

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 for whom should a Christian pray.

Weekly Readings *For the Sabbath of January 28, 2012*

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.

See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. *The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him.* Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And *everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure. Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness.* You know that he appeared to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. *No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him.* Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. *Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil,* for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. *No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God.* By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother. (! John 3:1–10 emphasis added)

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him. *By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome.* For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? This is he who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not by the water only but by the water and the blood. And the spirit [τὸ πνεῦμά] is the one who testifies, because the spirit [τὸ πνεῦμά] is the truth. For there are three that testify: the spirit [τὸ πνεῦμα] and the water and the blood; and these three agree. If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater, for this is the testimony of God that he has borne concerning his Son. Whoever believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself. Whoever does not believe God has made him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has borne concerning his Son. And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life. And *this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.* (1 John 5:1–15 emphasis added)

1.

A problem has developed in the past 1900 years that John did not have in the 1st-Century: Christians claim to believe that Jesus is the Christ, and sincerely do believe that Jesus is the Christ, but these Christians make a practice of sinning: they have been taught to sin by generations of Christian pastors and theologians. They have been taught that they are not under the Law and therefore do not have to obey the commands of God which, if a person will keep them, causes the person to live and not die a second death in the lake of fire. They have been taught that Jesus' righteousness is their righteousness when they profess that

Jesus is Lord and believe that the Father raised Jesus from death (Rom 10:9). They have been taught to spurn the *legalism* of keeping the commands of God, to run as fast as they can from anyone or any sect that advocates keeping the commands of God, with this admonishment to avoid those who keep the commandments going back at least as far as Huldrych Zwingli and the very beginning of the Protestant Reform Movement; for the split that occurred between the Reformed Church and Anabaptists in 1525 CE had at its core the reason for baptism. Both Zwingli and the young radicals that were the founders of German-speaking Anabaptists held that baptism was a pledge or a promise, but Zwingli and the Reform Movement denied that this pledge was to live without sin, and Zwingli disputed the Anabaptist position that only those who were born of spirit and able to live without sin were qualified to be baptized.

At the very beginning of the Protestant Movement, the issue of being born of spirit as a son of God separated Jesus from *Jesus*, with Protestant Reformers worshiping a different Jesus from the one Anabaptist Reformers worshiped, and with the Old Church [the Roman Church worshiping a different Jesus yet. The Christian Church was not one and did not worship the same God or the same Son; for two cannot walk together unless there is agreement. A Christian cannot walk as Jesus walked (1 John 2:6), cannot imitate Paul as he imitated Jesus (1 Cor 11:1 *et al*) and willingly transgress even the least of the commandments. And if a Christian doesn't strive to walk as Jesus walked, the Christian simply isn't of Christ Jesus.

If what the Apostle John writes is true—and it is—then Christians who make a practice of sinning, of transgressing the least of the commandments, do not believe that the same Jesus is Christ as John knew to be the Christ: they worship a different Jesus, a different Father, and have about them a different spirit. And the Apostle Paul anticipates Christians believing in a different Jesus when he wrote to the holy ones at Corinth: “For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it readily enough” (2 Cor 11:4).

Nearly every sect, denomination, heresy within greater Christendom preaches a different Jesus from the one who actually died at Calvary. There are so many differing Christs being preached that a scorecard is needed to keep their identities straight; for the Catholic Jesus still hangs on the cross whereas the Lutheran Jesus has escaped the cross. The Mormon Jesus is really a demon as is the Southern Baptist Jesus that is little more than a bobble-head on a dashboard. And the Jesus of the splintered Sabbatarian Churches of God is without love.

Again, two cannot walk together unless there is agreement between these two: the inner self that is born of God through receiving the breath of God [πνεῦμα Θεοῦ] in the breath of Christ [πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ] will walk as Jesus walked (1 John 2:6) in a fleshly body in which sin and death still dwells. Thus, the genuinely born of spirit Christian will not be without sin, but will strive to live without sin, with this person's inner self engaged in hard fought skirmishes against the lawlessness that continues to reside in the Christian's fleshly members—and with the inner

self winning more and more of these skirmishes as the inner self matures (i.e., grows in grace and knowledge).

A son of God is not born of spirit as a fully mature Christian, but as a spiritual infant. Human maturation forms the shadow and copy of spiritual maturation—and to walk uprightly before God by keeping the commandments discloses that the inner self that is a son of God is equivalent to a one year old human child. To be able to comprehend dual referents and typological exegesis discloses that the inner son of God has reached the spiritual maturity that a thirty month old human child has. And the founders of the Anabaptist Movement—Conrad Grebel, Felix Manz, George Blaurock, Andreas Fischer—were all martyred while they were still spiritual infants too young to understand dual referents; hence, the Anabaptist and Sabbatarian Anabaptist Movement were hamstrung from their inception. Rebuilding the temple of God would indeed take the seventy weeks of Daniel's prophecy and would not be complete until the 21st-Century. And along the way would be left many living stones that advanced the construction of the temple one concept at a time.

The inner self of a Christian that has been raised from death through receiving a second breath of life, the breath of God in the breath of Christ, does not and indeed, cannot make a practice of sinning. Simply won't happen! While the fleshly body will still do things that the living inner self hates, the fleshly body of a person who has received a second breath of life will strive to the best of the person's abilities to keep the commandments of God: it cannot be any other way. For to not keep the commandments by faith is *prima facie* evidence that the person has not been born of God but remains a son of disobedience (Eph 2:2–3), consigned to disobedience (Rom 11:32), the bondservant of the Adversary.

All sons of God are voluntary legalists, in that they strive to keep the commandments perfectly—and they are disappointed in themselves when they fail to keep the commandments.

There is no hypocrisy in having the law and striving to keep the law and failing to measure up to the standard that is Christ Jesus. The weakness of the flesh and the residing sin and death that remains in the flesh until the Second Passover liberation of Israel will prevent the Christian from doing what the truly born-of-God Christian desires to do.

Now, when there are many Christians worshipping the only Jesus they know, but worshipping a Jesus that did not hang on the stake at Calvary, these many Christians of necessity unknowingly worship demons ... because God the Father has not chosen to draw a person from this world in this present era doesn't mean that this person is lost. The Apostle Paul's gospel addressed this situation:

God shows no partiality. For all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified. For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is

written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus. (Rom 2:11–16)

Sin in the flesh is unbelief manifested in transgression of the law, but the inner self commits sin through simple unbelief (i.e., not believing God) that stands apart from what the flesh does as in the case of unacted-upon lust (see Matt 5:27–28).

The Christian who is not under the law because the inner self of this person remains consigned to disobedience will perish without the law if this Christian succumbs to the lawless ways of this world. This Christian must, regardless of what Jesus this Christian acknowledges as Lord, be a doer of the law. Zwingli was wrong. Luther was wrong. Knox was wrong. And on could go this list for all of this coming week. Menno Simon was closer to being correct, but not correct. For no Christian can transgress the Sabbath commandment, the least of the commandments, and walk as Jesus walked ... with spiritual birth, the fleshly body loses importance and becomes merely the house, the tent of flesh in which the inner son of God temporarily dwells. The law moves inside the person, moves from regulating the actions of the hand and body [murder and adultery] to regulating the desires of the heart and the thoughts of the mind [anger and lust]. The Sabbath doesn't move to another day, but also moves inside the person to affect the desires of the heart and the thoughts of the mind on the seventh day, keeping these desires and thoughts focused on God and not on the mundane things of this world.

The movement from hand to heart, from night to day, from physical to spiritual, with the hand/night/physical forming the shadow and copy [the left hand enantiomer] of the heart/day/spiritual, is what the founders of Anabaptist thought had not realized when each was martyred. They cannot be held accountable for what they were too young to understand—a human parent doesn't expect a small child to think as an adult thinks, nor does the Father and the Son expect an infant son of God to think as a mature Christian. Rather, the Father expects His infant son to grow in grace and knowledge through prayer and study and exercising the spirit. And this introduces a second problem that has developed over the past nineteen centuries.

Christians are routinely asked to pray for national leaders, and to pray for other Christians and non Christians. Christians are asked to pray for individuals whom the Christian knows is not a son of God. The Christian is asked to pray for the nation in which he or she lives, to pray for the armed forces of that nation, to pray for individual soldiers who have been injured in armed conflicts, to pray for the Adversary, for the Adversary's kingdom, and those rulers who assist the Adversary in his persecution of the holy ones of God ... yes, Christians are regularly asked by other Christians to pray for the Adversary. Of course, those who ask for these prayers do not realize that the Adversary remains the prince of this world, that all authority in this world comes from God but presently comes through the Adversary to whom God has given the kingdom of this world for the

destruction of the fleshly bodies of human persons so that their spirits might be saved when judgments are revealed.

Here is the problem that remains concealed in the many admonishments to pray for one another, and to pray for leaders: the prayers of truly born of spirit Christians are heard by God, and when a born of God Christian prays for, say, the United States to again be a fiscally strong nation, this son of God actually asks God to delay Christ Jesus' return. This son of God, in praying for the kingdom of God to come, prays for the collapse of all nations. Then by praying for the nation in which this son of God dwells, the son of God tells God to ignore his previous prayer. With the same mouth, this son of God gives and takes away a blessing on national leaders, on the nation in which he temporarily dwells, on the Adversary himself. And this should not be.

Because the Adversary remains the prince of this world, the prince of the power of the air, and because this world remains the spiritual kingdom of Babylon with the Adversary as the king of Babylon (see Isa 14:4), to pray for any nation-state or its armed forces is to pray that a portion of Babylon doesn't fall but remains viable and prosperous—and this is a greedy prayer, a prayer that places the interests of the person ahead of God. If a genuine son of God wants to pray for, say, the President of the United States, an appropriate prayer would be that God calls the President, drawing him from this world, thereby giving to him a second breath of life and awareness of what truly being born of God means. Then permit the President as an infant son of God to begin unraveling the web he has spun on behalf of the Adversary, who would quickly remove him from office.

To pray for a nation, say, the United States of America, is to pray that one of the Adversary's divisions successfully governs a people and thereby proves that the Adversary's advocacy of democratic rule has validity.

So what is a genuine Christian to do when asked to pray that wrongdoing continues? Refuse to pray that a sinner is healed because he or she is a sinner? Where is love in not praying for a sinner? Yet can a Christian ask God to forgive a sin—which a son of God has authority to do—when there is no repentance? Would this not be asking God to be a respecter of persons, holding the sins of one unrepentant sinner against the sinner but forgiving the sins of a different unrepentant sinner? For the Christian who asks to have sins forgiven is not able to bear the sins of the unrepentant sinner and still live so the Christian is really asking Jesus to give the bread of the children to dogs.

Grace covers unintentional sins, not willful transgressions of the Law. So attitude, mindset matters. The person who turns from his or her past lawless practices and begins to keep the commands of God to the best of the person's ability is worthy of forgiveness. A Christian can certainly ask God to forgive this person's sinful ways. But to ask that Christ Jesus heal an unrepentant sinner—to ask Jesus to remember the beating He took, to remember His death on the stake so that an unrepentant sinner can be healed and can keep on transgressing the law lacks love for Christ Jesus.

For a third time, two cannot walk together unless there is agreement ... if a son of God cannot walk beside the person for whom the son of God prays,

perhaps the son of God should cease praying for this person. And this raises all sorts of questions? What about a son or daughter who has decided to experience evil firsthand? At what point is enough *enough*? Should a parent not pray for a daughter who chooses to cohabit with rather than marry the father of her children? Should the Christian parent not pray for a son or daughter who has become a Buddhist?

If the prayers of a Christian are heard because this person is truly a son of God, should the Christian nag God because the thing for which this Christian prays is not happening?

The introductory citation ends with verse 15, but the remainder of John's epistle begins to resolve the question of whether, say, sons of God should pray for, say, President Obama, who apparently believes in collective salvation and is certainly not of the Church of God:

If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask, and God will give him life—to those who commit sins that do not lead to death. There is sin that leads to death; I do not say that one should pray for that. All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin that does not lead to death. We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him. We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one. And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols. (1 John 5:15–21)

John makes a distinction between sins that lead to death and sins that do not ... if all wrongdoing is sin, then to ignore a trifling amount of income coming from an unusual source when doing the person's taxes is wrongdoing that doesn't lead to death; for the under-reporting of income is stealing, a transgression of the commandments for which the death penalty wasn't imposed. Rather, the thief was to repay four times or seven times what he or she stole. A violation of a game law would be in this category, a form of stealing. But idolatry is not in this category; for idolatry is a sin that leads to death. And to worship a different Jesus than the one that died at Calvary is idolatry. A son of God is not to pray for this person.

President Obama openly serves a God other than the Father and God of Jesus. At best, he is an idolater. And to radical Islam, he is a backslider, the lowest of low life, the basest of men (see Dan 4:17), hence qualified to rule the affairs of men who have been consigned to disobedience for the destruction of their flesh. The prayers of sons of God should be that they, these sons of God, dwell in peace while trespassing in spiritual Babylon.

The union of Church and State that has been common to humanity exists in a disguised form in the United States of America; for when Sabbath observance is subordinated to seniority by the National Labor Relations Board, with Veterans'

Preference trumping merit, and with profile quotas affecting hiring, the humanist State supports a humanist ideology of a sort symbolized by the bronze statute of Zwingli with sword and Bible in front of the Wasserkirche in Zurich ... Zwingli attended the University of Vienna and the University of Basel, a center of humanism. He continued to study the Bible from a humanist perspective as a pastor in Glarus and later in Einsiedeln, where he was greatly influenced by the humanist teachings of Erasmus. Zwingli was a Christian humanist who strongly believed in the union of Church and State: he liked using the Adversary's authority to advance his Christian ideology.

Humanism in its various forms is a *Christian* religion even though Jesus is no more or not much more to humanists than He is to Muslims ... America's union of Church and State has freedom holding the Bible in one hand and a sword in the other—and no Anabaptist of any flavor can support such a comingling of the sacred and the profane.

Prayers should not be said for sins unto death, or for sinners or nation-states that practice idolatry. Prayers should not be said for spiritual Babylon, or for the spiritual king of Babylon. Both should be rebuked in prayer.

If there are sins that do not lead to death that need forgiven, and sins that lead to death for which no prayers should be said, then the Lord refusing to hear the pleadings of idolatrous Israel in the days of its kings stands as a shadow of how a Christian should pray.

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

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