rom. 4:20-21).

Once we rededicate ourselves to Him and walk before Him in perfection by His Spirit of grace, His promises to us are just as mouth-watering: He gives us a new name (Isa. 62:2) changing our destiny for the better; while Abraham was made a progenitor of kings, we are king-priests ourselves, and heaven is our eternal home!

The LORD demands nothing less than total dedication to Him, a walk with Him in faithfulness. Lord, help us be!