

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 *the temple*.

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Weekly Readings

For the Sabbath of March 29, 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.

Grace is, simply, the mantle or cloak or garment of Jesus' righteousness covering a person who has been drawn from this world by the Father and called to be a disciple of Christ Jesus. As a cloaked spacecraft in the *Star Trek* television series was invisible, the lawlessness of a person becomes invisible to the Father and to angels when covered by the blood or righteousness of Christ. This blood or righteousness is, according to Jesus, the "blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Matt 26:28). So there is a covenant involved, a covenant that establishes the basis for Jesus' ongoing covering of His disciples with His blood or righteousness.

A covenant made with the flesh extends from cutting to cutting, from the shedding of blood to the shedding of blood—and such a covenant will be a shadow of a heavenly or spiritual covenant that is ratified by better sacrifices (Heb 9:23). The covenant God made with Noah about never again baptizing the world with water is ratified with the setting of a [rain]bow in the sky (Gen 9:13), a better sacrifice than blood, so this covenant is an eternal covenant. Likewise, the covenant made between God and the mixed circumcised and uncircumcised children of Israel on the plains of Moab (Deut 29:1) was ratified with a song (Deut chap 32), a better sacrifice, so this is an eternal covenant. But the marriage covenant made between physically circumcised Israel and its God, the covenant by which Israel becomes the holy nation of God (Ex 19:5-6), was ratified by the blood of oxen thrown against the altar made at Sinai, and on the people (Ex 24:5-8). This blood was like that of a woman's hymen broken on the marriage bed, so this covenant is made with the flesh and is not an eternal covenant. However, this covenant remained in force until either Israel died as a single person dies, or until God died as a man dies. Only the death of one or the other would end this covenant, for the hymen is not torn and its blood shed a second time. The covenant would end with the shedding of blood at death.

Rabbinical Judaism does not accept the reality that its God died as a man at Calvary; therefore, Judaism contends that this nation [people] remains married to its deity to this day. But the underlying construct of Christendom is that the God who created all that is (John 1:3) entered His creation as His only Son (John 3:16), the man Jesus of Nazareth (John 1:14), and was baptized by John, at which time He received a second life when the divine Breath of the Father descended as a dove, lit and remained on Him, thereby fulfilling all righteousness (Matt 3:15-17). This Son of the Creator of all that is and Son of the Father (the two lives that were within Him following receipt of the spirit of God) died at Calvary, only to be resurrected from the dead by His God and His Father. He received the glory He had before (John 17:5), and now sits at the right hand of the Father as the high priest of disciples, each born of spirit as He was born a second time when the holy spirit or breath of the Father descended as a dove to visibly light on Him.

The underlying construct of Christendom that the Creator of all that is entered His creation as His only Son cannot be proof-tested by materialistic inquiry and is thus outside the bounds of scientific discovery. By the internal claims made by gospel writers, this construct cannot be understood or accepted by non-disciples. A person must have received a second birth through receipt of life coming from the breath of the Father in a manner analogous to how the divine breath of the Father visibly lit and remained on Jesus before the person can understand or accept the construct. Therefore, this construct is inherently divisive, separating those truly born of spirit from those who have not yet been so born. On one side of a rift stands all human beings who have only the life they received from their ancestral father, the first Adam, while on the other side of the rift stand those human beings, few in number, who have received a second life from their spiritual Father, the Most High God. Unfortunately, many who claim to be born again or born anew have only the life they received from their ancestral father; so the Apostle Paul disclosed a determining construct that will conclusively demonstrate whether a person has or has not been born of spirit: the person who has not been born of spirit is hostile to God, does not submit to God's Law, and cannot submit to keeping the Law (Rom 8:7). So the self-identified Christian who does not keep the commandments that the Creator of all that is spoke to Moses from atop Mount Sinai—these commandments are those that Jesus referenced when He said, “Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me” (John 14:21)—either has not been born of spirit, or is willfully rebellious, refusing to be ruled by Jesus as one of the citizens who hated the nobleman (Luke 19:14).

For human beings it is difficult to separate self-identified Christians who have not yet been born of spirit from willfully rebellious sons of God, for the new creature born of spirit as a son of God is neither male nor female, Jew nor Greek, free nor slave. The new creature is truly invisible. And the presence or absence of this new creature is only disclosed by the actions of the fleshly body in which this new creature dwells; so the Christian who has not been born of spirit and the Christian who is too weak to overcome the flesh and the willfully rebellious Christian will all break the commandments, often though only the commandment that the person thinks is least (which is usually the Sabbath commandment). Thus, schisms are necessary to separate genuine disciples from false or rebellious disciples even

though the Body of Christ is one and is not divided into many dissenting slivers. Genuine disciples are living stones that individually and collectively form the temple of God, with this temple representing New Jerusalem and the kingdom of God, which was when Jesus walked among the Pharisees of His day no larger than Jesus Himself.

Some Christians, mostly Arians, like Rabbinical Judaism, refuse to accept that the Creator of all that is died as a man at Calvary; thus, these Christians crept like silly girls feeling the first blush of adulthood as close as they can to Rabbinical Judaism in a *messianic Israel alliance* [or simply, MIA — Missing in Action] movement that promises to leave their virginity hanging as a bloody rag on the cross of Christ.

All of Islam, which is to Christendom as Greek Christianity was to Pauline Christianity or as American Christianity [principally Mormonism] is to Greek Christianity, refuses to accept that God can die as a man under any circumstances. Whether Muslims like it, the ignored assumption within their apologetics is that the God of Abraham is still married to the physically circumcised nation descended from Isaac. Unless the entirety of Israel perishes as a man slain [which both the sons of Esau and the sons of Ishmael intend], the marriage agreement made at Sinai, with its validity acknowledged by Jesus whom Islam recognizes as a great prophet, remains binding in this earthly realm. Muslims cannot make peace with the modern state of Israel or with natural Israelites anywhere. Although Muslims might not be consciously aware of what is at stake, the spiritual princes that reign over Islam comprehend the necessity of exterminating everyone descended from the patriarch Jacob; so there will be no peace between these siblings and cousins until Christ intervenes in a manner that causes both sides to recognize Him as the God of Abraham.

But the Creator of all that is—the *Theos* of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—entered His creation as His only Son and died as a man at Calvary. His death ended the marriage covenant made at Sinai; for today the circumcised-of-heart nation of Israel (Rom 2:26-29) is the holy nation of God (1 Pet 2:9). The offense of physical circumcision was abolished at Calvary (Eph 2:11-22). It will remain abolished for as long as Jesus covers disciples with His righteousness. It will remain abolished when Israel is delivered into the hand of the man of perdition for the destruction of the flesh for 1260 days so that the spirit of weak and rebellious sons of God might be saved. But it will have returned in the Millennium. Whether it returns halfway through the seven endtime years of tribulation or at the end of these seven years remains to be seen.

Regardless, the Sinai covenant was never the covenant by which sins are passed over. Rather, the Sinai covenant and its giving of the Law brought sin to life (Rom 7:8) with sin being the transgression of the Law (1 John 3:4). This covenant made the Law visible to Israel so that its transgressions could be seen by both man and God. And though the marriage covenant made at Sinai required that Israel obey God's voice and keep covenant with God, there was no provision in this covenant for Israel to have life after transgressing the Law. This is seen in Israel's relationship to the Sabbath,

with God chastising transgressors before the giving of the Law (Ex 16:27-30) whereas God ordered the execution of a Sabbath breaker after the Law was given (Num 15:32-36).

The above needs to be emphasized: before the giving of the Law, sin reigned over humankind (Rom 11:32), but this sin was not reckoned or counted against transgressors (Rom 5:13). Every person was under a form of natural grace that did not give life to the person, but did not require the immediate execution of the person when a law of God was broken. This, however, changed once the Law was given at Sinai; for with the giving of the Law, “life” was offered to Israel (v. 14). And with this offer of life came death for transgression of the Law ... the Sinai covenant contained within it the promise of inheriting eternal life, for marriage to God would make Israel one with God as a man and woman when married are one flesh (Gen 2:24), and if God and Israel are one, then there is no other but Israel who can inherit eternal life. This “specialness” tends to produce arrogance and elitism, not integrity and love for God and neighbor.

Between Sinai and Calvary, the only covering for Israel’s transgressions of the Law was animal sacrifices coming from additional commands added because of Israel’s continued bondage to sin. But the lives of innocent livestock cannot pay the death penalties earned by Israel for its lawlessness. All these animal sacrifices could do was delay the implementation of the wages earned for sin—

Here is where Rabbinical Judaism goes terribly wrong: every transgression of the Law earns the transgressor death. The rabbi who strives to do right, keeping the Law to the best of his ability, will inevitably break the Law in some minor or major point. This rabbi now needs a covering for his sin, and when the temple stood in what is now present day Jerusalem, a sin offering would have been presented to God not to erase or abolish the sin but to cover it with blood so that the death penalty demanded for it would not have to immediately be paid as the man gathering sticks paid with his life for his transgression. But since the destruction of the temple in 70 CE, Judaism has had nowhere for a sin offering to made. Therefore, since 70 CE, the sins of Israel cannot be covered by the blood of regularly sacrificed sin offerings, for there is no temple, no altar. Yet every natural Israelite who sins is not immediately stoned as the Sabbath breaker found gathering sticks was, so explication and understanding of what has occurred since 70 CE is necessary.

With the razing of the Jerusalem temple, livestock sacrificed as sin offerings cannot be presented to God, nor should they be. For on the 14th of Abib in the year that corresponded to 31 CE, Jesus of Nazareth as the Passover Lamb of God was sacrificed as the reality of every lamb, every goat, every bull, every dove ever offered to God in any capacity. His sacrifice of His life, with His body/Body [lower case “b” representing His physical body and the capital “B” representing His spiritual Body, the Church] being the temple not built with hands, ended both the need for additional animal sacrifices as well as the need for a physical temple in Jerusalem. The death of the “life” dwelling within His body/Body becomes the reality of the livestock that would be offered as sin offerings, with His visible body/Body representing the temple in which sin offerings would be made.

The Creator of all that is (John 1:3) entered His creation as the man Jesus of Nazareth. His death exceeded the worth of all life that has ever lived; thus, He was able to take on the sins of this world while on the cross at Calvary. But before He died at Calvary, He ate the Passover and after the meal,

Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." (Matt 26:26-29)

Jesus made the unleavened bread of the Passover meal He ate the symbol of His body, and He made the wine served at that Passover meal the symbol of His blood, with His blood becoming the covering needed for Israel not to die immediately for transgressions of the Law. Thus, when disciples take the Passover sacraments of bread and wine on the night that Jesus was betrayed (the dark portion of the 14th of Abib), they participate in the annual renewing of the covenant by which Jesus' blood covers their sins.

We don't today see people immediately dying because of some transgression of the law. Nor was this seen in the 1st-Century before Calvary. So what's going on? And the "what" amounts to realization that death is separation from God, not necessarily absence of physical breath.

To God, the presence or absence of physical breath in a human being is no more than the person being awake or being asleep (Matt 9:24); so it isn't human life or death that God considers as life or death (not a oxymoron), but His presence or absence. As long as God is present—as long as God is with, or His eyes are on Israel—then the Israelite either had the possibility of inheriting eternal life or now has eternal life present in the person in the form of the Holy Spirit. But when God hid or hides His face from Israel because of sin (Deut 32:20), the natural Israelite did not inherit eternal life, nor will the Israelite who has been born of spirit have his or her lawlessness covered by Grace. So the presence of God equates to life while the absence of God equates to death. Separation from God is absence from God. Thus, when God delivered first the house of Israel into the hand of the Assyrians, then the house of Judah into the hand of the Babylonians, both Israel and Judah were "slain" as if each nation were a man, for with delivery into captivity each nation was separated from God.

When in Egypt, the lawlessness of Israel was "covered" by the nation being the bondservants of Pharaoh. As such, Pharaoh assumed responsibility for Israel's transgressions, but Egypt had not received the Law so transgressions of the Law were not reckoned against Pharaoh or Egypt. However, Pharaoh and his firstborn son and the firstborn of Egypt paid with their lives when God ransomed Israel, for Egypt had no covering for the sins for which the nation was

responsible. Israel covered their sins with the blood of Passover lambs slain six hours before the death angels passed over all of Egypt.

The kings of Assyria and Babylon assumed responsibility for the house of Israel's, and the house of Judah's lawlessness once these nations became captive peoples. The record of debt that these two houses of Israel accumulated after being delivered into captivity became the responsibility of the kings of these Gentile nations. But as with Pharaoh, neither of these Gentile nations had received the Law; thus, sin was not reckoned against either nation, but in Scripture Assyria becomes the typological representation of Death as Egypt is the representation of Sin. Babylon, now, becomes the representation of the single kingdom of the world, with King Nebuchadnezzar serving as the lively representative of the prince of this world. And at a second Passover liberation of Israel, the lives of firstborns in spiritual Babylon (the single kingdom of this world) will be given as ransom for spiritually circumcised Israel's ransom from bondage to indwelling sin and death (Isa 43:4).

God spiritually slays Israel for the nation's transgressions by sending both houses into Gentile captivity: He separated Israel from Himself. And as long as Israel remained/remains a captive people—even though the nation will physically prosper in the cities of the Chaldeans—Israel is “dead.” In Babylon, Israel's prosperity does not come from Judean hillsides; hence, the harvest is not of God or for God.

With the temple in Jerusalem destroyed and with Israel a captive people, Cyrus, king of Persia, decreed,

Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: The Lord [YHWH], the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever is among you of all his people, may his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and rebuild the house of the Lord [YHWH], the God of Israel—he is the God who is in Jerusalem. (Ezra 1:2-3)

So a remnant of Israel returned to Jerusalem, but this remnant did not return as a free people or of their own volition. And this is an important point to remember: for all of the years work on the temple limped along, Israel remained a captive people under the yoke of the king of Persia. Only within the walls of the temple was Israel free from bondage to the Persian king. Only within the temple could sacrifices occur, and the ability to sacrifice is the determiner of whether Israel is free or slave.

For Israel, the situation does not change under the kings of Persia, nor under Alexander or the Ptolemaic kingdom: only the temple was under the control of Israel. And this limited piece of free geography was threatened by the Seleucid king Antiochus Epiphanes IV when he ordered that a pig be sacrificed on the temple's altar and a statue of Zeus be placed in the Holy of holies.

But because God had returned the temple to Israel's control, with this physical temple being the shadow and type of the spiritual temple that becomes New Jerusalem, God apparently backed the Maccabean rebellion as these physical sons of light successfully fought to regain control of the temple. And here is where prophecy deviates from history, for the spiritual sons of light with Christ Jesus leading will fight to regain control of the spiritual temple in a different manner than the Maccabees fought. The fight of these spiritual sons will not be with weapons forged from the dust of this earth, but with weapons forged in heaven for they will fight against wicked spirits (or spiritual wickedness) in that portion of the heavenly realm within the bottomless pit.

It was needful for Israel to retain control of the temple throughout the period between Antiochus Epiphanes IV and the death of Jesus at Calvary; thus, Israel retained control of the temple under Roman occupation and kept this control until the rebellion that ended with the razing of the temple in 70 CE.

It was typologically important for Israel to receive control of the temple after the prophesied 70 years of Jerusalem being uninhabited, for those years correspond to the twelve centuries when spiritual Israel was separated from God and thus dead through being enslaved by the spiritual king of Babylon, and it was typologically important that 483 years occur between when the third order goes out to rebuild the temple and the beginning of Jesus' ministry in 27 CE, for these years correspond to the period between when a remnant of spiritually circumcised Israel left spiritual Babylon and when life is restored to the Body of Christ (meaning that the separation from Christ ends). If the first 483 years of the seventy weeks prophecy correspond to 483 years, then restoration of life to the Body is on the immediate event horizon.

Even though Israel was not an otherwise free people for most of the period between Cyrus and Herod, sacrifices were offered in the temple—and it is the history of the temple between Cyrus and Antiochus Epiphanes IV that forms the shadow of the Church between approximately 1525/27 CE and the beginning of the seven endtime years of tribulation that start with the second Passover liberation of Israel.

Jesus said that His body was the temple that mattered (John 2:19 *et al*); Jesus' body/Body replaced the temple. The sacrifices presented to God in the temple that Cyrus ordered rebuilt were shadows and copies of the sacrifice Jesus made at Calvary.

As physically circumcised Israel was the shadow and type of spiritually circumcised [i.e., circumcised of heart] Israel, the temple in physical Jerusalem was the shadow and copy of the body/Body of Christ, the temple of God in which the spirit of God dwells.

Now, where does all of this go? There is no provision made in the Sinai covenant for the forgiveness of sin; yet, it is through this covenant that the Law comes which brings sin to life and it is through this

covenant that the promise of eternal life comes to Israel. The sacrifices were added because Israel could not keep the Law. However, it is by the terms of the Passover covenant made with Israel on the day when God took the nation's fathers by the hand to lead them out of Egypt that Israel is alive today.

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The person conducting the service should read or assign to be read Exodus chapter 12 and 13; followed by Jeremiah chapter 31, verses 31 through 34.

Commentary: The new covenant replaces the Passover covenant, not the Sinai covenant (Ex chapter 20-24) or the Moab covenant (Deut chaps 29-32), and this new covenant has not yet been implemented for Jesus continued the Passover covenant in the same way that Israel itself is continued as the holy nation of God. The covenants of promise from which the “uncircumcised” were once aliens (Eph 2:12) were not abolished; the offense of physical circumcision was abolished. Jesus’ death at Calvary ended the marriage covenant made with the natural descendants of Jacob at Sinai. His death did not end the Law, or the promise of life. Rather, the Law moves from being written on two tablets of stone to being written—when the new covenant is implemented—on two tablets of flesh, the heart and mind of the disciple.

When Israel rebels against God in the wilderness of Paran (Num chap 14), with the exception of Joshua and Caleb, the nation numbered in the census of the second year is slain as if the nation were a man—and this “slaying” of Israel becomes the shadow and copy of the “slaying” of spiritually circumcised Israel when God delivered this holy nation in the hand of the spiritual king of Babylon (ca 325 CE) as He had earlier delivered physically circumcised Israel into the hand of the physical king of Babylon (ca 586 BCE). Therefore, the second covenant [as opposed to the new covenant] made with the mixed circumcised and uncircumcised children of Israel on the plains of Moab is an eternal covenant, and the covenant to which better promises were added when its mediator becomes Christ Jesus.

Jesus replaced the temple made with hands as the temple of God. Disciples who are one with Jesus have been added to this temple, thereby making each the temple as Jesus was and making them collectively the temple as New Jerusalem will be. No physical temple in present day Jerusalem can be the temple of God, or can have spiritual importance. So efforts to rebuild a physical temple are at best misguided; at worse, these efforts amount to open rebellion against God.

When Israel left Egypt after its first Passover liberation, God’s rest lay before the nation in the geography of all Canaan. But the nation that left Egypt rebelled against God and was not allowed to enter into God’s rest (Ps 95:10-11), so it fell to the children of Israel to enter into God’s rest, where these children also rebelled against God (Ezek chap 20). So God physically removed the children of

these children from the geographical landscape that represented His rest: He sent both the house of Israel and the house of Judah into captivity. Then He allowed a remnant of Israel to return, not as a free people but as a slave nation, to rebuild the temple in a model (as a shadow and copy) that foreshadowed the resurrection to life of the Body of Christ between the 16th and 21st Centuries. The movement now from the physical temple being the temple of God to Jesus' physical body being the temple of God corresponds to [the second Passover liberation](#) of Israel, at which time the spiritual Body of Christ will be resurrected through the Church being empowered by the spirit of God in a manner represented by what happened on that day of Pentecost that followed Calvary. For the past almost five centuries, the remnant of a remnant of Christendom that came from the Radical Reformers (the Anabaptists) has corresponded to the rebuilt temple from the time of Ezra through to the beginning of the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes IV. This era of the Church has been, unfortunately, as spiritually lifeless as the physical temple of God was in Jerusalem. But this will all change suddenly at the second Passover. But more about the Passover next Sabbath.

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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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