

Yahweh, the Almighty God of Israel, is with us
"Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet,
and shew my people their transgression,
and the house of Jacob their sins." Isaiah 58:1

Unclassified Topics

Study Prayerfully & Study Carefully

The Perfect Church

1. Introduction

The Hebrew words '**shalem**' and '**tamim**' translated '**perfect**' in the King James Bible mean finished, complete and whole. The word '**perfect**' is often used in Scripture to describe a believer's **motives** as well as his/her **actions**. Is perfection in this sense possible? The answer is **yes**.

Genesis 6: 9: *"These are the generations of Noah: **Noah** was a just man and **perfect** in his generations, and Noah walked with God."*

Job 1: 1: *"There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was **Job**; and that man was **perfect** and upright, and one that feared God and eschewed evil."*

1 Kings 15: 14: *"...Nevertheless **Asa's heart was perfect** with the Lord all the days of his life."*

Isaiah 38: 3: *Remember now O Lord, I (Hezekiah) beseech thee, how I have walked before thee with a **perfect heart** and have done that which is good in thy sight."*

From these texts we can see that **perfection**, albeit in a limited sense, is possible. Just as a flower bud or a small green apple is **perfect** at that particular stage of development, though not perfectly matured; in the same way a person can be **perfect** before God at his/her stage of development.

2. Perfection - a Goal

There are many who say that perfection is totally beyond man's reach; and so they make little effort to improve. What's worse, they appear to glory in their imperfections and sins. They harp on and on about how sinful they were before they were converted; or how sinful they still are. These souls miss the point of salvation. For the truth is this: the Most High wants His followers to be perfect. That is His ultimate goal - the perfection of His children. Did not the Master command us to be perfect?

Matthew 5: 48: *"**Be ye therefore perfect even as your heavenly Father is perfect.**"*

2 Corinthians 7: 1: *"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, **perfecting holiness in the fear of God.**"*

2 Corinthians 13: 11: *"Finally, brethren, farewell. **Be perfect**, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you."*

2 Timothy 3: 17: *"That the man of God may be **perfect**, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."*

Oh yes, perfection is possible and it should be the goal of all true believers in Christ.

3. The Imperfect Church

Sad to say, however, the church is far from perfect; and few - **if any** - believers would claim to be perfect. Indeed it is often the case that the very ones who imagine they are next to being perfect are the farthest from it.

The Split Church

The church is split. Almost every opinion, no matter how right or wrong, is guaranteed to cause division. All the weighty, spiritual qualities like faith, patience, meekness, common courtesy and brotherly-love are somehow set aside when a difference of opinion arises. Instead, arguments rage, suspicion and slander take over and separations inevitably follow. Oh yes, the church is split into hundreds - yea thousands - of groups.

Sectarian Battles

Still worse are the **sectarian battles**; the hatred, the persecution and the murder. Sectarian battles are commonplace these days, between Protestants and Catholics and between denominations; each totally convinced that it alone has the truth. Divisions in the church are not a new phenomenon, they existed in the early church and will no doubt continue till the Saviour returns.

4. The True Church

Are you looking for the true church, the perfect church? If so these are the signs you should look for:

Truth

Teaching which has no trace of atheism or heathenism. Not that any group will have **total truth** and know everything there is to know. Oh no! Instead what it does hold - the little or much it understands - will be based on **Yahweh's Word - the Holy Bible**. In other words the true church will be able to support its teaching from the Bible. It will not need to rely on **tradition, signs** or **miracles**, which few believers have the power to perform anyway. Rather it will take its doctrinal stand on the Bible and the Bible only. See our article on **Bible Versions** as to which translation of the Bible is recommended.

A Perfect Congregation

In the perfect congregation **ALL** the members will be **practising** the truth. They will **all** be faithful, pure, kind, happy, generous, hospitable, industrious, clean, respectable, obedient and holy people. **Can we hope to find such a congregation - anywhere on earth?** Our answer is **No, not yet**.

As you look over the thousands of Christian congregations, they all appear to have the same spiritual problems: unbelief, divided families and sin-sick members. To be sure some denominations know more, **or** think they know more, than others. They understand Bible prophecy. They give more in tithes and offerings. They have better choirs and musicians etc. But, sad to say, in their behaviour, there is often little difference between those who know much and those who know little.

Hatred, jealousy, suspicion, back-biting, faithlessness, apathy and outright sin exists in all denominations. In other words, the **performance** of the membership in all the denominations is far from perfect, no matter what they know or possess. I would go so far as to say that believers only know as much they put into practice. In other words **'theoretical knowledge'** if it is not put into practice is not real knowledge. In the Scriptural sense **'to know'** means **'to have an 'intimate' relationship with'** rather than just to theoretically accept as fact.

Spiritual knowledge which is not put into practice is not true knowledge. It is just so much **counter-productive, mental baggage**. Believers who do not practice the truth they profess are clouds without rain, wells without

water, trees without fruit.

Keep away from such individuals. They will weary you.

5. What does all this Mean?

It means that at the moment (**2011**)

- There is no such thing as the perfect denomination.
- There is no such thing as the perfect congregation.
- There are comparatively few perfect individuals!

You may travel the world and visit hundreds of religious groups and you will not find the perfect congregation. Simply because, right now, **it does not exist!** To be sure one day - and I believe soon - the perfect church will become a reality; but right now (**2011**) it doesn't exist.

6. Is Perfection Possible at Group Level?

Yes perfection is possible: not only in isolated instances, but in tens of thousands of cases. We see a picture of a perfect group in this passage:

Revelation 14: 1: *“And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.*
2: *And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:*
3: *And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.*
4: *These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.*
5: ***And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.”***

In other words: **some day soon**, when the sealing work mentioned in (Revelation chapter 7) is finished, we shall see the **perfect group**, the ones who **“are without fault before the throne of God.”**

7. Meanwhile look Within

So what should the average believer aim for at this present moment in time? Short of spending a lifetime travelling about looking for the perfect group what can he/she do now? A lot. If you want to improve matters in your own life, your own family or group, address these questions:

- Am I doing all I can to improve my own performance? Or am I wasting time assessing and criticizing fellow believers, who may even be better than I am?
- Am I doing all I can to make my family a better family - a perfect family? Or has my family life become an empty shell, an emotional wilderness?
- Am I doing all I can to become a better person - a perfect spouse, father, mother, son or daughter. Am I?

8. True Perfection

Spiritual Fruit

A believer's aim must be to allow the Holy Spirit to produce **SPIRITUAL FRUIT** in his/her life: **faith, love, joy, peace, honesty, purity, mercy, kindness, generosity, hospitality, patience, meekness and contentment etc.** These are the things which identify the true believer from the false. Perfection is having these

qualities in abundance. How does one attain to this sublime state? The answer, in my view, is through **YESHUA the Messiah. (Jesus Christ)** He is the route to perfection. Perfection is not attainable through study, knowledge or human effort. Perfection is only possible through the life-giving presence and power of the **Son of God**.

9. Faith

The Almighty divides mankind into two classes.

- **Believers** ...Those who believe in Him.
- **Unbelievers** ... Those who do not.

Looking through the Bible you will see scores of stories about believers and what they did through faith. (Hebrews chapter 11) gives example after example of these characters: Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Gideon, Samson, Rahab the harlot, Samuel and king David etc. These were people of faith and they won a good report by their subsequent actions. Is it possible to be like them? Of course it is.

What is faith? The answer is found in Hebrews 11:1

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”

Note that **faith is a substance**. To be sure man cannot weigh faith in an ordinary balance or measure its length, breadth and volume as one would a **physical substance**. Nevertheless faith is a substance: a **spiritual substance** which in varying quantities exists in the mind of every true believer. Yahweh is able to measure that faith and He assesses people by it.

He can weigh a man's faith in a balance just as we can measure the weight of a grain of sand or a pound of sugar. We humans assess each other by human standards: intelligence, knowledge, appearance, talents, presentation etc. But the Almighty looks deep into the human mind and **weighs our faith, our motives and our thoughts**. We humans cannot do this. That is why we cannot be certain that our assessment of others is correct. Those we think are good, knowledgeable Christians, might well be as chaff by God's measure: and those we dismiss as ignorant, may well be of great weight and stature in His sight.

1 Samuel 16: 7: ***“But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.”***

How Important is Faith?

- Hebrews 11: 2: ***“For by it (faith) the elders obtained a good report.”***
- Verse: 6: ***“Without faith it is impossible to please God.”***

In other words **FAITH** is the key ingredient for salvation. It is the first thing the Almighty looks for when evaluating a person's or congregation's spiritual standing. Hebrews chapter 11 is called the **Faith chapter**. Take time to study it and notice how that faith, to be of any value, must exhibit itself in action. That mighty host all had faith. They comprised the **True Church of God**. It was not so much what they knew that mattered - for some knew much whilst others knew very little - but what they did. Their **actions proved that they had living faith**. They comprised the **True Church of God**.

10. Spiritual Tools

To be sure besides **FAITH** we believers are anxious to possess:

- **Knowledge of the Scriptures.**
- **Gifts of the Holy Spirit**

- Prophecy/Evangelism/Teaching skills
- Discernment of Spirits
- Gifts of Healing/Miraculous powers
- Diversity of Tongues/Interpretation
- Organizational skills/Helps etc.

But these are merely **gifts** given by the Most High to perfect the church and to produce in its members the **Fruit of the Spirit**. Spiritual gifts are, of course, important and very useful; but, like gardening tools they are not the end product. The **produce of the garden** is the end product. It is absolutely essential to recognize this difference between gifts, talents, knowledge, or whatever, and their **ultimate purpose**. Failure to recognize this difference will lead to the barren wilderness. **The true believer will bear spiritual fruit**, the false will not. It's as simple as that.

11. The Judgment

We humans are going to be judged by **our faith**, that spiritual substance in the mind, and also by **our performance, works** - not by our talents, qualifications, knowledge or wealth. To be sure on the great Day of Judgment our **talents** will be taken into account. For example when assessing a man's life Yahweh will take into account:

- The age/country/generation in which he lived.
- The facilities he had access to: spiritual books, dictionaries. encyclopaedias etc.
- The free time he had to make use of those facilities.
- The pressures/temptations he was put through. His health, family background, working conditions, Christian environment etc.
- The conviction the Holy Spirit brought to his mind.

All these **contributing factors** will be taken into account. But over and above these things we will be judged according to our **willingness to believe (faith)** and **our works**!

Revelation 20: *11: And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.*
12: And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.
13: And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

See **A Voice In The Wilderness - Canada** article **Works**, Are they Important? for information on the importance of works.

12. With Whom, then, do I Worship?

If there is currently no perfect church, congregation or person, who, then, do we worship with? My answer is as follows:

- Find a local group of Christians who accept the Bible as the very Word of God, Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the Ten Commandments as the law of God. Join with these believers in worshipping God.
- If there are several such groups in your area, then select the one which meets on the **True Sabbath**, - which is Saturday.
- If after finding a Sabbath-keeping group, you subsequently find that **not everything it teaches** agrees with your understanding of God's truth, (and this will surely happen) then do not despair.
- The Master met each Sabbath with folk who thought very differently from him. But that didn't stop him worshipping God in the company of other believers.
- If there are no Sabbath-keeping groups in your area, then meet with other Christians - **as you see fit** - but seriously consider starting a **Sabbath meeting** in your own home.

- It is a serious mistake to give up worshipping God in the company of other Christians simply because they do not agree with everything you think is the Truth. The Bible says in:
Hebrews 10: 24: *“And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:
25: **Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”***
- No matter what you do, be certain of this one fact that however small the company you join in worshipping God - **even two or three believers** - the Spirit of the Most High and His Son will be with you to bless and to build.

Summary

In summary we may say that the **Perfect Church doesn't exist** at this moment in time. (2011) Nonetheless, when looking for a congregation to worship with, we should **not** look for the congregation which is outwardly attractive, i.e. is the largest, knows the most, sings the best etc. These are surface attractions, they mean little. Look for **faith, obedience** and a **praying group**, believers who are happy and at peace with themselves and each other! Regrettably most people will be attracted to larger groups, those with learning, talent, possessions, fame and wealth; and having found them will suppose that they have found the perfect church. But I can assure you that in the course of time if you pay undue attention to these things, disappointment will surely follow. If on the other hand you look for **Truth, Obedience** and the **Fruit of the Holy Spirit** you will not go astray.

Galatians 5: 22: *“But the fruit of the Spirit is **love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,***

*23: **Meekness, temperance:** against such there is no law.*

24: And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

25: If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

26: Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.”

Matthew 7: 15: *“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.*

*16: **Ye shall know them by their fruits.** Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?*

17: Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

18: A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

19: Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

*20: **Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.***

21: Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

22: Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

*23: And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: **depart from me, ye that work iniquity.**”*

When the Saviour evaluated the various churches mentioned in the book of Revelation you will note that he looked for **good character** and **performance**.

- **Ephesus:**
*“I know thy **works**, and thy **labour**, and thy **patience**, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil...”*
- **Smyrna:**
*“I know thy **works**, and **tribulation**, and **poverty**, (but thou art rich)...”*
- **Pergamos:**
*“I know thy **works**, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou **holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith...**”*
- **Thyatira:**
*“I know thy **works**, and **charity**, and **service**, and **faith**, and thy **patience.**”*
- **Sardis:**
*“I know thy **works**, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead...for I have not found thy **works** perfect before God.”*
- **Philadelphia:**

*“I know thy **works**:... for thou hast a little strength, and hast **kept my word**, and hast **not denied my name**.”*

- **Laodicea:**

*“I know thy **works**, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.*

16: So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

17: Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:”

When you have found the group which is **closest to these standards**; that is, the group which teaches and obeys the truth and also exhibits the fruit of the Holy Spirit, then worship with that group every Sabbath day. You may be sure, however, that in the course of time you will discover that it has many faults, ***almost as many as you yourself have.***

Do not be discouraged.

You attend church services, not to meet with perfect people, or even to hear perfect sermons about absolute truth. No, you should attend Sabbath services to worship **Yahweh** the Almighty God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob: the Father of our Lord and Saviour **Yeshua the Messiah**. And as you worship Him you will benefit greatly from His presence. ***The Almighty God will be with you in Spirit and in Truth.*** You will be greatly blessed over and above anything you can remotely imagine.

AMEN!

In the Son's Name — For the Father's glory.

Elder: *Max W. Mader*

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