

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 about the spirit in man.

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## Weekly Readings For the Sabbath of March 1, 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 service should read or assign to be read John chapter 14 & chapter 15.*

**Commentary:** Last Sabbath the issue of the spiritual Body of Christ being dead was briefly addressed: more needs to be said about this critical but not widely accepted reality, for if the Body is truly crucified with Christ, the Body will not come down from the cross alive but can only come down dead.

Concerning the coming of the kingdom of God, Jesus said to His disciples, not to the Pharisees whom He had previously addressed on the subject,

The days are coming when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it. And they will say to you, "Look, there!" or "Look, here!" Do not go out or follow them. For as the lightening flashes and lights up the sky from one side to the other, so will the Son of Man be in his day. *But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.* Just as it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the days of the Son of Man. They were eating and drinking and marrying and being given in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise, just as it was in the days of Lot—they were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building, but on the day when Lot went out from Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all—so will it be on the day when the Son of Man is revealed. (Luke 17:22–30 emphasis added)

Disciples, according to Jesus, will be told to *Look, there* and to *Look, here* for Him, but Jesus said not to follow after them ... if someone told Peter to, "Look, there is Jesus," would Peter have believed the someone? And could that someone be other than another disciple? It is really not credible to believe that Peter could be deceived by someone, or that Peter would chase after shadows and false rumors. So the disciples whom Jesus was then addressing would be the same disciples as He referenced when He prayed to the Father, "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that

they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me” (John 17:20–21).

Endtime disciples who believe in the testimony of the first disciples will be one with these first disciples as Jesus is one with them and with the Father, or at least this will be the case if Jesus’ prayer was answered. If, then, endtime disciples are one with first disciples, then it is most likely that endtime disciples are the ones being addressed when Jesus said not to go out or follow after those who say, *Jesus is here*, or *Jesus is there*. And if endtime disciples are not to follow after those who say, *Look! Jesus*, then endtime disciples will not “see” Jesus until He comes as lightning filling the sky from one side to the other.

But what about Noah ... if seven years of tribulation precede the coming of Jesus, then these seven years will announce the coming of Jesus in a way unlike the coming of the flood—unless, of course, the revealing of the Son of Man comes at the beginning of these seven endtime years. Then, what does “to reveal” the Son of Man mean? What does ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἀποκαλύπτεται mean if not that as it was when fire fell from heaven on Sodom and as it was when the fountains of the deep broke to bring the flood upon the earth, so will it be when the Son of Man, Head and Body, is made known to the world.

But ἀποκαλύπτεται has a denotative meaning of “to take off the cover,” as in to disrobe.

Disciples as the Body of Christ are also the Body of the Son of Man, and disciples are “garmented” in Grace as if this covering of Christ’s righteousness were a cloak put on daily for the sake of modesty, or so that no one can see the less comely parts of the Body ... the less comely parts of the Body are those parts that do not yet walk uprightly before God though the spirit is willing.

There will be no reason to reveal a dead Body, but rather, revealing the Body shows to all that the Body is alive; for a cloak on a corpse might fool [and has fooled] those who do not look closely at the Body of Christ, but a revealed corpse fools no one.

Today, the garment of Grace covers a dead Body and fools many disciples into believing that the Body lives in its disobedience to God.

Any discussion of the Spirit of God is fraught with theological landmines that explode with some regularity. The source of these landmines is the impreciseness of the language used to convey metaphorical concepts. An immortal soul would be a “spirit in man,” but not the breath of man, when /spirit/ conveys the sense of “breath” in Latin and in Greek. The Greek icon /*pneuma*–πνεῦμα/ is used for deep breath as opposed to shallow breath. English users retain the icon /*breath*/which comes from the Old English /*bhræu*/used for warm air or steam rather than moving air. But humankind is not born with immortal souls; rather, everlasting life is the gift of God in Christ Jesus. So any spirit in man is not an immortal soul, but an added life-force that is analogous to the “breath of life” that enlivens a person.

Therefore, the Spirit of God [πνεῦμα θεοῦ] that Jesus received when John baptized Him, and the Holy Spirit [πνεῦμα ἅγιον] that He gave to His disciples when He breathed on them were both the divine Breath of God that imparts life in the heavenly realm to the person; whereas the spirit of truth [πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας] that the world cannot receive comes from the Father not as a life-giving force analogous to the “breath of life,” but as an added invisible force that imparts knowledge to a person who has already been drawn from this world through being born a second time. It is perhaps

unfortunate that Greek lacked another linguistic icon that could be used to separate a life-giving force such as “breath” from a knowledge giving force that functions within the mind as the Gospels (the testimony of the Apostles) function outside of the mind, with both serving as witnesses of Christ Jesus (John 15:26–27).

What is a witness other than one who testifies about a matter? And here is one of those still unexploded landmines: as the Holy Spirit spoke to Paul and those with whom he worked (Act 13:2), the *parakletos* [παράκλητος] testifies about Jesus and the truth of Him being the Son of Man. But as has been seen, Paul was anointed to hear words spoken by the mouth of the Father (Acts 22:14). To hear these words, he must hear the divine Breath of the Father utter words, and indeed, Paul hears the Holy Spirit [πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον] pronounce the words of the Father as a person might hear my breath form and convey the words of my mouth. To hear, now, the testimony of the *parakletos* about Jesus is to “hear” thoughts of the mind that reassure the disciple that Jesus is the glorified Son.

Again, the world cannot receive the *parakletos*, for the world has not yet been born of Spirit [i.e., possess the earnest of the divine Breath of God]. And because the world cannot receive the *parakletos*, a disciple can know that the *parakletos* is not the life-giving force through which a person who hears the words of Jesus and believes the One who sent Him can pass from death to life without coming under judgment. The *parakletos* is not the Breath of the Father that raises the dead. It is, instead, a heavenly witness that testifies to the disciple about who Jesus is.

If a spirit testifies about Christ, is not this “spirit” a living being as an angel is? NO! It is not.

The *parakletos* is no more a living entity than the Holy Spirit is—and they cannot be the same, for the world can receive and will receive the Holy Spirit whereas the testimony of Jesus is that the world cannot receive the *parakletos*. Trinitarian Christianity gets around this difficulty by claiming that a person is born with an immortal soul that only needs to be regenerated by the *parakletos*, which it identifies as the Holy Spirit. But this is contrary to both the testimony of the *parakletos* as well as the testimony of the Gospels and the Epistles. ... Do the Gospels “speak” to a disciple? If they also testify that Jesus is the Son of Man, how do they do this? Are they “living” as in being a living entity? No, they are not. Yet they “speak” to disciples by producing thoughts in the minds of disciples, with these thoughts conveying knowledge. Likewise, the invisible *parakletos* testifies about Jesus in a like manner even when disciples do not have Bibles to read, as is the case of some disciples in Kenya who need Bibles in the Ekegusii language before they can read Scripture.

If a tent of flesh can be compared to a wineskin, the tent of flesh is spiritually empty regardless of how long it has lived physically until it receives the Holy Spirit and experiences a second birth that can only metaphorically be compared to the person’s human birth. Wine is put in a new wineskin when a disciple receives the Holy Spirit; i.e., when the Father raises the person from the dead (John 5:21). This wine now, as if an artesian “wine-spring” were within the bag, flows until it fills the bag, then flows more until it stretches the bag that expands as if it were a balloon. No additional wine can be placed in this wineskin that has grown in Grace and knowledge, ever stretching tighter the expanded skin. But the person who was born of Spirit, but has not grown other than to receive the *parakletos* remains as a new wineskin to which additional wine can be added—and will be added when the disciple is liberated from indwelling sin and death at

the second Passover. The disciple will then be “filled” with, or empowered by the Holy Spirit, but the price of this filling is being spiritually disrobed, or revealed.

The disciple who can be compared to an old wineskin has been taking the Passover as Jesus established the example on the night that Jesus was betrayed; thus, this disciple is in covenant with Jesus, who bears the disciple’s sins by covenantal agreement. But the disciple who, though born of Spirit, remains a new wineskin through not entering into the Passover covenant, the means by which Jesus bears the sins of many. This disciple is spiritually dead even though this disciple has been born of Spirit. All that holds this disciple in Christendom is the *parakletos*, which gives the disciple knowledge of Jesus. Thus, the *parakletos* functions as the glue which keeps the Body of Christ from dissipating into thin air since God delivered the Church into the hands of the prince of the world, the spiritual king of Babylon, long ago.

The theological landmines that explode regularly are fused with the assumption that for a “spirit” to speak or to testify or to teach, the “spirit” must be a living entity like an angel is. Again, my breath speaks my words, at least ones that I do not inscribe in written text, but my breath has no personhood of its own. My inscribed words speak and hopefully teach though having no life of their own although some authors speak of their writings (especially poems) as if their writings were their children—and to a certain extent, when writing a novel, the story takes on a “life” of its own that seems to cause the story to tell itself, with the author functioning more as a scribe than as the story’s creator. This is a phenomenon with which I have some experience, and it has nothing to do with demon influence. Rather, it has to do with the mental language of the brain: *if this thing is true, then this next thing is also true, and if these two things are true, then this third thing is also true, and so on* until a significant portion of the story has been written, and this significant portion then “drives” itself because of the necessity of yet more things being true.

My breath is not a living entity although I might well exhale many “germs” when I breathe. Likewise, the divine Breath of God is not a living entity like God (to claim it is causes the person to commit blasphemy against God). And my testimony comes by my breath and through my inscribed words. In a similar manner, the *parakletos* testifies about Christ and the inscribed Gospels testify about Christ.

What has been used in the preceding few paragraphs that is seldom seen in a Sabbath reading? The first person pronoun—yes, the narrator is seldom a personage in a Sabbath reading, nor should he or she be, but has been revealed to make a point: whom does this pronoun reference? A regular reader probably knows, but the point is that without an identifying phrase or clause, the narrator is a disembodied voice that can well be likened to a spirit. But the voice is not a living entity even if it is said to be a spirit. Likewise, neither the divine Breath of God is a living entity, nor is the *parakletos*.

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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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