

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 being set free from sin and death.

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## Weekly Readings *For the Sabbath of February 16, 2013*

*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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What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, *you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?* But thanks be to God, that *you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.* I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification. For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But *now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life.* For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. ... There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. *For the law of the spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.* (Rom 6:15–23; 8:1–2 emphasis added)

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If Christians have been set free from the Law of Sin and Death, why do most Christians believe that have been freed from any obligation to keep the commandments, by which a person will live? Doesn't transgressing the commandments return a person to being slaves of sin? That certainly seems to be what Paul wrote: "Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness" (Rom 6:16).

If a person has been set free from the Law of Sin and Death that caused Paul to do, in his flesh, the very things he hated and not do those things he desired to do (Rom 7:15–25), then it is the inner self that has been set free, not the flesh in which sin and death continues to dwell, with physical death being the conclusion of the Law of Sin and Death. And what sets anything free from death? Life does. Thus, the inner self that is consigned to disobedience (Rom 11:32) as a son of disobedience (Eph 2:2–3) has not been set free from Sin and Death, but is under bondage to both—with both Sin and Death residing in the fleshly body of the person, the mystery that Paul didn't understand but described though living the reality.

The above is central to understanding things to come: today it can be said with absolute certainty that in the Millennium, Israel will not buy and sell; will not engage in transactions, which will cause the Millennium to be a very different world than the present world that is organized around transactions. There never will be in the Millennium a requirement that a people buy health care insurance, or any other form of insurance. There will no insurance policies offered for sale. There will be no buying and selling of stocks or of commodities—and without being able to amass large pools of money through the sale of shares in an enterprise, there will not be enterprises that are dependant upon consumer sales. And today, endtime disciples can see the failings of transactional economies just as Paul could see that sin continued to dwell in his flesh through Paul doing the very things he hated. But Paul didn't have an answer to why sin continued to dwell in his flesh when he had been set free from the Law of Sin and Death. Paul didn't know that there would be a Second Passover liberation of saints. What Paul knew was that although he had been set free from Sin and Death, he wasn't truly free. His flesh was still in bondage to disobedience. Thus, he needed the covering of grace to hide, to blot out those things he did that he hated. So Paul emphasized "grace" throughout his ministry, with grace not being unmerited pardon for transgression of the Law he committed, but the garment, the covering of Christ Jesus' righteousness. Disciples daily put on grace in a manner analogous to Israel's daily sacrifice; disciples put on grace daily by making the willful decision to walk in this world as Jesus walked. This will now have disciples striving to the best of their abilities to keep the commandments and outwardly show love to father and mother, neighbor and brother.

A child playing dress-up in the clothes of an adult is perhaps the best visual image of a disciple putting on the garment of Christ Jesus' righteousness. There will be a day, barring premature death, when the child will grow enough

physically that the clothes of the adult are his or her clothing—and so it is with Christ’s righteousness.

We cannot today comprehend how an economy would be organized other than on transactions, with all forms of trading being transactional by definition; for a trade is a transaction. Bartering is transactional. Money is simply a stand-in for a trade good that the purchasing part desires. And if the Millennium were to begin as a bartering economy, within fifty years it would be a capitalist, transactional economy, and within another century Israel in the Millennium would be economically where we are today.

So as Paul didn’t understand why sin continued to dwell in his flesh when he had been set free from the Law of Sin and Death, we, today, in *Philadelphia* know about the near-future Second Passover liberation of Israel from indwelling sin and death in the flesh through human persons being filled with the divine breath of God when the world is baptized into life as the world was baptized into death in the days of Noah. Paul realized what the future held, thought the future had arrived, and didn’t understand why the future-that-had-arrived wasn’t like he expected. So learning from Paul, we know that there will be no transactions in the Millennium, but we have no idea how to organize a society without transactions, so rather than conjuring schemes that will not work, we accept the reality that we don’t know—and we get about our business of proclaiming the endtime good news that all who endure to the end shall be saved. We don’t spend mental energy or resources on trying to imagine what we are not capable of imagining because we dwell in the Adversary’s transactional world.

Casting the Adversary into space-time where he shall roam free for three and a half years, then be chained for a thousand years before being turned loose to again roam free for another three and a half years preceding when fire comes out from his belly to utterly consume him—casting the Adversary into the creation serves two or more purposes: because the Adversary will have the power to compel all peoples in the Endurance to take upon themselves the mark of death, the tattoo of the cross [*chi xi stigma*], to buy and sell, those people who endure to the end in faith shall not take upon themselves this mark of the beast and will be excluded from buying and selling. Thus, the holy ones shall, of necessity, devise ways to live without conducting transactions. And as an empty belly makes a person a better hunter, an empty belly will clear minds and inspire the holy ones to “invent” what today cannot be imagined.

Endtime disciples can imagine returning to an 18<sup>th</sup>-Century-like economy, a pre-industrial revolution economy that was still dependant upon buying and selling but not on the scale of today ... there was no futures market on which grain is sold before seed is even planted (to sell what hasn’t been planted requires a level of hubris unimagined by historic cultures).

Anything manmade will breakdown and fail at the least opportune time. A part, or the entire piece of machinery has to be replaced through a transaction. But if the person cannot make a transaction because he or she hasn’t accepted the mark of death, what is the person to do? Get along without the part, the piece of machinery? That is the reality facing the person: accept the mark of death and die

when Christ returns in less than three and a half years, or figure out how to get whatever job the part or the piece of machinery was needed to do, done without the part or piece of machinery. And even today, human persons are inventive and imaginative. Then, in the Endurance when all people have been baptized into life and have the indwelling mind of Christ, human persons will be even more inventive and imaginative. So today to try and figure out how an economy will be organized without transactions occurring is an utter waste of time. We have neither the necessity of doing without transactions, nor the fullness of the mind of Christ. We are doubly handicapped.

Paul didn't dwell long on why, even though he had been set free from the Law of Sin and Death, sin continued to dwell in his fleshly members, causing him to do those things that he hated. He accepted the reality that there continued to be sin dwelling within him, and he thanked God for the garment of Christ's righteousness.

It is enough for us to know that no transactions will occur in the Millennium, that the Millennium will be here on earth but will not be like anything we can today imagine ... but human curiosity compels us to try and figure out what life will be in the Millennium.

A trapper setting traps for bobcats or lynx will use an attractor—often a feather hung in a tree (a feather or a bird wing)—to bring the cat to his set. A breeze blows and the feather swings back and forth, spins around ... *movement* and the cat's curiosity causes the cat to come to the trap. And so it is with human persons: curiosity can kill if it isn't held in check by caution.

A varmint caller imitates the squeals of a terrified rabbit, and a coyote comes from over the far ridge on a dead run to take part in the kill. A soldier on a battlefield is wounded and left to cry for help as ambush bait. The Adversary waves the garment of grace before Christians as a matador waves his cape—and the Christian charges the cape, trying to claim it as his or hers, never suspecting grace could be a trap, that coming to an altar to claim grace could be an ambush.

Grace covers only unintentional transgressions of the Law by the Christian who has truly been born of God as a son. Grace does NOT cover a willful or deliberate transgression, such as keeping Sunday as the Sabbath by the person who knows the Sabbath is the seventh day. And what Christian truly doesn't know the Sabbath is the seventh day. Maybe there are a few, but there cannot be many ... there are, however, a great many who have been mistaught; who have been told that Christ's resurrection changed the Sabbath.

Paul wrote,

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would

no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. For *sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.* (Rom 6:1–14 emphasis added)

When does sin no longer have dominion over a person? When the person has been set free from the Law of Sin and Death, not before. If Paul did in the flesh the very things he hated, then his flesh had not been set free from the Law of Sin and Death. Sin still had dominion over his flesh. If sin didn't still have dominion of his flesh, he wouldn't have written: "For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me" (Rom 7:14–17).

By his own admission, sin continued to dwell in Paul's flesh, which remained under the dominion of Sin. Again, if Paul's flesh was not still under the dominion of Sin, his fleshly members would have done those things that his mind desired for them to do.

It is self evident that Paul didn't physically die when he was baptized, that Paul wasn't physically resurrected in a resurrection like that of Christ Jesus when he was raised from baptism, that Paul speaks figuratively about his inner self being raised from death through receipt of a second breath of life.

It is also self-evident that Paul died a physical death; so Death continued to have dominion over Paul's flesh. The question is now, did Paul die from internal causes or was Paul truly martyred. There is no Scripture saying that he was. The assumption has been that he was martyred in Rome ... if Paul had been set free from the Law of Sin and Death in the flesh, Paul's fleshly members would do whatever Paul desired that they do. Paul said that in his mind he desired to keep the Law ("For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members" — Rom 7:22–23), but in his flesh he could not. And if his flesh had not been set free from Sin, neither had his flesh been set free from Death: Paul remained subject to dying from internal causes.

When the person has truly been set free from the indwelling Law of Sin and Death, there will no longer be any sin in the flesh, nor will there be death. The flesh will not be immortal—the person can still die but not from internal causes. The person will have to be killed by outside causes, with martyrdom returning in the Affliction, the first 1260 days of the seven endtime years of tribulation.

What Paul writes in his treatise to the saints at Rome lays the base for understanding the Second Passover liberation of Israel. Whereas the inner self (the *psuche* or soul) was set free from the Law of Sin and Death with Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection, the fleshly body of the disciple remained under the dominion of Sin and Death and as such under the Law of Moses. Transgressions of the commandments are remembered, but are also covered by the blood of Christ Jesus, His blood poured out for the forgiveness of the sins of many when disciples drink from the cup on Passover. And for as long as transgressions are only covered—for as long as disciples drink from the blessed cup—disciples are not under the New Covenant that will have the Law written on hearts and placed in minds so that all *know the Lord* and there is no need for Christian ministry, but disciples remain under the First Covenant, the Passover covenant made with the fathers of Israel on the night the Lord figuratively took them by the hand to lead them out from Egypt.

Paul couldn't imagine a Second Passover liberation of Israel that would have "Israel" filled with spirit so that Sin and Death would be "pushed" out of the fleshly members of disciples. The concept was beyond him, and beyond anyone who was born-into and educated in the traditions of Judaism. In all probability, comprehending that a Second Passover liberation of Israel was promised by the prophets was only available to a person who wasn't reared as a circumcised Jew. And so will it be for comprehending an economy not-based upon buying and selling. It will be the person who isn't indoctrinated in transactional economics that will put together the schema for non-transactional economics.

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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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