

## “WALK BEFORE ME AND BE BLAMELESS”— LIVING THE CIRCUMCISED LIFE!

*Gen 17:1-2* When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, **"I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless. [2] And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly."**

### Questions:

- Have you ever gone ahead with your own plans when you knew down deep that it wasn't totally of the Lord and ended up with "leanness" in your soul? When was the last time?
- Are you living your life for yourself and for Christ? OR for Christ alone?
- How "wholeheartedly given over to the Lord" is your present walk?

**LIVING THE CIRCUMCISED LIFE!** -- Up to this point we have been following Abram as a believer in the true God, sojourning in the land of promise. But **the difference between a believer and a circumcised believer is very IMPORTANT indeed, and it is to this difference that the Spirit of God directs our attention in Genesis 17.**

- We last saw Abram attempting to help God. He was trying to solve a problem he felt was too hard for God. He and Sarai felt they had the solution to the problem.
- Thirteen years elapsed between the account of Chapter 16 and that of Chapter 17, and we can imagine these were years of unhappiness and unrest in the household of Abram. God must have used these thirteen years to teach Abram the folly of acting on his own.
- Have **we not had some similar experiences**, when God has allowed us to have our own way, and the results have been most distressing? We were permitted to go our own headstrong way in order that we might learn the folly of acting apart from God. One of the most frightening things about life with God is this fact: That, if you insist upon having your own way, He will often let you have it, till you are sorry you asked for it. **"And He gave them their request, But sent leanness into their soul," (Psalms 106:15)**
- New developments are unfolded here in Chapter 17:
- **The first is the new revelation he has of God: *When Abram was ninety-nine years old the Lord appeared to Abram, and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly."*** After thirteen years of silence, God appears to Abram in a new revelation and with a new name -- **God Almighty**. In the Hebrew it is *El Shaddai*, -"**the God who is sufficient**," the all-competent God, the adequate God, who knows what He is doing and how to do it. This is an indication that Abram has learned something from his recent bitter experience. God says, in effect, "**You have been learning for thirteen years the total inadequacy of your own efforts, through Ishmael. Now learn a new thing about Me. I am El Shaddai. You have discovered by sad experience how futile your plans and efforts can be without Me. Now learn how capable I am to do everything that I desire to do, whenever I desire to do it.**"
- How we all need to discover this truth! **We need desperately to recover the reality of *El Shaddai, the God who is sufficient* for whatever we are going through right now!** This is what Abram learned.
- In this new light from God came a new demand from God. **"Walk before Me and be blameless."** The word *blameless* can be translated "perfect." The root meaning of the word is "wholehearted." **"Walk before Me and be perfect, wholehearted,"** God says, "because **I am**

*El Shaddai.*" That is, **I am all-sufficient to make you blameless.** Walk before Me, therefore, and be blameless.

- The truth that is often brought before us in the New Testament, that **we are so constantly trying to serve two masters, to please self and Christ.** We are **quite content to serve Christ, if we can also serve self at the same time.** But God says to Abram, "**This can no longer be permitted.** You have come to the place where **your dual allegiance can no longer be tolerated.** **Walk now before Me, appropriating, relying on, what I am, and be wholehearted, be wholly on My side, be Mine!**"
- **This is what a circumcised life means! It is Christ asserting His practical Lordship in our lives.**
- When you become a Christian, you did so by recognizing the right of Jesus Christ to be Lord in your life. You did not understand what that would involve, but you saw, in one way or another, **that His willingness to save you involved His right to control you.** For a time, **though you knew you were essentially different, you lived much as you did before.**
- You made decisions on the basis **of how you felt and what you wanted to do.** Then the Holy Spirit begins to put on the pressure. He says to you, "**Stop this!**" or "**Start doing that!**" All He is really doing **is asserting the Lordship of Christ in your life.** He is **beginning to cut the ties that bind you to the world and the self-life within you.** This is essentially what He is saying to Abram here.
- So important is this step, along with the new revelation of God, that new names are given to Abram and Sarai:
- **Whenever you see God in a new way, it always makes a corresponding change in you.** Because you have now learned that I am El Shaddai, your name **can no longer be 'exalted' but it must now be 'fruitful,'** for you will be the father of a multitude."

Now we come to the great sign of circumcision: - *Gen 17:9-13* **And God said to Abraham: "As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. [10] This is My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised; [11] and you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you. [12] He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised, every male child in your generations, he who is born in your house or bought with money from any foreigner who is not your descendant. [13] He who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money must be circumcised, and My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.**

And the actual event is recorded in *Gen 17:22-27* **Then He finished talking with him, and God went up from Abraham. [23] So Abraham took Ishmael his son, all who were born in his house and all who were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house, and circumcised the flesh of their foreskins that very same day, as God had said to him. [24] Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. [25] And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. [26] That very same day Abraham was circumcised, and his son Ishmael; [27] and all the men of his house, born in the house or bought with money from a foreigner, were circumcised with him.**

- Now let us remember that what was **physical and literal** to Abraham is intended to have **spiritual significance** to us.
- In the New Testament, therefore, we **no longer** read of **circumcision of the flesh but of the heart**. The **heart is the symbol of the soul -- the mind, emotions, and will, the whole personality**.
- Every **believer in Christ is to bear on his heart the sign of Christ's Lordship**. The **total personality is to be at His disposal**. That is the Christian's circumcised life.
- Many feel that circumcision was **the origin of the wedding ring**. The act of circumcision was performed by a metal or stone knife which cut around the foreskin leaving a circular scar. So a man and woman, standing before someone who represents God, place a metal and/or stone ring upon each other's fingers, indicating that **two hearts are giving themselves to each other**.
- **This is the meaning of heart circumcision: The believer's heart is totally Christ's, to use as he wills -- all his emotions, mind, intellect, and will are dedicated and available, ready at the command of Jesus Christ to be used for His purposes.**
- We are to **have no reliance upon ourselves, but rely totally upon Him**. Every thought, every imagination, is brought into captivity to Christ. That is the circumcised life.
- **"Walk therefore before Me, and be wholehearted, blameless."** That will be a life of fruitfulness and blessing, a life that is well-pleasing to God, for it all springs from the realization that the God who lives within is El Shaddai, the God who is sufficient.
- It is quite possible for us to give the impression that we are totally yours, Lord, that we love You and serve You, and that all we have is Yours, and yet to be quite false to that ideal. Help us to discover the glory of the circumcised life, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

## SUMMARY

- Is your life committed to serving **self AND Christ OR Christ alone?**
- How about your **"Ai"** experiences; **your experiences with the Gibeonites - "they did not ask counsel of the Lord" (Joshua 9:14)?**
- How **frequently do you pray before** making a decision; answering a question; spending a dollar?
- **HE IS OUR SUFFICIENCY, OUR ENABLEMENT; ONLY IN CRIST!**
- **"I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless (Gen. 17:1)**
- **"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. [19] Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations..." (Mat. 28:18-19)**
- **" For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ**
- **Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh, (Phil.3:3).**

***Christ is Enough - Hillsong Music***

*Christ is my reward/ And all of my devotion/ Now there's nothing in this world/ That could ever satisfy/ Through every trial My soul will sing/ No turning back/ I've been set free*

*Christ is enough for me/ Christ is enough for me/ Everything I need is in You/ Everything I need*

*Christ my all in all/ The joy of my salvation/ And this hope will never fail/ Heaven is our home/ Through every storm/ My soul will sing/ Jesus is here/ To God be the glory/ I have decided/ to follow Jesus/ No turning back/ No trudging back*

*The cross before me/ The world behind me/ No turning back/ No turning back/ I have decided to follow Jesus/ No turning back/ No turning back*

***I Surrender - Hillsong Music***

*Here I am/ Down on my knees again/ Surrendering all/ Surrendering all/ Find me here/ Lord as You draw me near/ Desperate for You/ Desperate for You/ I surrender*

*Drench my soul/ As mercy and grace unfold/ I hunger and thirst/ I hunger and thirst/ With arms stretched wide/ I know You hear my cry/ Speak to me now/ Speak to me now*

*I surrender/I surrender/ I wanna know You more/ I wanna know You more  
[x2]*

*Like a rushing wind/ Jesus breathe within/ Lord have Your way/ Lord have Your way in me/ Like a mighty storm/ Stir within my soul/ Lord have Your way/ Lord have Your way in me*

*Lord have Your way/Lord have Your way in me*

*I surrender/I surrender  
I wanna know You more/I wanna know You more*