

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 *sacrament of baptism*.

Weekly Readings

For the Sabbath of March 3, 2007

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 sacrament of baptism as performed by the Universal Church does not satisfy the requirement for inclusion into the household of God, nor does it have any spiritual value to the "baptized" individual. It is unlikely that an infant will drown in a sprinkle of rain, and even more unlikely that this infant has repented of the disobedience that will make him (or her) a bondservant to the prince of this world. To baptize [βαπτίζω] is to make *fully whelmed* as in fully covered with a liquid; to immerse, or submerge in a liquid. Thus, to sprinkle is not a baptism [βάπτισμα], but a moistening as if one were to iron wrinkles from clothing. And sprinkling an infant merely exposes the infant to a greater possibility of catching a cold.

Harsh but also true words—an infant that has been sprinkled has not been baptized.

The world will be baptized three times: once with water, which happened in the days of Noah when it grieved God that He had made humankind (Gen 6:5-7). Once with the Holy Spirit [Πνεύμα Ἅγιον], when this divine Breath of God is poured out on all flesh (Joel 2:28) as if it were a fluid [wind – πνεύμα]. And once with fire, when the new heavens and new earth come from heaven to transform all that is physical into spirit (Rev 21:1). On these three occasions, the world will be fully submerged in a fluid: in water [the Flood], in the divine Breath of God, and in fire. The first submersion happened approximately 4,300 years ago. The second will happen halfway through the seven endtime years of tribulation. The last will happen after the great White Throne Judgment, which follows Christ's thousand year long reign as the King of kings and Lord of lords, which in turn is followed by the short while that Satan is loosed before he is again taken and finally cast into the lake of fire. The first baptism is unto death; the second unto life; and the third unto glory. The Father gives life, and the Son gives glory (John 5:21) to those whom He will of all whom the Father has made alive.

Understand, to be submerged in water causes an air-breathing creature—a nephesh—to drown or suffocate from the inability to breathe; crucifixion causes a person to suffocate. Therefore, submersion in water—a baptism [βάπτισμα]—is analogous to being crucified. In both cases, the person dies from his or her inability to breathe deeply, with deep breath also represented by the Greek linguistic icon πνεύμα.

Thus, to be “baptized into Christ” (Gal 3:27) is to be crucified with Christ (Rom 6:6). Therefore, when the practice of full immersion baptism ceased, disciples ceased being crucified with Christ—and when disciples ceased being crucified with Christ, the Body of Christ ceased to exist.

When the world is submerged in the Holy Spirit [Πνευμα Ἅγιον], all of humankind will receive spiritual life in a manner analogous to receiving a second breath, the realization of being “born again” or “born of Spirit.” But when submerged in the Holy Spirit, a person will not merely receive an inner new self, but will be fully liberated from indwelling sin and death. In a real sense, death will no longer dwell in the person, for death is the wages of sin (Rom 6:23) which will no longer be inside the person. Therefore, while the person can die from outside sources, he or she will not die from inner “natural causes.” Life spans will again be a thousand years; will be of Christ Jesus’ 1,000 year long reign if the person is born at the beginning of this millennium.

When the world is baptized in fire, all that is physical will melt away and cease to exist: fire separates the dimensions. Represented by the flaming sword that prevented Adam from returning to the garden of God (Gen 3:24), fire that is not the oxidation of matter prevents flesh and blood from entering heaven. This fire will utterly consume fleshly bodies; thus, if that which is perishable does not put on imperishability, then the body in which born of Spirit sons of God dwell will vaporize and the life within this body will perish. Therefore, the baptism of fire is akin to the lake of fire into which the lawless will be thrown alive. The baptism of fire is the physical earth’s second death. Only what has put on immortality will walk through these flames in a manner foreshadowed by Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (Dan 3:25, 27).

To begin anew: Baptism by water is unto the death of the old self, the human nature with which a person is born. Baptism is not—and this cannot be stressed too strongly—the Christian equivalent to circumcision for a Jew; for “the Christian” is not a fleshly creation produced through a son of disobedience repenting and being baptized. Rather, “the Christian” is the new creature, born of Spirit, who, with others born of Spirit, forms a new nation, a holy nation, a royal priesthood from peoples who were not before a nation (1 Pet 2:9-10). The greatest error of history is identifying “Christianity” with a visible, physical organization: the Church, especially the Universal Church. Christianity is that nation which consists entirely of the new creatures or new selves or Paul’s new man born from above into an assortment of tabernacles or tents of flesh, where these new creatures will reside until they reach maturity or die as stillborns. In one sense [for the science fantasy adherent], Christianity represents an alien invasion of life forms from another dimension, but with these life forms having no substance in this physical dimension. And baptism will not produce a living being born of Spirit. Only God the Father produces this life form.

No one “decides” to be a Christian. No one gets up in the morning and says, *I think I will cease being a son of disobedience and become born again today.* God consigned all of humankind to disobedience so that He could have mercy on all (Rom 11:32). He doesn’t unconsign a human being from being a bondservant to the prince of this world until He liberates the fleshly tabernacles into which His sons have been born (liberation will be from indwelling sin and death). Rather, into a tabernacle of flesh consigned to sin, God inserts His Holy Spirit [Πνευμα Ἅγιον] in the form of an additional birth that produces a new self which must overcome the still living but crucified old self. This new self is immediately engaged in a war with the flesh and the crucified old self, with the

Apostle Paul's description of this war disclosing to endtime disciples the essence of the conflict going on within every born of Spirit Christian in this era.

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The person conducting the service should read or assign to be read Romans chapter 7.

Commentary: Paul writes, "I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate" (7:15) ... if Paul doesn't understand why he does what he doesn't want to do, endtime disciples cannot look to Paul for additional insight on the struggle of the new creature against indwelling sin and death, which Paul identifies as the law of sin and death. However, Paul gives sufficient knowledge that endtime disciples can understand what happens when a person is born of Spirit.

Because of Adam's transgression, humankind was driven from the garden of God—and in being expelled from the garden and access to the Tree of Life, humankind needed a "covering" for its transgression or the human being would be immediately killed as God promised Adam (Gen 2:17). *Elohim* [singular in usage] "covered" Adam and Eve with garments of animal skins before expelling them from the garden (Gen 3:21). These animals that were slain and the skin clothing made from their hides did not pay the death penalty for Adam's transgression; rather, their lives temporarily "covered" the death penalty for Adam and Eve's transgressions in the garden. The skin clothing covered Adam as the garment of Christ's righteousness covers the sins of sons of Spirit disciples in the heavenly realm. And Adam and Eve needed temporary covering so that children could come from Eve, the mother of all humankind.

Since every transgression requires death, the eventual loss of Adam's life only paid for that initial eating of forbidden fruit. The animal skin clothing only covered that initial sin. So a covering for Adam would be needed for future transgressions. And this covering came from God consigning humankind to disobedience and to being bondservants of the prince of this world. Humankind ceased being free to obey God the moment Adam and Eve exited the garden and a flaming sword prevented their return. Through Adam's sin, all of humankind was made bondservants to disobedience, or sons of disobedience.

Paul writes, "Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law" (Rom 5:12-13) ... if sin is not counted as sin, then sin is being "covered" in a natural form of grace, with this natural form being through humankind being consigned [concluded] to disobedience and thus not free to keep the law of God. Sin is lawlessness, or the transgression of the law (1 John 3:4). Disobedience is sin. Therefore, God made human beings bondservants to sin, giving sin dominion over every person, until Moses. Then a selected nation, natural Israel, was liberated from physical bondage through this nation's exodus from Egypt and the giving of the law of God. This liberation was a shadow and copy of the liberation from sin and death that will come to spiritually circumcised Israel following a second Passover. And this latter liberation, itself, forms the shadow and copy of the endtime liberation of all of humankind from consignment to disobedience when the Holy Spirit is poured out on all flesh. Thus, the endtime good news [gospel] that must be proclaimed to the world as a witness to all nations is that all who endure to the end shall be saved (Matt 24:13-14). All will be saved because all will be born of Spirit, born liberated from indwelling sin and death; and to endure, all must live by faith in God for three and a half years. However, these are the years seen in

Revelation chapters 13 through 20:4. The events described in Revelation chapters 5 through 12 occur during the first three and a half years of the seven endtime years of tribulation.

The lawlessness of the world is “covered” by a form of natural grace through humankind being consigned to disobedience and bondage to the prince of this world. Therefore, because humankind has not been free to keep the commandments, humankind’s lawlessness will not be counted against it. But when given the commandments and the freedom to keep them, the liberated person is no longer covered by being the bondservant of the prince of this world. The person needs another covering.

When Israel was liberated from bondage to Pharaoh, Israel was free to keep the commandments after they were given. But Israel did not do a very good job of keeping them, so a “covering” for its sinfulness was needed, with this covering being the added animal sacrifices. The lives of sheep, goats, bulls, and turtledoves temporarily covered the daily transgressions of natural Israel, but the lives of livestock could not—as Adam’s and Eve’s skin clothing could not—permanently cover the transgression of Israel. Christ Jesus, at Calvary, became the only acceptable sin offering for natural Israel’s lawlessness. His death permanently paid the righteous price required by the law of a death for every transgression of the law.

However, natural Israel’s liberation from physical bondage to Pharaoh, natural Israel’s receipt of the law through the hearing of the ears, natural Israel’s refusal to enter into God’s rest when the promise of entering stood, and natural Israel’s attempt to enter God’s rest on the following day—all form the shadow and copy of spiritually circumcised Israel’s liberation from indwelling sin and death, spiritual Israel’s receipt of the law written on hearts and minds of disciples, spiritual Israel’s refusal to keep the Sabbath once liberated from sin, and spiritual Israel’s taking sin back into itself when its only covering for sin is its obedience to God. With the exception of Joshua and Caleb, all natural Israelite males counted in the census of Numbers chapter one perished in the wilderness of Sin/Zin. With the exception of the remnant of Revelation 12:17, all of Christendom liberated at the second Passover will die either physically or spiritually during the first half of the seven endtime years [the 144,000 are born of Spirit during these three and a half years]. Most of Christendom will die in sin when God sends a great delusion over those who refuse to enter into God’s rest when the promise of entering stood (2 Thess 2:11-12).

Too many wannabe teachers of Israel have no realization that physically circumcised Israel in Egypt and in physical bondage to Pharaoh forms the shadow and copy of spiritually circumcised Israel today, in Babylon and in spiritual bondage to the prince of this world.

Two scenarios run concurrently: (1) the Body of Christ is presently dead and will be resurrected to life when the second Passover occurs; and (2) a remnant of Israel, like the remnant under Ezra and Nehemiah, has returned to heavenly Jerusalem to rebuild the house of God while most of Israel remains in Babylon, prospering as that great city prospered. Two scenarios will run concurrently following the second Passover liberation of Israel: (1) the last Eve will give birth to two sons, one a spiritual Cain and one like Abel, with Cain killing righteous Abel; and (2) spiritual Isaac will see the birth of two sons, a spiritual Esau and a spiritual Jacob, with Jacob fleeing from Esau to save his life. And though some will object, saying that two scenarios cannot run concurrently, the

multi-layering of biblical narrative cannot be perceived unless a person can simultaneously hold two or more scenarios in place as a story unfolds or reveals itself. This is not a difficult thing for the mature person who has been born of Spirit. This will, however, prove more difficult for the person who is still a spiritual infant.

Understanding that the foreskin of a man is not the skin clothing with which *Elohim* covered Adam [as Eve's husband, Adam covers Eve] but represents this covering becomes another case where two scenarios run concurrently: (1) a man is "covered" by his foreskin, which is an "animal" skin covering; and (2) a man is "covered" by being a bondservant to disobedience and the prince of this world. The flesh is represented by the foreskin; the human nature that activates the flesh (the old self) is an assigned nature that comes from the prince of this world being the prince of the power of the air. Thus, the flesh and God's assigned nature to human beings are two entities that function as one in a manner analogous to a married woman and man being two separate entities that function as one entity—and this is how two concurrent scenarios function as one course of events.

Physical circumcision causes a male to appear naked before God; physical circumcision causes a man to be covered only by his obedience to God. The first Adam was covered only by his obedience regardless of the status of his penis. The last Adam (1 Cor 15:45; Rom 5:14) was made a circumcised member of the tribe of Judah by His physical father [who actually did the cutting doesn't matter]; thus, the last Adam was covered only by His obedience to God. He did not sin; He was not born consigned to sin for His father was not of the first Adam but was *Theos*. Therefore, the man Jesus of Nazareth needed no other covering for sin but His obedience, and He demonstrated that when a person is not born consigned to sin that the person can cover himself or herself through obedience to God.

To repeat: The foreskin of a man symbolically represents the garment of animal skin with which God clothed Adam, who, as the husband of Eve, represented her covering which is why sin doesn't enter this world through Eve's transgression.

Again, circumcision makes a person naked before God; circumcision does away with man's status as an animal. Although the flesh of a man and the flesh of a beast are both of dust and both will return to dust, the cutting of the foreskin caused a physical separation from animal status, with this separation forming the shadow and copy of the separation that occurs when a person is spiritually circumcised after being drawn from this world by the Father and given the Holy Spirit, thereby becoming spiritually alive [analogous to human birth]. Spiritual circumcision requires that infant son of God make a journey by faith of sufficient length to cleanse the heart. It is not enough to be born of Spirit—God does this to the person without asking the person's permission. A born of Spirit disciple must still make a journey of faith so that, as physical circumcision follows human birth and occurs on the eighth day, spiritual circumcision will follow spiritual birth and will occur when hearts have been cleansed after the example of Abraham (Rom 4:11-12).

At the Jerusalem Conference the test of whether a person was of Israel was that of the Holy Spirit cleansing hearts (Acts 15:8-9), the precursor to spiritual circumcision which will have the laws of God written on hearts and minds. Therefore, circumcision remains the determining factor of whether a person is or is not of Israel, only now that circumcision that counts is that of the heart. Circumcision of the flesh in this era means nothing. And is it a serious doctrinal error to teach that disciples must be physically

circumcised in this era: this error alone is enough to cause God to end a person's ministry.

Baptism does not cause a person to be born of Spirit. Nor does baptism in the name of Jesus Christ cause a person to be born of Spirit as evidenced by what did not occur when Philip baptized Samaritan believers (Acts 8:12). A person is born of Spirit when God, who knows the heart of the person, decides the person should be so born. The Father alone raises the dead and gives them life, with this life domiciled in a tent of flesh (John 5:21). The Son then gives immortality to those tents of flesh whom He wills, with all judgment being given to the Son. Thus, the Father first places spiritual life into a tent of flesh, and that life will by faith make a mental or spiritual journey of sufficient length to cleanse the heart and to become spiritually circumcised. And once this life is numbered among those who are of spiritually circumcised Israel, judgment is upon this life, with this judgment to be revealed upon Christ Jesus' return (1 Cor 4:5). The revealing of this judgment will determine whether the Son gives immortality to the test of flesh in which this life has resided. Without immortality, the flesh and the life domiciled in it will perish in the lake of fire, the baptism of fire.

As circumcision causes a person to cease being considered an animal and to become a son of God under judgment, baptism is for the death of the old human nature that activated the flesh when it was uncircumcised. Both circumcision and baptism operate concurrently to transform a "natural" human being, a high order primate, into a child of God under the authority of the law and under judgment. And until the tent of flesh in which this child dwells is liberated from indwelling sin and death, the lawlessness of this child is covered by the garment of Christ Jesus' righteousness, a garment that will be removed to reveal the Body of the Son of Man at the second Passover [the Head is already uncovered, revealed, and glorified].

Baptism is unto repentance, the only means of killing each person's human nature received from birth as bondage to disobedience. Without repentance, baptism is meaningless. Without the determination to live by the laws of God, baptism is meaningless. The person might as well go swimming.

Some of the 16th-Century arguments of Anabaptist disciples were valid; the principle of adult or believer Baptism is absolutely valid. Anything other than believer baptism unto repentance and the death of the old self through full submersion is not crucifixion of the old self with Christ Jesus.

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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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