

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 *the new covenant*.

## **Weekly Readings For the Sabbath of January 05, 2008**

*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.*

*The person conducting the services should read or assign to be read Hebrews chapter 8, verses 8 through 13; followed by Jeremiah chapter 31, verses 31 through 34.*

**Commentary:** Christendom has used the icon phrase */the new covenant/* in a very imprecise manner for far too long.

What is the new covenant? Where can it be found in Scripture if not in the two passages read? What are its terms, its contractual promises and obligations if not those in the two passages?

Calvary abolished the separation of *the nations*, called “the uncircumcised” by circumcised Israel, from the covenants of promise (Eph 2:11-12) contained in the *Law of Moses*. Calvary did not end these covenants of promise, for *the nations* have been brought near to these promises by the blood of Jesus (v. 13). And if these covenants of promise were not abolished, then whatever the *Law of Moses* is has also not been abolished, a controversial claim supported by Israel, now a nation circumcised of heart (Rom 2:28-29; Col 2:11), still being the holy nation of God (1 Pet 2:9).

What Calvary abolished was “the dividing wall of hostility” (Eph 2:14), and this wall of hostility was broken down “by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances” (v 15) ... the assumption has been that this *law of commandments and ordinances* is the *Law of Moses*, but where in the *law of Moses* is circumcision mentioned? Jesus told Pharisees, “If on the Sabbath a man receives circumcision, so that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with me because on the Sabbath I made a man's whole body well” (John 7:23). So in Jesus' use of language, circumcision is part of the *Law of Moses*.

If circumcision is part of the *Law of Moses*, then all of the *Torah*—the five books of Scripture attributed to Moses—constitutes the *Law of Moses*, for circumcision was given to Abraham as the sign of the covenant by which Abraham would walk upright and be blameless before God (Gen 17:1–2). Circumcision was certainly not a part of the Sinai covenant, nor was it part of the additional covenant (or second covenant) made on the plains of Moab (Deut 29:1). And in Genesis and throughout the *Torah* are covenants of promise, one of which is that God Almighty [*El Shaddai*] would make, first, of the

patriarch Abraham a great nation so that Abraham would be a blessing to all families of the earth. The Apostle Paul identifies this blessing as Christ Jesus: “[S]o that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith” (Gal 3:14). Paul adds, “Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, ‘And to offsprings,’ referring to many, but referring to one, ‘And to your offspring,’ who is Christ” (v. 16).

Unfortunately, translation of /καὶ τῷ σπέρματι/ into English with “offspring” instead of “the seed” being assigned to represent /σπέρματι/ produces a linguistic problem, for *offspring* includes all offspring from a person. The distinction in Greek between the singular *seed* and the plural *seeds* is readily apparent to all readers. And whereas the point Paul sought to make was that the blessing of salvation would come through one, Christ Jesus, not through many—that salvation was the greatest promise made by covenant—translation into English tends to obscure Paul’s additional point: the faith of Abraham required that, then, Abram go from his house and from his kindred and from his father’s house to the land that God Almighty would show him (Gen 12:1); required that Abram undertake a journey of faith, that Abram complete the journey which Terah, Abram’s father, undertook when they left Ur of the Chaldeans to go to the land of Canaan.

- Terah had three sons in Ur of the Chaldeans: Abram, Nahor, and Haran, with Abram apparently being his firstborn.
- Ur of the Chaldeans represents Babylon. Although the exact location of Ur will be debated, its symbolic representation should not be debated: Ur is a type and shadow of spiritual Babylon, over which the prince of this world reigns as king of Babylon (Isa 14:4).
- Nebuchadnezzar’s Babylon was a type and shadow of spiritual Babylon as King Nebuchadnezzar was a type of the prince of this world.
- Spiritual Babylon is a euphemistic expression for the mental typography of disobedience to which God consigned all of humankind (Rom 11:32) following Adam’s sin. As such, Babylon represents all of the kingdoms of this world, or the single kingdom of this world (Rev 11:15)

Grasping the concept of physical geography representing mental typography is central to understanding holiness, righteousness, and the new covenant. **The essence of speaking all things into existence is that the intangible things of God have been revealed through the things that have been made** (Rom 1:20). Words formed by the modulations of breath become objects possessing mass when that “breath” [πνεῦμα] is the divine Breath of God, the Holy Spirit [πνεῦμα ἅγιον]. Thoughts, now, sprout and grow from a mental landscape that is analogous to a geographical landscape of this earth. Thoughts become like weeds or wheat, and these thoughts form the inside of the earthenware vessel that is every person. When the inside of the cup (i.e., the earthenware vessel) is clean, then the entire vessel is clean. Salvation comes to the inside of the cup when a disciple is born of Spirit: the cup has been given everlasting life to hold as the earnest of eternal life, which will have the cup itself transformed from living clay to living spirit.

On his homeward voyage, Odysseus [of Homer’s *Odyssey*] was given a bag full of wind [πνεῦμα], which, unfortunately, his men opened when home was in sight. What kind of a bag would hold “wind”? A balloon? A rigid bag analogous to the tank of an air compressor? Some people have been called windbags. And it is here where the 5<sup>th</sup>-

Century CE assignment of personhood to the divine Breath of God has prevented *Christians* from being able to understand the figurative language that Jesus spoke during His ministry, not that many understood this figurative language earlier.

Paul wrote to Timothy “that all who are in Asia turned away from me” (2 Tim 1:15), and to the saints at Philippi, Paul wrote, “For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things” (3:18-19). So with Jews and Jewish converts trying to kill him, and with the saints in Achaia [Greece] questioning whether he was of God, and with the saints of Asia having left him, there could not have been many in the 1<sup>st</sup>-Century who understood Paul’s explications of the figurative language Jesus used, with Paul’s explications coming from direct revelation occurring outside of the narrative of Scripture.

Abram, when told to leave Haran, then the land of his father Terah, got up and went, obeying by faith, with this obedience fulfilling his obligation under the covenant by which God would make him a blessing to all families of the earth. In Paul’s memorable analogy of circumcised Israel being represented by Ishmael (Gal chap 4) and the covenant made at Sinai being represented by Hagar—with present day Jerusalem also corresponding to Hagar—the Christian Church is represented by Isaac, which places Jesus in the position of Abraham. Thus, Abraham becomes a type of Christ Jesus in the same way that Adam was a type of Christ Jesus (Rom 5:14; 1 Co 15:45).

Abraham’s offspring are Christians, all having come from one seed, the man Jesus. But it is not all of Abraham’s physical offspring that are his offspring (Rom 9:7), but only the ones who have undertaken a journey of faith that is spiritually equivalent to Abraham’s physical journey from Ur of the Chaldeans to Canaan, with the last leg of this journey (from Haran to Canaan) being made entirely by faith.

Before proceeding, pedagogical review is necessary: the visible things that have been made by the uttered Breath of God reveal the invisible things of God in the way that human words, spoken or inscribed, reveal the thoughts of the person’s mind, thoughts that another person would not otherwise be able to see or hear. Thus, the things that have been made reveal the invisible attributes of God (Rom 1:20)—and this is the basis for typological exegesis, or taking meaning from Scripture through typology.

Scripture is about the geographical lands of pre-Flood Eden, with Assyria in the North, Babylon in the East, and Egypt in the South and West. The land of Canaan lies at the center of a landmass composed of Assyria, Babylon, and Egypt. And present day Jerusalem serves as the heart of endtime Canaan.

Abraham’s journey was anciently from today’s eastern Iraq, westward and northward into Syria, then southward into the State of Israel. If Abraham had stopped and stayed at Shechem (Gen 12:6-7), near where Jerusalem is, every disciple’s journey of faith would be a simple undertaking: leave Babylon, which is the kingdom of this world, and mentally journey into keeping the commandments of God, with Sabbath observance representing the geography of Canaan and the disciple’s old nature or old self representing Abraham’s father Terah. This will have the land of Assyria or Haran representing death. But Abraham did not stay in Shechem. He continued down to Egypt, where his lie [his half-truth that Sarai was his sister] brought him great prosperity when the Pharaoh took Sarai as his wife.

Christendom did not stay in heavenly Jerusalem, the city of God, when disciples undertook 1<sup>st</sup>-Century CE journeys of faith equivalent to Abraham’s physical journey.

Rather, these disciples continued past the heavenly city, the mother of spiritual Isaac (Gal 4:26), and entered sin [Egypt] where Christianity greatly prospered as Abraham prospered in Egypt. And Christendom's lie is apparent for all to see, angels and men, in Christendom's transgression of the Sabbath commandment.

Yes, Christendom, with only minor dissenting voices within the ideological monolith, teaches disciples to keep the first day of the week as Jews kept the Sabbath. In doing so, Christendom teaches a half-truth that functions to keep disciples within the theological domain of spiritual Babylon as Abram's half-truth kept him in Egypt.

- Egypt represents sin or lawlessness in a manner analogous to Babylon representing the single kingdom of this world and Assyria representing death.
- The liberation of Israel from sin is foreshadowed by *YHWH* afflicting Pharaoh and his house with great plagues until Pharaoh expelled Abram from Egypt (Gen 12:17-20).
- Thus, the ten plagues of Moses equate to the plagues *YHWH* sent against Pharaoh when he held Sarai as his wife, with the tenth plague being the Passover slaughter of firstborns not covered by the blood of a lamb.

Christendom in the 1<sup>st</sup>-Century did not stop where Paul laid the foundation for the spiritual house of God (1 Co 3:10-11), but left Paul and virtually ran down to spiritual Egypt and into sin, where the prince of this world caused these rebels to prosper greatly.

Abram did not voluntarily leave Egypt. Israel, centuries later, did not voluntarily leave Egypt. And it can be assumed that Abram prayed for Sarai's release and return to him with every bit as much fervor as Israel prayed for liberation from bondage to Pharaoh ... unfortunately, Christendom does not pray for release from bondage to indwelling sin and death, but believes that it has been liberated from sin. In a figurative sense, Christendom has made a covenant with death and has taken refuge in lies (Isa 28:15) that are half-truths designed to deceive newly born of Spirit sons of God, spiritual infants that have been made to pass through fire as ancient Israel passed its firstborns through fire, offering them as sacrifices to no-gods as if God Almighty desired the aroma of burning human flesh.

Because of Israel's rebellion, *YHWH* says through the prophet Ezekiel,

Then I said I would pour out my wrath upon them [the children of the nation that left Egypt] and spend my anger against them in the wilderness. But I withheld my hand and acted for the sake of my name, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations, in whose sight I had brought them out. Moreover, I swore to them in the wilderness that I would scatter them among the nations and disperse them through the countries because they had not obeyed my rules, but had rejected my statutes and profaned my Sabbaths, and their eyes were set on their fathers' idols. Moreover, *I gave them statutes that were not good and rules by which they could not have life, and I defiled them through their very gifts in their offering up all their firstborn, that I might devastate them. I did it that they might know that I am the Lord [YHWH].* (20:21-26 emphasis added)

While the children of Israel were still in the wilderness, Moses commands them, "When you come into the land that the Lord your God is giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominable practices of those nations. There shall not be found among you anyone who burns his son or his daughter as an offering [literally, *makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire*]" (Deut 18:9-10). So Ezekiel's recording of God giving to

Israel statutes and rules that caused Israel to offer their firstborn as sacrifices steps around a long history of Israel rejecting God's statutes and profaning His Sabbaths—it is from the perspective of this long-term rebellion that Ezekiel adds,

Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord God: Will you defile yourselves after the manner of your father and go whoring after their detestable things? When you present your gifts and off up your children in fire, you defile yourselves with all your idols to this day. And shall I be inquired of by you, O house of Israel? As I live, declares the Lord God, I will not be inquired of by you. (20:30-31)

When Ezekiel addresses the “elders of Israel” that came “to inquire of the Lord” (Ezek 20:1), Israel had already been delivered into the hand of King Nebuchadnezzar. God Almighty had brought upon Israel much of the cursing promised for disobedience: “And the Lord will bring you back in ships to Egypt, a journey that I promised that you should never make again, and there you shall offer yourselves for sale to your enemies as male and female slaves, but there will be no buyer” (Deut 28:68). Even though Babylon would make war against Egypt and would prevail, from the perspective of Scripture, Babylon and Egypt are used as synonymous representations for being made captives of the prince of this world, with the movement in terminology from *Egypt* to *Babylon* coming from the conjoined law of sin and death into which God delivers Israel after Israel entered into His rest.

- Paul wrote, “Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses” (Rom 5:14), so Israel in Egypt was under the dominion of death.
- Regardless of where Israel would have dwelt before Moses, Israel would have been under the dominion of death.
- Thus, Egypt as the representation of sin [disobedience] was all that had spiritual significance.
- But the promise of life comes by way of the second covenant (Deut 30:15-20) if Israel, when exiled in a far land, will by faith turn to God and begin to love Him with heart and mind, keeping His commandments and statutes (*vv.* 1-2) and all that is written in Deuteronomy (*v.* 10).

When God delivers Israel into the hand of King Nebuchadnezzar, He delivers Israel into the conjoined hand of sin [Egypt] and death [Assyria], for life had come to Israel in the form of the second covenant, the covenant made with Israel on the plains of Moab (Deut 29:1). The journey of faith that every Israelite must make since God delivered Israel into the hand of the Chaldeans is from Babylon back to the plains of Moab, where the Israelite will choose life or death, with the choice of life requiring that the Israelite live by all that is written in Deuteronomy. Thus, as Abraham journeyed from Ur of the Chaldeans [conjoined sin and death] to Haran [death] then on to Canaan and down to Egypt [sin] before returning to Canaan (where he again got himself in trouble in the manner of Abimelech), Israel physically left Egypt and entered the Promised Land but never spiritually left Egypt; so God delivered Israel into the hand of Babylon, from which only a remnant returned to Jerusalem where this remnant returned to sin, with its lawlessness outwardly concealed by a veil of tradition.

Present day Jerusalem came to represent sin as Hagar represents Egypt because whenever in present day Jerusalem, Israel committed sin but tried to conceal its lawlessness through an outward display of religious piety. This is the point behind Paul's juxtaposition of Abraham fathering two sons, one by a slave woman and one by a free

woman (Gal 4:22). Circumcised Israel in present day Jerusalem was never free to keep the commandments of God, nor was Israel in Jerusalem covered (i.e., its sins covered) by being in bondage to either an Egyptian Pharaoh or to human kings of Babylon. It was only covered by its obedience to God, and its track record of obedience was dismal at best.

Note: the Passover exodus of Israel from Egypt was liberation from physical bondage to Pharaoh, but this Passover exodus did not cause Israel to spiritually abandon its worship of Egyptian gods and idols. When the elders of Israel called upon Ezekiel to ask the prophet to inquire of God for them, God tells Ezekiel to say to the elders,

Let them know the abominations of their fathers, and say to them, Thus says the Lord God: On the day when I chose Israel, I swore to the offspring of the house of Jacob, making myself known to them in the land of Egypt. I swore to them, saying, I am the Lord [YHWH] your God [*Elohim*]. *On that day* I swore to them that I would bring them out of the land of Egypt into a land that I had searched out for them, a land flowing with milk and honey, the most glorious of all lands. And I said to them, Cast away the detestable things your eyes feast on, every one of you, and do not defile yourselves with the idols of Egypt; I am the Lord your God. But they rebelled against me and were not willing to listen to me. None of them cast away the detestable things their eyes feasted on, nor did they forsake the idols of Egypt. (20:4-8a emphasis added)

Then I said I would pour out my wrath upon them and spend my anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt. (20:8b)

Israel rebelled against God while the nation was still in Egypt, and God was ready to destroy the nation in Egypt but did not for the sake of His name. On a specific day when Israel was yet in Egypt, God made Himself known to Israel and made a covenant with the nation to bring it out from bondage and into the most glorious of lands. And it is failure to comprehend the nature of this covenant that has hindered endtime Israel, a nation of circumcised hearts, from coming humbly before God, eager to obey every word that proceeds from His mouth, the crux of Jesus' rebuttal to Satan's twisting of Scripture (Matt 4:4).

Understanding holiness, righteousness, and the new covenant begins with eagerly seeking to live by every word uttered by God, with these words forming even the material tent of flesh in which the born of Spirit son of God now temporarily dwells. Understanding does not come from wading through impenetrable theological dissertations, and hacking away obscure constructs on which rest many words, each a mosquito carrying malaria. Rather, understanding comes from hearing the voice of Christ Jesus, with His voice inscribed in Scripture as they are imbedded in the things that have been made when He spoke the world into existence.

The new covenant supersedes the covenant made on the day when God took Israel by the hand to lead this nation of rebels out from Egypt. But because Israel would not cease worshipping the idols of Egypt when in Egypt, nor when in the wilderness, the nation that left Egypt was condemned to death in the wilderness. This nation, with the exception of Joshua and Caleb, did not enter into God's rest but perished in disbelief as the shadow and copy of the spiritually circumcised nation perishing in disbelief in the Tribulation.

The covenant God made with Israel when that nation was in Egypt is the Passover covenant, not the Sinai covenant, or the second covenant, the Moab covenant. And as a covenant made in the flesh begins with the shedding of blood—a covenant is the

distance between cuttings, the distance between when blood is first shed to ratify an agreement until blood is again shed to end an agreement—this covenant made in the flesh only ends when blood is shed as lives are again given for the ransom of Israel in a manner foreshadowed by the lives of Egyptians given in the days of Moses (Isa 43:3-4).

The Passover covenant remains in effect: the sacraments of bread and wine have replaced the body and blood of a sacrificed lamb as spiritual circumcision has replaced physical circumcision. But this time when Israel leaves sin, the journey will be by faith, for there will be no visible Moses to follow, only the Moses inscribed in the *Torah*.

The Apostle John records Jesus telling the Pharisees, “If you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?” (5:46-47). And the answer is that Pharisees of all sorts do not believe Jesus’ words ... the ones who seek to purify themselves either through works without faith or by faith alone defile themselves by their unbelief; for faith is only manifest when it causes a disciple to make a mental journey to heavenly Jerusalem.

\*

*The person conducting the Sabbath service should close services with two hymns, or psalms, followed by a prayer asking God’s dismissal.*

\* \* \* \* \*

"Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved."

[ [Home](#) ] [ [Sabbath Readings](#) ]