

Zahakiel: Let's begin. Pastor, please offer an opening prayer.

Pastor Chick: Dear Father in Heaven. We ask for Your blessings upon this hour of divine meeting. May the Holy Spirit refresh us according to our needs and Your will in Yahshua's holy name, Amen.

Adriel: Amen

daphna dee: Amen

Lucan: Amen

Zahakiel: Amen.

Barb: Amen

Natashua: Amen.

Elyna: Amen. Danielle: Amen.

Ruthline: Amen

Zahakiel: Happy Sabbath to everyone. Tonight's study is called "The Burden of Perfection."

It is rather rare, I have found, that I will take the time to write a "response" study. Most of the time I am not led to directly respond to something that I have seen or read, but I feel strongly inspired to do so now.

Some days ago I read a devotional printed in the Adventist Today online newsletter, and it was about "Being Perfect." I won't go over every point that the author raised, but it presents itself as an attempt to encourage those who have been inclined to "worry a great deal" about Yahshua's statement found in passages such as this one: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect." (Mat 5:48)

To solve the "problem" that this verse presents, readers are advised to read the corresponding passage in Luke's Gospel, which puts it thus: "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful." (Luke 6:36)

Understanding that this is a parallel statement, the author proposes, will diffuse the guilt of feeling (and I quote) "that obsessive attempt to act perfect." The author spends some time expanding on this a bit, showing how it also applies to calls to be "holy" because our Creator is Holy, (Lev 19:2) and then continues referencing that passage to show that one who is called "holy" in that passage is someone who fulfills but a few obligations of the Law, these being the keeping of Sabbaths, the avoidance of idols in favor of the genuine worship of Yahweh, and various other activities. In other words, it is not as "difficult" to do this as one might initially suppose.

Let me begin my analysis of this by agreeing with the author's conclusion, that all that we have, and all of which life consists, is a gift of our Father. The demands and requirements of the Law are not, at all, to be a source of worry or distress for Yah's people. Satan has done everything He can to draw a dark cloud over the character of our Father, to convince even those who would love Him, and treasure His principles, that He as a Person is a harsh

judge, administering righteousness as if it were a penalty, and casting any who fall short of absolute perfection due to their own natural shortcomings into everlasting destruction. Anyone who wishes to reveal Yah's character as loving, kind, and forgiving has at least begun to move in the right direction, for the Savior has said, "he that is not against us is on our part." (Mark 9:40) Unfortunately, the Enemy has laid so many forks and rocks in the narrow Way that it is not sufficient to begin to move the right direction; one must also ensure that he or she endures to the end, avoiding all the many obstacles by the grace of Yah.

It is not a light thing to speak on behalf of Yahweh.

Anyone who claims to know some spiritual truth, or to understand the Scriptures so that they may explain it to others, takes up a grave responsibility. Right after that passage from Mark in which Yahshua says that anyone who wishes to speak in His name is free to do so, we find this: "And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea." (Mark 9:42)

The connection here is clear; neither Yahshua nor His followers are to forbid anyone who wishes to be seen as a Bible teacher, or a Gospel messenger. There is no place for physical or legal force in even the most sharp disagreements about those things that pertain to the salvation of souls; nevertheless, there are consequences for those who speak falsely, or from a position of ignorance, when it comes to these eternal matters, for it is also written, "My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation." (James 3:1)

And again, "Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind." (Col 2:18)

And yet a third witness speaks, "But these [dreamers/false teachers] speak evil of those things which they know not; but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves." (Jude 1:10)

Now, this might seem like some "heavy" language to employ when evaluating an article that seems intended to "soften" Yah's image to its readers, and about which I have already acknowledged seeks to do good service by assuaging unnecessary guilt and the tendency to worry. And yet, on matters so very critical to salvation, we can make no mistakes.

It is the Testimony of Yahshua that we must hold, and no lesser testimony, however brightly it might appear to the senses, will gain the hopeful soul admission into life everlasting.

It is Yah alone who saves. It is Yahshua alone who is the Savior, and He spoke most directly to those who would be seen as teachers of the Law, and yet failed to understand the true nature of Him whom they claimed to represent. Beware the heaven, as it is written... it is most dangerous in those who are closest to the truth.

We of the Faith of Yahshua would not, of course, find any fault with the keeping of the Sabbath, the abhorrence of idols, and every applicable activity that the Scriptures record for the spiritual, mental, and physical health of the believer. And yet, we must be sure that our "comfort" is in the truth, and not in pleasing fables.

Consider a parallel matter: When a loved one passes away, most Churches will attempt to comfort the grieving, not with the words of Scripture, but with pagan philosophy that has crept into Christian teachings over the generations. In the heathen theologies, the soul is naturally immortal; it is not subject to death, and so must spend conscious eternity either in Heaven with Yahweh or in Hell with the other damned spirits. Thus, since death is but a momentary event, rather than the true enemy of Yah's creation, (as it is described in 1 Corinthians 15:26) those who have passed away immediately face the judgment, and those who are of the faith receive their reward immediately. The sorrowful are then told that their loved ones must surely be looking down upon them even now from a place of spiritual exaltation, and therefore their grief – while appropriate – will be brief.

The Word of Yahweh tells us different things, which might not be as comforting to those who are used to the fiction, but is of the greatest comfort to those who have the "mind of Christ." Death is a sleep, (John 11:11-14) in which those who have ceased to live have neither thoughts nor knowledge. (Psa. 146:4, Ecc 9:5) It is true that this death is not the end of existence, but the reason is that there is a resurrection of the soul, the entire person who is both mind and spirit. (Gen 2:7) At the point of resurrection, for most people, the judgment is all at the same time, for the dead must be "gathered" for judgment; (Rev 20:13) indicating clearly that they are not judged individually as they die. After this, those whose names are found in the Book of Life hear the words of everlasting welcome from the Father, all at once, (Rev 13:8) and those who did not receive the Gospel with joy are made subject to the second death, which causes them to "perish," (John 3:16) to be utterly destroyed, so that only ashes remain when the fire that is not quenched finally concludes its strange work. (Mal 4:3) It is with "these words," and these words specifically, that we are to comfort our grieving. (1Th 4:18)

The world, and its churches, prefer other words. My point here is that it is not enough to say, "I have comforted, and therefore I have done well." Falsehoods may comfort as easily as the truth, more easily in fact, if the hearers are unused to the truth in the first place.

When it comes to perfection, it is we who rise to the Father's standards. It is not the Father's standards that are lowered to that which we can, in our own strength, meet.

Those who love Yahweh, and His character, rejoice rather that we can be so raised, than that His perfection must be compromised by allowing that which is imperfect, that which is less than perfectly holy, into unity with Himself.

To some, that is the mark of Yah's mercy – He allows us (broken and imperfect) to partake of His Kingdom. But is it not greater mercy, and is it not infinitely better love, that He fixes that which is broken?

Adriel: Amen

Zahakiel: Is it not a more praiseworthy thing that He mends the imperfect, and invites all who, in their sinful state cry out for His mercy, to receive an even better thing than they are asking for?

Yah does not keep us from Hell. He makes us suitable for Heaven, and that... that very thing, should be the greatest comfort of all. But one must love righteousness, otherwise the thought will be, "But then I will have to change! But then I will have to cease from sin, or He will not accept me." You can see, in those words, the love of sin. It is more comforting to the sinner to think, "I do not have to deny the flesh. I can keep my sin, and God will receive me anyway." It is more comforting to the saint to think, "I am not a captive to my temptations. Yahweh will make me His child, and receive me because I am of His Spirit."

So let us then look at the specifics here. Yahshua says, "Be perfect as God is perfect." This particular article seeks to lessen the impact of this by pointing out that in another passage the idea is rendered, "Be merciful as God is merciful." But here is a question that has apparently not occurred to the author: Is it easy to be merciful to the degree that, and in the same manner that, the Father is merciful? What I mean is, given a choice between being as perfect as Yahweh, or as merciful as Yahweh, which is easier for the sinner to accomplish? Clearly, both are perfectly impossible for mortal man.

Thus, while the article makes it "seem" as if Luke's Gospel is somehow more accurate because it is apparently more attainable, even if that were true, it is as impossible to jump to the moon as it is to the sun, even though the moon is much closer. There is no comfort here. Either option makes salvation quite out of the grasp of mankind, and therefore we must be just as dead to self, just as surrendered to Christ, just as born-again, to be divinely merciful as it is to be divinely perfect in all things.

Praise be to Yah, He has made a way for His people, who are willing, who are not lovers of sin, to be just as Yahshua has instructed us to be, and in every verse from which He might be quoted. By Yahshua's character, we may say even to those who persecute us, "Forgive them, Father, because they do not know what they are doing." It is by Yahshua's

character, and only by that character, that we can endure the Time of Trouble. We may be perfect in love, and perfect in mercy, and perfect in any other single aspect of Yah's character, only because we have the entire Fruit of the Spirit, and not individual points of excellence. Yah's nature is entirely excellent, and when He places within us that divine nature, because His Son abides in us, and we in the Son, we do not receive a part of divinity. We partake in ALL of it.

It is with these words that we ought to be comforting ourselves, and those who hear us, not with inventions that are pleasing to the sinful flesh.

If one should "worry" that Yahshua has said "Be ye perfect," we should say, "Yes, and rejoice that it is possible, for if it were not possible, He would not have asked us to do it." Further, we might testify, "In the very word, in the very command, is Power from On High, for it is the same Word that said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light."

Adriel: Amen!

It is these words, and not others, that lead the mind to trust in the omnipotence of the Father and Son, rather than Their ability to ignore our transgressions. They can do all things, including making saints out of sinners, lovers of righteousness out of lovers of sin, light out of darkness, and victory out of failure after failure.

Adriel: Amen!

If one should display, in the author's words, "that obsessive attempt to act perfect," then we ought to instruct, and gently lead, this poor soul to understand that there is no need for obsession, and no need to "act" perfect any more than a dog "acts" as a dog, or a mouse "acts" as a mouse. The sinner does not "act" like a sinner; he acts sinfully because that is what he is. Likewise, and just as surely, the saint does not "act" saintly. Those whom the Father has made perfect do not "act" perfect, and feel no pressure to do anything other than what lies within their very own nature to do.

The standards of Yahweh are impossibly high. Let us not comfort sinners by misrepresenting Him in a "better" way than Satan misrepresents Him. Let us be honest – the utter and matchless perfection of Yahweh is demanded of all who will be One with Him, for it is a true and everlasting unity.

But let the sinner (who wishes to be a saint) be comforted with these words: The love of Yah, and the mercy of Yah, and the power of Yah, are as impossibly great as are His standards. What He does for us is according to what He requires of us. Let the

sinner know that, if he desires it, he need not be a sinner any longer. He may rise up out of the grave of his transgressions and become a "new" creature.

To the flesh, this is scary, yes...there is no comfort for anyone to hear that he must die. But there is a resurrection, as Paul wrote. There is life after death, for after the sinner dies, the saint may live. How comforting, the Apostle lets us know. The thoughts will be different, clean, holy... and he will love what he once hated while hating what he once loved. But if he, because of his love for Yahweh and His character, will endure this death, will surrender his life for that love, then he will find that the burden of perfection is no burden at all. It is not something about which he ever needed to be comforted after all.

That Yah demands perfection is a wonderful thing, because it means that He bestows perfection. He has given us His Son, Perfection made Human, so that we might reach up and grasp everything we lack of Yah's expectations of us. In the Words, in the very Words that have said, "Be ye therefore perfect" is the power to accomplish it.

This truth, this Gospel, must be repeated, and repeated, sung and re-sung. It must be in our testimony before the world, because this will reveal those who are truly seeking righteousness. We will know them, because they will love the truth and hate the lie. We will know them because, with dawning hope, they will say, "Is it true? Can I actually be perfect, even as my Father in Heaven is perfect?" And when Yah, through us, answers them, "Yes! Be clean. Come, and sin no more," then with these words, with these very words, they will indeed be comforted.

Are there any comments or questions about the study for tonight?

Adriel: Amen. C

Zahakiel: Go ahead.

Adriel: Looking up the reference...Having trouble bringing it up, but it was a quote from Ellen White about every command from God is a promise of His aid to fulfill it. If I can get it to come up I will include it in the transcript. End

Zahakiel: Ok, thanks 😊 Are there any others?

Adriel: Got it 😊 "In every command and in every promise of the word of God is the power, the very life of God, by which the command may be fulfilled and the promise realized. He who by faith receives the word is receiving the very life and character of God. {COL 38.1}

I also found this one that deals directly with the verse that was discussed. "God's ideal for His children is higher than the highest human thought can reach. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." This command is a promise. The plan

of redemption contemplates our complete recovery from the power of Satan. Christ always separates the contrite soul from sin. He came to destroy the works of the devil, and He has made provision that the Holy Spirit shall be imparted to every repentant soul, to keep him from sinning. The tempter's agency is not to be accounted an excuse for one wrong act. Satan is jubilant when he hears the professed followers of Christ making excuses for their deformity of character. It is these excuses that lead to sin. There is no excuse for sinning. A holy temper, a Christlike life, is accessible to every repenting, believing child of God. The ideal of Christian character is Christlikeness. As the Son of man was perfect in His life, so His followers are to be perfect in their life. Jesus was in all things made like unto His brethren. He became flesh, even as we are. He was hungry and thirsty and weary. He was sustained by food and refreshed by sleep. He shared the lot of man; yet He was the blameless Son of God. He was God in the flesh. His character is to be ours. The Lord says of those who believe in Him, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people." 2 Corinthians 6:16. {DA 311.4}

Zahakiel: Yes, thank you for sharing that.

Elyna: C

Zahakiel: Go ahead.

Elyna: Please pray for Danielle. She was attending over the phone then the phone hanged up and I have not been able to make contact with her since. Thanks. End.

Adriel: (will do)

Lucan: C

Zahakiel: Go ahead.

Lucan: I am reminded of something I learned (or perhaps re-learned) recently about the word "holy..." In both Hebrew and Greek, it is identical to the word for "saints..." Where the Scripture says "the saints were gathered," etc. it literally reads "the holy were gathered..."

It is interesting to me that "Holy Spirit" is "hagios pneuma," and saints are "hagios" in Greek. It shows both that the source of all righteousness and perfection is the Spirit, leading to a unity such that the same word is used for the believer, the Spirit, and the Father that is the source of both. <End.>

Adriel: Amen.

Zahakiel: Yes, thank you for sharing that. And I think that is very important, that we always emphasize the connection between Yah and the redeemed is "holiness." The essence of what I shared tonight is that we cannot effectively comfort the sinners by

making Yah seem any "less" but by making His work in us, and what we become as a result, greater, perfect. That we become "holy" is the very purpose of what Yah has done.

Any other thoughts to share?

Adriel: Amen

Naraiel: C.

Zahakiel: Go ahead.

Naraiel: This reminds me of something I read, that when Yahshua calls us his brothers and sisters, he is not decreasing himself but increasing the standard that all believers must reach, with his power. Pastors and priests interpret the idea of Yahshua lowering himself to the point that we are not expected to do anything... perhaps because of their interpretation of the nature of the Holy Spirit. They are unbelievers of the power of His Spirit. End.

Zahakiel: I would like to see that reference if you find it :) And that is interesting... what you said now reminds me of a conversation I had with someone a number of years ago in a Christian chatroom. He was saying that he could always tell the "false" religions from the true ones, because the false religions always called Yahshua "brother" rather than "God" and "Son of God." He specifically singled out Adventism and Mormonism, that do this, and since I was there, I responded. I pointed out that there are several verses in which Yahshua Himself calls us His "brethren," and we are specifically told that He is "not ashamed" to do so. If He is not ashamed of the connection, how can we be? But considering what I have shared tonight, and what Bro. Luke and Giselle have added, it now becomes clear that this individual held that position because He did not believe in the Gospel as we do, as that which elevates us to Yah's true children, as much His child as Yahshua is, although by adoption rather than spiritual nature. But that elevation is the source of the Gospel's power, and our joy. So thank you both for sharing those thoughts.

Any others? All right, if there are none then I will ask Bro. Luke to offer a closing prayer.

Naraiel: C.

Zahakiel: Go ahead.

Naraiel: In regard to Satan's stumbling blocks or distractions. I was talking tonight with Julieta asking her if she has read some of the material I have sent her a while ago, and she answered that she has been so busy with her studies, work, etc., that she has not found the time to do so. End.

Zahakiel: Well, let us know how that goes 😊 Ok, please go ahead when ready, Bro. Luke.

Naraiel: And to finish, I told her that her studies neither her job will prepare her for the last days tribulation if she did not walk by faith, and decide to make time for Yahweh every day. End.

Lucan: Dear heavenly Father. We thank you that you have not delivered us into a watered down gospel, or a lesser standard than the life of your Son. But rather, that you have given us the very life, Spirit, faith, and testimony of Yahshua to bear boldly. You have not called us to be actors, as hypocrites, but doers of perfection. As we behold your character and Word, we are ever blessed with a clearer view of your perfection. We thank you that by beholding, we become changed. May your Spirit continue with us into the Sabbath hours and beyond, as we prepare for the Sabbath of the earth. In Yahshua's name we pray, amen.

Elyna: Amen.

daphna dee: Amen

Zahakiel: Amen.

Adriel: Amen

Natashua: Amen.

Barb: Amen

Ruthline: Amen

Pastor Chick: Amen.

Naraiel: Amen