

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 17, 2015

[Continued from January 10th]

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.

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)

4.

Baptism in Christ isn't about getting wet, but about escaping otherwise certain death. And this bring us to the Elect, the already processed fruit of the Promised Land, the exception to what happens to greater Christendom as Moses was an exception, with Moses entering into God's rest (Ex 34:14) without crossing the Jordan and physically entering into the Promised Land of God's rest.

About the elect of natural Israel, Paul wrote,

I ask, then, has God rejected His people? By no means! For I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. *God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew.* Do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he appeals to God against Israel? "Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have demolished your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life." But what is God's

reply to him? "I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal." So too at the present time *there is a remnant, chosen by grace*. But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace. What then? *Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking. The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened*, as it is written, "God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that would not see and ears that would not hear, down to this very day." And David says, "Let their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution for them; let their eyes be darkened so that they cannot see, and bend their backs forever." So I ask, did they stumble in order that they might fall? By no means! Rather *through their trespass salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as to make Israel jealous*. Now if *their trespass means riches for the world*, and if *their failure means riches for the Gentiles*, how much more will their full inclusion mean! Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry in order somehow to make my fellow Jews jealous, and thus save some of them. (Rom 11:1–14 emphasis and double emphasis added)

The first thing to note is Paul writing, *His people whom He foreknew* ... the concept of being *foreknown* has been under appreciated within greater Christendom: is everyone *foreknown* to God? Is everyone as Israel was—actually, as the descendants of the children of Israel that followed Joshua [in Greek, *'Iesou — Jesus*] across the Jordan and into the Promised Land were, people whom God *foreknew*? Paul clearly says that Gentiles differ from Israel in that they were not *foreknown* by God.

And of those whom God *foreknew*, most did not obtain the promise ... the *elect* obtained the promise while the hearts of the rest of Israel were hardened.

God hardened the heart of Pharaoh so that Pharaoh could serve as a chiral image of the Adversary; so that Pharaoh would not let the people of Israel go until he and Egypt were destroyed ... were the hearts of Israel hardened so that salvation could come to Gentiles? That seems to be what Paul wrote, but when did this hardening come and what is the root of this hardening? Before addressing the questions, we need to see the *elect*.

How did the elect of natural Israel become the remnant saved by grace? Was it not through hearing the voice, the words of Christ Jesus, and believing the One who sent Christ into this world in a manner similar to how Abraham heard the voice, the words of the Lord about his heir coming from his loins, words he believed and then had his belief counted to him as righteousness? Indeed, it was.

What did Jesus in John's Gospel tell Jews seeking His life: "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes Him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life" (John 5:24).

Whoever hears Jesus' word, His logos (from John 12:48) — as the Logos [*o Logos*] of the God [*ton Theon*] was God [*Theos*] and was with [*pros*] the God [*ton Theon*] in primacy [*arche*] (John 1:1) before He entered His creation (*v.* 3) as His unique Son (John 3:16), the man Jesus the Nazarene (John 1:14), the man Jesus left with His disciples His logos, His word, that was the words He spoke in this world. And He spoke only the Father's words, thereby being the Spokesperson for the Father, what He was before He divested Himself of His divinity and entered His creation. So the word of Jesus that He left with His disciples is the words of the Father who told Jesus what to say.

Whoever believes in me, believes not in me but in Him who sent me. And whoever sees me sees Him who sent me. I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness. If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word [*o logos*] that I have spoken will judge him on the last day. For *I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to speak.* And I know that His commandment is eternal life. *What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me.*" (John 12:44–50 emphasis added)

Note the downward transference of authority:

Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of His own accord, but only what He sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise. For the Father loves the Son and shows Him all that He Himself is doing. And greater works than these will he show Him, so that you may marvel. For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom He will. *The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son,* that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. (John 5:19–23)

The Father judges no one but has given all judgment to the Son, who likewise judges no one but has given all judgment to His word that He left with His disciples:

On the evening of that day, the first day [after the Sabbath], the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. *As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.*" And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ***If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.***" (John 20:19–23 emphasis and double emphasis added)

Note the chirality: as the Father sent Jesus, Jesus sends His disciples. As the Father gave all judgment to the Logos of Him, the man Jesus, Jesus gives all judgment to the logos of Him, the words He spoke to His disciples. Therefore, if His disciples forgive the sins of any, these sins are forgiven ... Jesus will not countermand the decision of His disciples; for His disciples have indwelling eternal life through the indwelling of the spirit of Christ [*pneuma Christou*] in them. And with the spirit of Christ in their spirits, they become the personification of Christ Jesus in this world as Jesus was, in this world, the personification of God the Father. Therefore, by extension, disciples genuinely born of spirit are likewise the personification of God, with the power of God to forgive sins, or to withhold forgiveness.

A problem emerges: who is and who isn't genuinely born of spirit and as such the personification of Christ Jesus ... who isn't is readily determined: the person who doesn't strive to walk in this world as Jesus walked is not born of spirit. This doesn't mean that the person perfectly walks as Jesus walked, but that the person does not practice sin; does not practice transgressing the Commandments, a subject to which we will return.

The natural descendants of the patriarchs—like Christians in greater Christendom today—stumbled over the Rock that was Christ. And yes, Christians in greater Christendom have stumbled over Christ: both they and second temple Israel permitted

their teachers, their priests to trap and snare them so that they may be broken and fall backwards (Isa 28:13). And how were; how are they broken? Through line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little, there a little exegesis—that's how they were/are broken.

Words are signs, a point that Augustine understood. And while ignorant people will say that words have meaning—whether you call a jihadist an Islamic terrorist, or a Muslim freedom fighter matters—words do not come with little backpacks that carry the meaning of the word. Rather, the reader, the auditor, assigns meaning to the word, with the assignment of meaning coming through a combination of the auditor's reading community and the context in which the word as a sign exists.

A word taken out of its context has no meaning, with the example I most often use being the word <*malix*> ... a more well-known example is <*quiz*>, a word placed in the English lexicon in one day as the result of a bet made between two Englishmen.

Rather than keeping words as signs in their context, second temple Israelites constructed fences around signs giving to them a context of Israel's own making, adding rules and regulations that caused Israel to worship God through the works of washed hands but unwashed hearts. And in an opposing manner, greater Christendom took signs (the words of Scripture) away from Moses and gave them to Greek philosophers where they were spun into a tapestry of lawlessness.

Christians today wash neither hands nor hearts, but pretend they are Gentiles, living as Gentiles live, eating as Gentiles eat, marrying and divorcing as Gentiles marry and divorce, even voting in national elections as Gentiles vote, thereby supporting one servant of the Adversary over another servant or over other servants of the Adversary as if putting a more pious or a more conservative servant of the Adversary into a political office will solve the problems of secular governance.

Are pious Christians known for their political resolve? Or put another way, do you send out a sheep to fend off coyotes in defending a flock, or do you send out a Great Pyrenees, or perhaps a llama?

In America, Republicans in the election of 2014 gained political control of both the House and the Senate and the governorship of thirty-one states. However, so far the Republican leadership has been timid, apparently from not wanting to confront political correctness and fearing being called killers of old women and children, fearing being called racists, homophobes, Islamophobes. It seems that debating ideas has vanished from the public arena, replaced by *ad hominem* attacks—Christian political candidates deemphasize their Christianity and, if elected to a public office, become just like every other servant of the Adversary, toeing the party line as if they were Democrats or Republicans rather than Christians. And this cannot be helped; for the Adversary is the still-reigning prince of this world; is still the prince of the power of the air (Eph 2:2–3). He broadcasts his mindset into all human persons not truly born of spirit through the indwelling of Christ ...

This indwelling of Christ will cause the Christian to want to keep the Commandments and thereby walk in this world as Jesus walked ... this person would not and will not run for a public office, nor be elected if his or her name were to appear on a ballot. The Adversary will simply not permit a son of God into his administration of this world.

- The elect of natural Israel that Paul introduces will be saved by grace; by the righteousness of Christ Jesus, put on as a garment.
- The Elect of Christ Jesus are already saved through the indwelling of Christ Jesus, His spirit [*pneuma Christou*] in the spirit of the person [*to pneuma tou 'anthropou*].

The elect of natural Israel were the *elect* of the 1st-Century CE; the Elect of Christ Jesus are the *Elect* of the 21st-Century. These two *elects/Elects* form chiral images of each other; non-symmetrical mirror images. Thus, in the natural *elect* of the 1st-Century, the spiritual *Elect* of the 21st-Century can see itself. And the natural *elect* of the 1st-Century was baptized in water, John's baptism, but not baptized in spirit even through this *elect* received the spirit of God in the spirit of Christ.

In the 1st-Century, John's baptism in water preceded the baptized person receiving the spirit of God ... in the 21st-Century mirror image, the disciple receives the indwelling spirit of God in the spirit of Christ before being baptized in spirit at the Second Passover liberation of Israel from indwelling sin and death. And where in this mirror image is baptism by water, John's baptism? There is no place for the symbolic death of the old self when the disciple who hears Jesus' words and believes the One who sent Jesus into this world has already passed from death to life without coming under judgment (again, John 5:24).

Returning to the natural *elect*: what else can be known about this *elect*? For certain, all kept the commandments for all were observant Jews, as Paul was an observant Jew, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. All came under the rubric of what Paul identified as the *righteousness based on faith*, this righteousness described in Deuteronomy 30:1–10, particularly in verses 1 & 2. For what does Moses say about this righteousness based on faith?

For this commandment that I command you today is not too hard for you, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will ascend to heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' But the word is very near you. It is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it. See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil. If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God that I command you today, by loving the Lord your God, by walking in His ways, and by keeping His commandments and His statutes and His rules, then you shall live and multiply, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. (Deut 30:11–16)

There is in what Moses tells the children of Israel assembled on the plains of Moab an advance in the narrative of history: the children of Israel, unlike previous peoples and nations after Adam and Eve were driven from the Garden, could choose *life and good, death and evil* ... these children of Israel were not consigned to disobedience and thereby humanly born as serfs of the Adversary. These children of Israel had been baptized into Moses—

Paul wrote, “Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come” (Rom 5:14).

Death did not reign over all of humanity beyond Moses, the reality of Israel having been baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the water (from 1 Cor 10:1–2). Death

reigned over *all except those baptized into Moses*, the one who entered into the presence of the Lord atop Mount Sinai. Death reigned over all except those God *foreknew*.

In being baptized into Moses, Israel was liberated from slavery to sin. For the first time since Adam, a person had freewill and could choose between *life and good, death and evil*

But what did the children of Israel do with their liberation?

And I said to their children in the wilderness, Do not walk in the statutes of your fathers, nor keep their rules, nor defile yourselves with their idols. I am the Lord your God; *walk in my statutes, and be careful to obey my rules, and keep my Sabbaths holy that they may be a sign between me and you, that you may know that I am the Lord your God. But **the children rebelled against me**. They did not walk in my statutes and were not careful to obey my rules, by which, if a person does them, he shall live; they profaned my Sabbaths. Then I said I would pour out my wrath upon them 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. (Ex 20:18–26 emphasis and double emphasis added)

Where does the Lord swear to the children of Israel that He would scatter them? Read Deuteronomy 29:10–29. The passage is too long for an in-text citation. And then reread chapter 30, verses 1 & 2.

The Moab covenant was made with the children of Israel, a covenant that was in addition to the Second Sinai Covenant (Ex chap 34) — the first Sinai Covenant was ratified by blood (Ex 24;5–8) and ended with the shedding of blood by both covenantee and Covenanter:

Moses stood in the gate of the camp and said, "Who is on the Lord's side? Come to me." And all the sons of Levi gathered around him. And he said to them, "Thus says the Lord God of Israel, 'Put your sword on your side each of you, and go to and fro from gate to gate throughout the camp, and each of you kill his brother and his companion and his neighbor.'" And the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses. And that day about three thousand men of the people fell. ... The Lord sent a plague on the people, because they made the calf, the one that Aaron made. (Ex 32:26–28, 35)

The Second Sinai Covenant was ratified by Moses entering into the presence of the Lord, and the glow that shone from his face thereafter. The Moab Covenant was ratified by a song (Deut chap 32). Thus both were ratified by better sacrifices than the shedding of blood. Both are therefore heavenly covenants:

Under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. Thus *it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these*. (Heb 9:22–23 emphasis added)

The first Sinai Covenant was a copy of a heavenly thing, the Second Sinai Covenant, as the first Passover liberation was a copy of the Second Passover liberation of Israel. However, the Moab covenant as a heavenly thing mediated by Moses is a copy of the

New Covenant mediated by Christ Jesus, with Moses [by name, the *son of no-name*] forming the non-symmetrical chiral image of Christ Jesus.

Freewill is not free: Moses entered into the presence of the Lord to obtain it for Israel and for the children of Israel, with Israel having been baptized into Moses before Moses entered the cloud and into the presence of the Lord ... Moses figuratively brought the cloud down to the ground through the glory that shone from his face, which is how Israel could be baptized in the cloud that was always visibly above Israel.

Today, this message will be stored in *the cloud*, an equivocation Greeks would have loved and that perhaps amuses the glorified Christ.

The children of Israel used their freewill to rebel again the Lord ... so why give to any human person true freewill if even the Children of Israel used it to serve sin, which leads to death? Why not remove freewill from the table of mindsets until Israel is filled with spirit and thereby liberated from indwelling sin and death? Why not give to the children of Israel *statutes that were not good and rules by which the children of Israel could not have life?*

In the Lord giving to the children of Israel *rules by which they could not have life*, the Lord took back from Israel the freewill that He had given to the nation.

Paul wrote,

So 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)

To the Jew first and also to the Greek, what could be known about God was shown to them so they were/are without excuse when they exchanged/exchange the glory of God for images resembling things that have been created. Therefore, as the Lord gave to the children of Israel statutes that were not good and rules by which they could not have life, God gave to all peoples debased minds so that people could not have indwelling spiritual life:

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)

In the Lord giving to the children of Israel rules by which they could not have life, the Lord took freewill from the children of Israel because they rebelled against the Lord when they had the chance to serve obedience that leads to righteousness. Likewise, if humanity knew God but did not honor Him as God, worshiping instead sticks and stones resembling created creatures, which resulted in God giving to humanity debased minds that now cannot worship God, then God has taken from humanity whatever freewill humankind had.

Moving from theoretical to applicable, the person who feels sexually attracted to someone like him or herself will argue that he or she was born with the sexual orientation the person has—and this might well be true. Nevertheless, the person has a debased mind, not necessarily from anything the person did or from anything that happened to the person, but from God giving idolaters debased minds that would be epigenetically inherited through the father and/or through the mother, generation after generation. Thus, this person, if desiring to submit to God, must more than figuratively kill the old self with its epigenetic markers; this person must become a new person from the inside out, with (what usually occurs in such a case) the person becoming a voluntary eunuch for Christ.

The flesh is extremely reluctant to change sexual orientation once the person consciously determines his or her inner gender. Baptism in water for the death of the old self only causes the outer self to get wet. When the person is raised from the baptismal pool, regardless of how much the person wants to change and begin a new life, the person will revert back to what seems *natural* and right, not that what seems *natural* is right before God, who caused the person to inherit a debased mind.

If this person is drawn from this world by the Father and delivered to Christ Jesus, neither the Father nor Christ Jesus are surprised by the person's sexual orientation ... the expectation of both the Father and the Son is that the person will inwardly "fight" against the person's orientation, the person striving to kill his or her old self; to figuratively break the legs of the crucified old self so that it will die as quickly as possible. And because all judgment has been given to Christ Jesus, who then left it with His disciples, other persons need not know about the fight that rages inside the person, a more apparent fight than that faced by the pious person who never knowingly broke a Commandment but who is nevertheless a sinner because of the person's lack of love for the one struggling against virtually insurmountable odds.

The one who struggles in a fight that seems unwinnable will have greater mercy for others than the one who doesn't struggle; hence for practical purposes, it is more likely that God will call the one who has the greater struggle that develops greater compassion.

Baptism in water really doesn't cause the old self to die. Baptism is symbolic of the person willingly taking judgment upon him or herself, which represents a problem for the spiritual Elect that pass from death to life without coming under judgment ... why be baptized in water for repentance when the spiritual Elect do not have freewill, but were

made slaves of obedience through being predestined to be called, justified, and glorified while the fleshly body still temporarily lives?

Did Moses have freewill? Could Moses have said, *No*, to the Lord? He tried to say, *No, get someone else*, but the Lord was having none of it ... whether Moses wanted to go or not, Moses was returning to Egypt to bring the people of God out from physical slavery to a physical king in a physical land—and Moses returned to Egypt.

Could Moses have resisted longer or with more determination? Possibly. But the results would be the same: Moses was on his way back to Egypt.

And so it is with the Elect who are made slaves of obedience that leads to righteousness. Maybe the Elect really don't want to be religious. I didn't. Maybe they throw a figurative temper tantrum, doing something really stupid like getting pregnant out of wedlock, or being drunk while driving, or selling a little pot. Whatever the Elect does to resist Christ won't last and won't amount to much. The foreknown and predestined person is just that, predestined to be glorified as fruit borne out of season.

*

There remains enough to be said about baptism for another Sabbath Reading.

*

"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](#)]