

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 who Jesus was.

Weekly Readings For the Sabbath of March 8, 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 5, with emphasis on verses 14 through 47.

Commentary: The man was an invalid for thirty-eight years; he was an invalid when Jesus visited the temple when He was twelve (Luke 2:41-49). So, yes, Jesus would have known that the man had been an invalid for a long time, unable to get into the pool when the spirit or breath [Heb: *ruwach*; Gr: *pneuma*] of God stirred the water ... the spirit or breath of God renews the face of the earth when it is sent forth (Ps 104:30). As wind will ruffle a pool or form storm waves that test the largest vessels through the frictional transfer of energy from moving air molecules to the surface molecules of the body of water, and as these same air molecules in controlled modulations produce the sound waves that allow a speaker to be heard some distance away—and as the visible things of this world, with “air” being on the transitional edge of visibility, reveal the invisible things of God—wind as well as a person's deep breath [both moving air] function as a metaphor for the spirit of God, a life creating, life sustaining, life renewing force that is not of this world but comes from the supra-dimensional heavenly realm. The spirit of God [πνεῦμα θεοῦ] is not a personage; the Holy Spirit [πνεῦμα ἅγιον] is not a personage, for every spirit or breath that proceeds from God is holy [*hagion*—ἅγιον]. And the traditional belief that had the first person into the “stirred” waters of the Pool of Siloam being healed, with these waters being stirred by the Holy Spirit, served as a type of the faith required for the invalid to stand and to take up his bed when Jesus said, “Get up, take up your bed, and walk” (John 5:8). Belief in the tradition equated with believing Jesus' words, as Jesus' words equated with the Holy Spirit stirring the pool's surface.

What was at stake—what the religious authorities understood—was the evidentiary display that Jesus was God; that His spoken words healed as the Spirit of God healed after stirring the surface of the pool.

A few minutes with a dictionary will reveal to English speakers that the Greek word /*pneuma*—πνεῦμα/ that is translated into Latin as /*spīritus*/, both meaning “breath” as in moving air, becomes the English word /*spirit*/, while the English word “breath”

comes from Germanic origins assigned to represent a vapor as in warm air or steam from a simmering pot. In colder northern latitudes, “breath” can be seen for half of the year whereas in Mediterranean latitudes, “breath” would rarely be seen. The differing origins for linguistic icons representing the same linguistic object (the life-sustaining delivery of oxygen molecules to the lungs and the person’s blood stream). So to make a /spirit/ discernibly different in type and/or composition from a /breath/ is intellectually dishonest.

But God is not an air breathing creature, a *nephesh*. So the moving force that activates God or enlivens God and that God uses as a person uses his or her breath is not of this world, is not moving air, and can only metaphorically be identified as /spirit/ or /breath/, both of which have widely agreed upon assignments of linguistic objects to icons apart from their usage in Christian theology.

A father teaches his son through the son mimicking the father, and through the father speaking to the son. The father sustains his life through his breath as the son sustain his life through his breath, with one breath being like the other breath but delivering oxygen molecules to a differing set of lungs. So the breath of the father is in the son but is not the son’s breath, and this is what the Apostle Paul describes in Romans chapter 8, verses 9 and 11, where the *pneuma* of Christ (v. 9) differs from the *pneuma* of the One who raised Christ from the dead (v. 11).

Returning now to what Jesus told the Jewish authorities that were seeking to kill Him: “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing” (John 5:19). The Son mimics the Father—is this not what Jesus says? Jesus was not doing a “new thing” when healing the invalid of 38 years; rather, He was doing what *Theos* had done year by year when with His breath, He stirred the surface of the pool so that a renewing or healing might occur. And, yes, all of Israel could have been healed if *Theos* had so willed, but the stirring of the pool’s surface that *Theos* did established the shadow for what would be recorded in Scripture, which isn’t every healing Jesus performed but the seven Sabbath healings.

The Son mimics the Father as He delivers the Father’s words to Israel on the Sabbaths when miracles occurred. But the physical precedes the spiritual (1 Cor 15:46); so the Son telling the invalid to stand and take up his bed becomes the reality of the stirring of the healing waters of the pool, with the pool of Siloam being a shadow and type of the river that flows from Jerusalem during the Millennium (Ezek chap 47), with this river turning the brackish and salt water of the seas into fresh water. Note, salt water actually represents death: it cannot be drunk to quench thirst, so it is the opposite of the waters Jesus promised to give the Samaritan woman, water that permanently quenches thirst (John 4:13-14).

The Son makes hearing His words and believing them like water that permanently quenches thirst, with, in this metaphor, the saline waters of the Dead Sea and the seas of the world being equivalent to unbelief and rebellion against God. His words heal as the waters that flow from the temple in Jerusalem turn salt water fresh during the Millennium, thereby healing the seas. But the swamps and marshes will not become fresh; for throughout the Millennium, in the backwaters of thought lurks unbelief concealed deep in the hearts of Israel, unbelief that Satan, when released from the bottomless pit after the thousand years, transforms into active rebellion against God. So the temple authorities that sought to kill Jesus are symbols of the unbelief that will be concealed but present throughout the Millennium. And a correspondence is disclosed

between the spoken words of Christ Jesus, delivered through modulations of His breath, being represented by flowing or moving waters—the Holy Spirit, holy because it is the divine breath of God [πνεῦμα θεοῦ], is analogous to flowing waters that heal, with the healing coming through the utterance of words of God, Father or Son.

Imagine having waited beside the pool of Siloam on the holy days for thirty-eight years, waiting for the pool's calm surface to suddenly become rippled, ruffled, stirred by the movement of an invisible force, the breath of God, then with the stirring, struggling to lurch yourself toward and into the pool, but always someone less incapacitated getting down the steps first to receive the healing. Where is the justice in the more capable person being healed? Does not God seem to play favorites? Or is it that God can more easily heal the person only slightly injured. Thirty-eight years. Most of a lifetime, a lifetime spent waiting for deliverance—what did this man think when Jesus came to him and asks, “Do you want to be healed?” (John 5:6). What is the man to say? Of course he wants to be healed. He wouldn't be at the pool if he did not want healed. But look at how he answers Jesus, “Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up” (v. 7). He needs help. Even to be healed, he needs help. He is unable to do it on his own. And Jesus, not introducing himself and not known to the man, tells him to stand and walk ... would you have stood and walked? Would you have even attempted to stand? Or would you say, *I have no one to help me*. Or even worse, would you say, *Because Jesus walked uprightly before God, I don't have to stand and walk uprightly, but I can lie here and know that I have been healed (saved)*.

If the invalid would have continued to lie on his bed, would he have been healed? When Jesus asked him if he wanted to be healed, he did not say yes or no, but gave an excuse for why he wasn't healed, and probably a valid excuse. Could he have as easily given Jesus an excuse for why he couldn't stand? Certainly! And he would then not have been able to stand, for he needed faith that he could walk when he did not know who Jesus was. Likewise, disciples need faith that they can walk uprightly before God when told to do so by someone they do not know.

Shall we allow a few moments of silence to pass for the above to bring forth fruit?

Jesus told the temple officials who were seeking to kill Him, “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) ... are these the words of someone Christians know? How about,

I have come in my Father's name, and you will not receive me. If another comes in his own name, you will receive him. How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God? Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you: Moses, on whom you have set your hope. If you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?” (vv. 43-47)

Christians do not know Christ Jesus. They have no idea He said that if Israel did not believe Moses' writings, Israel would not believe His words ... if you do not believe Moses' writings, you will not believe Jesus' words, and if you do not believe His words—He spoke only the Father's words—then you have not passed from death to life, but remain numbered among the dead of this world, walking pillars of salt.

As a Christian, how would you respond if someone came up to you and asked, *Do you want to live forever?* Would you say that you are already assured of living forever,

that you have been born again, that you have been saved by professing that Jesus is Lord and believing that the Father raised him from the dead? Most likely this is what you would say. But if this person whom you did not know went on to ask, *Do you believe Moses' writings?* Would you not say that you are under grace, that the Law of Moses with its legal demands has been abolished? You would, wouldn't you? But all judgment has been given to that person whom you do not know. Yes, all judgment (John 5:22) has been given to the one who said that if you don't believe Moses' writing you will not believe His words ... if you would have been that invalid of thirty-eight years, you would not have risen to take up your bed; rather, you would have asked Jesus if He could help you down into the pool the next time the waters was stirred.

Our hypothetical Christian did not say anything that is not in Scripture, but this Christian does not recognize Jesus nor hear His voice. Instead, he or she has received others—Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Hut, Penn, Fox, Knox, Wesley, White, Moody—in their names, and these others save no one. At best, they could have helped the invalid into the pool. At worse, these twisted the epistles of Paul to their own destruction and joined themselves to “the error of lawless people” (2 Pet 3:17). They are as false as were the temple officials that sought to kill Jesus.

The Jesus that is unknown to most Christians said, “Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment [condemnation]” (John 5:28-29) ... what about grace? Is not grace sufficient to cover the evil done by Christians? And is not judgment based on works [i.e., “done good” versus “done evil”] contrary to what leading theologians have taught about Jesus?

Jesus told those seeking his life, “As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me” (John 5:30) ... to whom does Jesus listen? The Father? The disciple? For His declaration is that all judgment has been given to Him, and He judges as He hears—and when His judgments are revealed upon His return (1 Cor 4:5), those who have done good will be resurrected to life.

Why hasn't our hypothetical Christian been taught that he or she must walk uprightly before God once the person has been “healed” through the gift of everlasting life? Jesus told the invalid of thirty-eight years, “See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you” (John 5:14) ... the implication of Jesus' words are that something worse than being an invalid would happen if the man transgressed the Laws of God. The implication for Christians is that once they have been given life, if they return to sin, which is lawlessness or the transgression of the law (1 John 3:4), they will die the second death. But this isn't what Christians have been taught.

What Jesus told those seeking His life can be said to every leading Christian theologian: “You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life” (John 5:39-40). Is not this the rallying cry of protesting Reformers: *Scriptura sola*? In Scripture alone was salvation. No longer did they need to listen to Jesus' voice (John 10:27), and they didn't. They were as horses with bits between their teeth and the scent of freedom in their nostrils. They could not be herded, and the stampede was on. The *holiness movement* was forbidden fruit, savored for its liberty from the law. But it has also produced bitterness in the belly as Christians began to live like their lawless

neighbors, with the same divorce rates, the same personal failings, the same in every way as the culture in which they live.

Passover is an extremely important period—and it is Passover when the covenant of liberation is annually renewed; when we as disciples are told to stand, pick up our beds and walk uprightly before God. And the great sadness within Christendom is that few keep the Passover, few cover themselves with grace, most are too busy searching the Scriptures for eternal life to listen to Christ.

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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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