

The following Scripture passages are offered to aid beginning fellowships. The readings and commentary for this week are more in line with what has become usual; for the following will most likely be familiar observations. The concept behind this Sabbath's selection is baptism.

[Printable/viewable PDF format to display Greek or Hebrew characters](#)

## Weekly Readings

### *For the Sabbath of January 3, 2015*

[Continued from December 27<sup>th</sup>]

*The person conducting the Sabbath service should open services with two or three hymns, or psalms, followed by an opening prayer acknowledging that two or three (or more) are gathered together in Christ Jesus' name, and inviting the Lord to be with them.*

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And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." So they said to him, "Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as the prophet Isaiah said." (Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.) They asked him, "Then why are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" John answered them, "I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know, even He who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie." These things took place in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing. (John 1:19–28)

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#### 2.

Does a person have to become a physical Jew before becoming a Christian, the question at the core of Acts' Jerusalem Conference scene? To become a Jew, a male proselyte had to be circumcised, had to be baptized, and had to give an offering to the temple. The Apostle Paul taught the circumcision that mattered was of the heart; that being a "Jew" was not contingent upon the person being outwardly circumcised, but upon the person being inwardly circumcised (Rom 2:25–29). And when the temple ceased being the edifice King Herod paid to have built and became individually and collectively disciples circumcised of heart (1 Cor 3:16–17)—disciples that formed the Body of Christ (1 Cor 12:27)—the spiritual Body of Christ was the temple. And the appropriate offering the convert could offer to this temple was the life of the person; hence Paul wrote,

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. (Rom 12:1–2)

The appropriate offering for a Christian convert to give is the convert him or herself, the convert becoming a living sacrifice, not conformed to this world but transformed mentally through the indwelling of Christ Jesus. This would have the proselyte no longer living as a Gentile, a person of the nations, but living as a Judean regardless of whether outwardly circumcised. For as Paul also writes,

But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For *as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ*. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise. (Gal 3:25–29)

*As many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ*, with this “putting on” being as clothing oneself ... if I put on a coat to go outside this morning [it's near 0°F] would I appear to be wearing a coat? Certainly. So if you put on *Christ* as you would put on a coat, would you appear like Christ? Would you become a personification of Christ? Would you walk in this world as Christ walked? Or would you walk as a Gentile, look like a Gentile, eat like a Gentile, talk like a Gentile? Remember Paul wrote, “That by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect” (Rom 12:2) — what sort of test would a Christian convert devise to “test” for the will of God? The Lord tested Abraham when the Lord commanded Abraham to sacrifice Isaac (Gen chap 22), and if we are Christ's, you are spiritual *Isaac* (Gal 4:21–31), subject to the same sort of testing as physical Isaac endured when bound by his father and about to be slain. Christ Jesus was figuratively bound [nailed to the stake/cross] and sacrificed by His Father.

Being *baptized into Christ* would in a casual reading be the same as being baptized with Christ's baptism—and this is not the case. But before pursuing the difference, let us return to the beginning—

Baptism was one of three things required of a proselyte converting to Judaism, and baptism is unchallenged as a sacrament in greater Christendom. After all, Jesus Himself was baptized by John, and baptized in John's baptism. And did not Jesus establish the pattern for Christian conversion?

But did Jesus baptize His disciples?

Before answering this question, let us examine what Paul wrote about his visits to Jerusalem—

For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it. And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers. But when He who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by His grace, was pleased to reveal His Son to me, in order that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone; nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into

Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. *Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother.* (In what I am writing to you, before God, I do not lie!) Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. And I was still unknown in person to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. They only were hearing it said, "He who used to persecute us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy." And they glorified God because of me. *Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me. **I went up because of a revelation and set before them (though privately before those who seemed influential) the gospel that I proclaim among the Gentiles,** in order to make sure I was not running or had not run in vain.* But even Titus, who was with me, was not forced to be circumcised, though he was a Greek. Yet because of false brothers secretly brought in—who slipped in to spy out our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might bring us into slavery—to them we did not yield in submission even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you. And from those who seemed to be influential (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)—those, I say, who seemed influential added nothing to me. On the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to the circumcised (for he who worked through Peter for his apostolic ministry to the circumcised worked also through me for mine to the Gentiles), and when James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. Only, they asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do. (Gal 1:11–2:10 emphasis and double emphasis added)

From the bold face sentence in the above citation the Sophist author of Acts derived enough information to create his Jerusalem Conference scene, with this scene becoming the loadbearing pillar supporting greater Christendom's evangelism ... every Christian knows the scene, knows why Paul came to Jerusalem after fourteen years (according to the Sophist author);

But some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved." And *after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were **appointed to go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and the elders about this question.*** So, being sent on their way by the church, they passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria, describing in detail the conversion of the Gentiles, and brought great joy to all the brothers. When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they declared all that God had done with them. But some believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees rose up and said, "It is necessary to circumcise them and to order them to keep the Law of Moses." The apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider this matter. (Acts 15:1–6 emphasis and double emphasis added)

There is considerable difference between being appointed to go to Jerusalem to consult with the elders over the matter of outward circumcision and voluntarily going to Jerusalem because of a revelation that Paul wanted to set before the elders to verify that he was not teaching error. There is considerable difference between a private meeting from which no formal declaration was pronounced and James making a ruling and sending it as a letter to the churches with Gentile converts. But perhaps most

importantly, why would Paul in his letter to the Galatians write, *In what I am writing to you, before God, I do not lie!*

This odd little inserted comment about not lying forms a lacunae, a crack or gap in Paul's narrative, and such lacunae permit the deconstructionist to open the passage ... deconstructing the inserted comment about not lying would have the reader realizing that Paul would have been countering a rumor or perception being circulated in Galatia that he had a different history in the faith than the one he was presenting in his epistle to the Galatians. Paul's comment suggests that he was being accused [outside of the scope of Paul's epistle] of lying about receiving a revelation from God, about where and how he got his gospel, and about whatever else that might be questionable. And how might this lying go: *That Paul, he never stopped killing Christians. Only now instead of arresting them and dragging them back to Jerusalem to be killed, he's killing them in situ by preventing proselytes from being circumcised. He's a bad one, a liar, a murderer, a hater of Christ. Why he even lies about not being taught by his temple masters what to say to prevent proselytes from coming to Adonai. Of course he's been taught what to say to keep you from being circumcised. He even tells you the name of his teacher. You can't trust him. Don't listen to him. Save yourselves. Get circumcised as soon as possible, today if you can. Tomorrow at the latest. Do it now for you don't know what tomorrow will bring*, thus employing the "do it now" urgency of con artists.

What advantage would it have been to anyone to create for Paul a history other than what he did and how it happened? And the answer is easily found: it would have been of a great advantage to the Circumcision Faction and/or to the Platonists, the Christians to either theological side of Paul ... Justin Martyr was a Platonist Christian after he converted, but he didn't create Platonist Christianity by himself, imagining that God had inspired Plato and other Greek philosophers of old. No, he picked up threads being taught among Greek converts and merely wove these threads into a tapestry that someone like Marcion could use to cloak a heresy that continues to pervade greater Christendom, with Luke's Gospel and Acts supporting this heresy, becoming the textual base for *Mary worship* and even observance of *Christmas*.

In Acts, endtime disciples can see why Paul, in correcting the holy ones in Galatia, had to write, *In what I am writing to you, before God, I do not lie!* ... Lies about how Paul came to teach what he taught were being circulated: for Platonist Christians, Paul was the Apostle of Christ; the others were not. For the Circumcision Faction, Paul was a heretic that had joined the dark side, the forces of evil: Paul was the 1<sup>st</sup>-Century equivalent to Darth Vader.

When Paul said he went to Jerusalem because of a revelation, then said that Titus as an uncircumcised male also went along, it isn't likely that the revelation was about circumcision. If it had been, then Paul would have stated what his revelation was; for the subject of Paul's epistle to the Galatians was his rebuke of them for accepting the importance of fleshly circumcision, thereby forcibly causing a Gentile convert to become a Jew before becoming a Christian. And that is not right. That negates faith; that negates grace, the garment of Christ Jesus' righteousness.

For Christians, circumcision is of the heart, and apparently this was true for those whom Paul visited in Jerusalem—but this should have been the revelation Paul received at the beginning of his ministry fourteen/seventeen years earlier (Gal 1:12), the reason

why Titus wasn't circumcised before the revelation came that caused Paul to go to Jerusalem a second time.

So what was this latter revelation, the one that prompted Paul to go to Jerusalem and verify that he was not running in a wrong direction?

Deconstruction of a text is initially messy; for when a lacunae is found and spread apart so that the biases and perceptions of an author can be examined, the author is figuratively disemboweled, not with a scalpel but with a machete. As a result what's seen in deconstruction often appears more like a bear mauling than a precise literary examination. ... In the university, graduate students have to tidy-up the kill scene and pretend they're working on an operating table. In the field, pretenses are dropped. All that matters is whether the butcher understands the author and what the author was attempting to communicate.

The Apostle Paul continually had to contend with well-intended but spiritually illiterate converts to the Jesus Movement; for unlike in the 21<sup>st</sup>-Century, in order for the *word* Jesus left with His disciples to remain in this world, critical mass for the Jesus Movement had to be obtained through the Father foreknowing and predestining—and Jesus calling—enough individuals that Christianity would explode, taking knowledge of *Jesus* to every corner of human endeavor.

But in exploding, much of the knowledge that Paul had was lost. Much of the *word* Jesus left with His disciples was transformed into energy and dissipated across the globe, but in doing so, enough remained intact that reconstruction of what was lost is possible. And in a reconstruction the disemboweled Paul has to be returned to figurative life, a resurrection of Paul's revelations that is only obtainable through these revelations being repeated as Nebuchadnezzar's vision was repeated [in Daniel receiving the same vision] thereby establishing that the vision was from God.

If Paul's revelations are not twice given, they probably were not of God. But in Paul's revelations being twice given—in the 1<sup>st</sup>-Century and in the 21<sup>st</sup>-Century—their truth will be established and "Paul" will be resurrected before he lives again in a glorified body.

Most likely—almost certainly—Paul's first revelation was that the physical things of this world reveal and precede the spiritual things of God, with physical circumcision [the paring away of male foreskins at eight days of age] preceding invisible circumcision of the heart that takes away stubbornness and rebellion against God. This revelation will have the Law moving from outside the person [as if inscribed on two tablets of stone] to being written on hearts and minds, and this revelation will remove all importance on biological gender and genetic ethnicity: a son of God would therefore be neither male nor female, of natural Israel or of the nations. Rather, the son of God would have received life from God through the indwelling of His glory, His spirit, His breath.

What now would be the revelation that sent Paul scurrying to Jerusalem to verify he was still on the correct course?

The revelation would not have been about a small matter, but something central to salvation itself—and something that most likely was beyond the understanding of infant sons of God, meaning the revelation was not spiritual milk and therefore not laid out in Paul's epistles.

The best understanding of spiritual matters is found in John's Gospel, in Matthew's Gospel, and in Revelation.

In both John's Gospel and in Matthew's Gospel, the existence of two deities is revealed: the Father, the God of dead ones; and the Beloved, the God of living ones, with the Beloved having entered His creation as His unique Son, the man Jesus, the First of the firstborn sons of God, the first of many brothers. And all of this has been discussed in commentaries and in Sabbath Readings for several years ... this would not seem to be a revelation that would send Paul hurrying to Jerusalem, especially not when Paul doesn't seem to say what the revelation was, saying only,

I must go on boasting. Though there is nothing to be gained by it, *I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord*. I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows. And I know that this man was caught up into paradise—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows—and *he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter*. (2 Cor 12:1–4 emphasis added)

Obviously, the revelation Paul had that sent him to Jerusalem was troubling, at least as troubling as Daniel's visions were to Daniel:

As for me, Daniel, my thoughts greatly alarmed me, and my color changed, but I kept the matter in my heart. (Dan 7:28)

And I, Daniel, was overcome and lay sick for some days. (Dan 8:27)

How long did Daniel keep his vision of Belshazzar's first year to himself before he wrote it down? At some point, he wrote an account of the vision or we wouldn't have it today. At some point—based on early versions of Mark's Gospel that end with 16:8—the three women that went to the tomb overcame their fear and told someone of their experience. And most likely, Paul went to Jerusalem to tell James, Peter, and John at least what had happened to him, if not to run what *could-not-be-said* past them to confirm and/or refute what he had seen in paradise.

So that there is no misunderstanding, Paul would not have repeated *what could not be told*. But *what could not be told* would have become a part of Paul. Therefore, regardless of how silent Paul was about the subject, *what could not be told* would have been imbedded in what he wrote and thus concealed publicly but open to the deconstructionist if the appropriate lacunae were located, meaning that concealed in Paul's epistles are both the things about which Paul could not speak as well as the revelation that sent Paul hurrying to Jerusalem.

Now comes the mess: when I was called to *reread prophecy* in January 2002, almost immediately (within a day) I understood that Daniel's visions had been “sealed and kept secret” through historical events that seemed to fulfill the visions, these historical events even causing scholars to date Daniel's vision to a false *Daniel* in the 2<sup>nd</sup>-Century BCE. And as I was getting out of the pickup to keep Passover in 2003, I realized [sudden realization] that there would be a Second Passover liberation of Israel on a future second Passover ... was this the revelation that sent Paul hurrying to Jerusalem? Was this what Paul could not tell anyone? For there to be a Second Passover liberation of Israel, there had to be a second enslavement of Israel, with this second enslavement being to sin and death.

If all of humanity, including all of Israel, is consigned to disobedience (Rom 11:32) that produces sin followed by death, then all of humanity since Adam and certainly since Noah are “slaves” of that old serpent, Satan the devil—and slaves through being deceived into believing that humanity has freewill and is therefore “free.”

The Passover liberation of outwardly circumcised Israel in the days of Moses [the son of *no-name*] forms the non-symmetrical left hand mirror image of the right hand Second Passover liberation of spiritual Israel in the days of the two witnesses who shall be two brothers as Moses and Aaron were brothers, with Moses' life being historically presented in Scripture as a squared thought-couplet in Hebraic poetry—and with this squared thought-couplet forming the physical portion of a cubed thought-couplet representing the elder of the two witnesses [in the Affliction] and Christ Jesus as the Lamb of God [in the Endurance].

Paul wrote,

You yourselves are our letter of recommendation, written on our hearts, to be known and read by all. And you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. (2 Cor 3:2–3)

If the lives of holy ones are figuratively epistles written in the Book of Life, not with ink on parchment or vellum but with spirit on the hearts of the Elect, then these “epistles” are written in structured thought-couplet verse, with a physical presentation [the before-conversion life lived] and with a spiritual presentation [the life-lived after being born of spirit], with the physical life lived for all to see revealing the invisible spiritual life of the inner self of the disciple. Hence, when a person is truly born of spirit, the person will outwardly live as an uncircumcised Judean, keeping the Commandments, eating clean meats [the manifestation of love for God through desiring to be holy as God is holy — Lev 11:45], with outwardly manifesting love for neighbor and brother whenever the opportunity arises.

When the world saw sub-Saharan famine victims on nightly news casts in the 1980s, then again in the first decade of this century, the hearts of some Christians were moved to feed the hungry, doing for, say, an Ethiopian, what the person would do for Christ Jesus. But the hearts of too many Christians blamed the victims for their hunger, blaming famine on African independence and the political leaders that had come to power in nations too politically immature to have freedom, probably an argument used in the antebellum South, certainly a perversion of what the author of Matthew's Jesus tells His disciples.

What was it, again, that Paul said about presenting oneself as a living sacrifice? *Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.* Is it the will of God that any person perish spiritually? No. Is it the will of God that any person perish physically? This question is a little more difficult to answer, but again, the answer is, No!

Yes, the days of man are numbered. The fleshly body will not live forever. It is not designed to live forever. But it should be capable of living a thousand years, ten times longer than it presently does ... the life of a human person is but a tithe of the life that could have been lived if the Lord hadn't regretted making man because of his wickedness, *the thoughts of man's heart being only evil continually* (Gen 6:5).

And [YHWH] regretted that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him to His heart. So [YHWH] said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them." (Gen 6:6–7)

When the physical reveals the spiritual through chirality, the polarized light needed to see chiral images equating to the light that is God, the physical lifespan of man—a tithe of lifespans before the Flood and of lifespans after the Second Advent—forms the mirage image of sons of God: a tithe of humanity will be gathered to God as sons. ... As a human person in this era doesn't get to live ninety percent of his or her potential lifespan, God doesn't get to gather to Himself ninety percent of His potential sons. Why? Because the wickedness of humanity is great; because even when given the opportunity, the vast majority of humanity has not and will not believe God.

Paul wrote,

I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith." For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For *what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For His invisible attributes, namely, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.* Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. (Rom 1:15–25 emphasis added)

Who, now, has an excuse for his or her wickedness?

It could be argued that all of humanity has an excuse:

For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. And *since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done.* They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them. (Rom 1:26–32 emphasis added)

Which came first, the wickedness of the person or the debased mind of the person ... was a person not humanly born consigned to disobedience (again Rom 11:32) as a son of disobedience (Eph 2:2–3)? When did this person have the opportunity given to his or her antediluvian ancestors to know God? For the Flood came about from God "baptizing" the world into death for the repentance of its wickedness, with the sons of Noah all being sons of righteousness.



Yes, the Flood of Noah's day corresponds to the baptism of John, with water and for repentance. As such, the Flood forms the chiral image of Christ Jesus baptizing the world in spirit and into life.

But would revelation that only a tithe of humanity will be saved have sent Paul to Jerusalem to verify that the gospel he proclaimed was indeed on course. Perhaps.

Paul wrote,

For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles—assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for you, how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. *When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the spirit. **This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.*** Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace, which was given me by the working of His power. (Eph 3:1–7 emphasis and double emphasis added)

God gave to Paul revelation so that he would understand the mystery of God, this mystery being that all of humanity has been consigned to disobedience [sin] so that God can have mercy on all (Rom 11:32) — and if all of humanity has been consigned to disobedience but not called by God in this era, then God has established a demonstration in which humanity functions as serfs on a global farm leased to the Adversary until an acceptable year of jubilee. This global farm is His, and He will take control of what He owns when the Adversary has had sufficient opportunity to “prove” that his self-rule farming practices work or don't work ...

They don't work. The history of humanity has been that of war and rumors of war, brutality against the weak, exploitation of the poor, and blasphemy against God. Still, humanity has not yet destroyed itself.

In what Paul claimed—his gospel—God has made no distinction between Gentile and Israel: whoever lives by the Commandments, having love for God, neighbor, and brother, thereby hearing the words of Jesus and believing the One who sent Him into this world, shall be saved (John 5:24). This would seem to indicate that all of humanity will be saved. But in John's Gospel, Jesus tells Jews seeking His life:

Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear His voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment. (John 5:28–29)

All of humanity will not be saved. Most of humanity will not be saved, with Jesus using the following parable:

“The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son, and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come. Again he sent other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, “See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast.”’ But they paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.’ And those servants went out into the roads and

gathered all whom they found, both bad and good. So the wedding hall was filled with guests. But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment. And he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' For *many are called, but few are chosen.*" (Matt 22:1–14 emphasis added)

So was it revelation that despite the good work Paul was doing in proclaiming the Gospel to Gentiles, few would believe and thereby be saved that caused Paul to hurry to Jerusalem? Remember, the Pastoral Epistles that claim to be written by Paul were not: it was known in the 2<sup>nd</sup>-Century that these epistles were spurious, but they served a purpose; they were useful, so they were retained. They kept women silent in services, and they established the basis for ecclesiastical authority, thereby dividing fellowships into a subservient laity and an authoritarian bishopric. But they were written after the fellowships Paul established had fallen apart. Paul didn't know that all in Asia had turned away from him when he was no longer around.

What sort of epistles would Paul have written to a fellowship that turned away from him? Ones like the one he wrote to the Galatians? Yes, and probably stronger. He wouldn't have changed his narrative *voice*, his syntax, his grammar, and written as a limp-wristed Christian pastor to those who were doing the Body of Christ serious harm.

But still, is this the revelation that sent Paul to Jerusalem?

For now, let us assume that it was, which means that baptism by water becomes a much more complicated sacrament of Christendom than it has previously been represented.

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There will be at least one more Sabbath Reading concerning baptism.

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