

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 Sabbath.

Clickable hymns on this page require [RealPlayer](#) to be installed on your computer. The download is free.

Possible songs include the following hymns:

[How Firm A Foundation](#)

[Eternal Father, Strong to Save](#)

[Lord Teach Me That I May Know](#)

[O Lord of Hosts, My King, My God](#)

[Wisdom Begins With the Fear of the Lord](#)

Weekly Readings For the Sabbath of May 2, 2009

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 Ezekiel chapter 20.

Commentary: When the elders of Israel came to the prophet Ezekiel to inquire of the Lord [*YHWH*], the Lord told Ezekiel (the son of Adam) that He would not be inquired of by these elders, that Ezekiel was to let them know their abomination, and the Lord gave to Ezekiel an account of Israel's faults that reads much like the account that Stephen gave before he was stoned.

The elders of Israel in Ezekiel's day were in Babylon, among the captives there. They were men who knew their prayers were not being answered, that no miraculous deliverances were occurring as had happened in the days of Moses, Joshua, Samuel, and Isaiah (when the Assyrians had withdrawn from around Jerusalem). They knew they needed Ezekiel, whose prayers were heard on high, to ask the Lord about His will. And the Lord would not entertain their inquiry even when coming through Ezekiel.

In Egypt, before the Lord took the fathers of Israel by the hand to lead them out of bondage (Jer 31:32), Israel rebelled against the Lord (Ezek 20:8) ... yes, when Moses first went to Egypt by command of the Lord to lead Israel to a Promised Land, before the Pharaoh released the nation after the tenth plague, Israel rebelled through its unbelief: the nation was not willing to listen to the Lord—and so it is with the Christian Church today.

What Christian leaders have failed to perceive is that today, 2009, is a time when the Christian Church is directly analogous to Israel in Egypt on the night of the tenth plague.

One long spiritual night began when the Passover Lamb of God was sacrificed on the 14th day of Abib in the Hebrew year 3791, but when the Lamb was sacrificed, there was no circumcised of heart Israel. Thus, the Christian Church

era began and has grown large in the dark portion—in the portion equivalent to the first six hours of the 14th of Abib when Israel in Egypt awaited liberation—of the one long spiritual night that will end when the kingdom of this world becomes the kingdom of the Father and the Son (Rev 11:15; Dan 7:9–14).

Through the first nine plagues, the Lord made a distinction between Egypt and Israel as the Lord through Moses has made a distinction between those who are of this world and Israel, now a nation circumcised of heart (Rom 2:28–29); for Jesus said, “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?” (John 5:46–47) ... today’s Christian Church is not willing to believe the writings of Moses nor to hear the words of Jesus nor believe the One who sent Him; for Jesus said, “Therefore whoever relaxes [not breaks] one of the least of these commandments [of the Torah] and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of [the heavens], but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of [the heavens]” (Matt 5:19).

Is the Christian Church not like Israel in Egypt, a nation that rebelled against the Lord before being liberated from bondage to Pharaoh? What is the least of the commandments? Don’t most Christians believe the Sabbath commandment is least? Certainly they behave as if they do; for they use the Sabbath as their principle day for buying and selling the merchandise of this world. If a business is to have a one-day-sale, that sale will always occur on the Sabbath—and do Christians participate in this sale? Of course they do. So Christians, by their habitual practice of buying and selling on the Sabbath, tell God that they are of this world, that they remain a part of this world, that they don’t really care what He thinks of them, that they will worship Him however and whenever they please, and that He had better be satisfied with whatever they do.

Is that not what the greater Christian Church does? Dictate to God their worship terms, telling Him that they will do whatever they want, that conciliar Christendom has the authority to negate the very words of Jesus and practices of the Christian Church in Judea—that is exactly what today’s Christian Church has done, and is proud of doing.

Jesus said that the person who relaxes but doesn’t break the Sabbath commandment will be called least in the kingdom, whereas the person who habitually breaks the Sabbath commandment and teaches others to do the same will, regardless of the mighty works this person does in Jesus’ name, be denied entrance into the kingdom when judgments are revealed (Matt 7:21–23). Yet, Christendom calls Jesus a liar, or to be more charitable, says that what Jesus said only pertained to Jews, that Jesus gave the Church the authority to change the Sabbath from the seventh day to the first day of the week, that the Church has loosed the need to rest on the Sabbath and has bound the need to worship God on Sunday, the day of the mighty sun.

The writer of Hebrews says, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever” (13:8) ... if Jesus doesn’t change, then from where has change entered the Christian Church if not from the Adversary, who was a liar and a murderer from the beginning?

How many Christian ministers habitually teach their parishioners to break the Sabbath commandment? You can go ahead and raise your hands if you teach Christ’s little ones to transgress the law. The Father and the Son already know who you are. Satan knows who you are, for you are one of his ministers (and he has ministers — 2 Cor 11:14–15). Sabbatarian disciples know who you are. You’re

fooling no one. So keep your hands in the air, at least until guilt overwhelms you and shames you and perhaps causes you to repent.

(More disciples than just those of *Philadelphia* read these Readings.)

The Christian Church today is as Israel was in Egypt ... Jesus is the prophet who was like Moses (Deut 18:15–16), a prophet who speaks directly with God. And as Israel in Egypt was in physical bondage [slavery] to a human king, the Christ Church is today in bondage to sin and to the prince of this world; for if the Christian Church were not in bondage to sin, it would not present itself as the obedient slave to sin (Rom 6:16).

Paul writes,

For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. (Rom 8:5–7)

Is it possible for the Christian Church to submit to God's law? It is not possible, is it? For the Christian Church reads the first four verses of Romans chapter 8 —

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. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit —

then skips to verse 9 (“You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you”) and assures itself that it is a spirit-filled assembly; whereas its hostility to God prevents it from walking as Jesus walked (1 John 2:6) or imitating Paul as he imitated Jesus (1 Cor 4:16; 11:1; Phil 3:17; 1 Thess 1:6) or imitating the churches of God that were in Judea (1 Thess 2:14) or keeping the precepts of the law so that its uncircumcision will be counted as circumcision (Rom 2:26).

Indeed, there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ, but the lawless are not of Christ but are of the devil:

Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. You know that he [Jesus] appeared to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God. By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother. (1 John 3:4–10)

No one rewrote John's epistle in the middle of night to make it say that that the children of the devil could be recognized by their habitual lawlessness.

The righteous requirement of the law is simple: transgression of the law requires that the life of the transgressor be taken, as in the case of the man found gathering sticks on the Sabbath ... those Israelites who found the man gathering sticks brought him to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation to determine what was to be done. And the Lord told Moses, "The man shall be put to death; all the congregation shall stone him with stones outside the camp" (Num 15:35).

The man was to be stoned for he had broken the law inscribed on stone tablets.

If disciples are to walk according to the spirit and not according to the flesh, these disciples will submit to God's law—and submission to God's law will be by faith for the uncircumcised person who is under no cultural obligation to keep the commandments. Thus, the lawless are not of Christ because they do not submit to God's law but transgress the law, thereby making it their practice to sin.

The self-proclaimed "spirit filled" Christian teacher or pastor who practices lawlessness will inevitably let his or her fangs show when told a disciple tells this wolf that he or she doesn't have the spirit of God and is not of God, but is of the devil. This Christian wolf will say things reminiscent of what Pharisees told Jesus:

Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. I know that you are offspring of Abraham; yet you seek to kill me because my word finds no place in you. I speak of what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have heard from your father."

They answered him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing the works Abraham did, but now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did. You are doing the works your father did." They said to him, "We were not born of sexual immorality. We have one Father—even God." Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me. Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. (John 8:34–44)

Our lawless Christian wolf will say that he or she is of Christ as the Jews told Jesus that they were of Abraham, but if this Christian wolf were of Christ he or she would walk as Christ walked, and he or she certainly wouldn't present him or herself as a slave to sin, which is how every Sunday-worshiping Christian presents him or herself.

Is transgression of the Sabbath not sin?

There is little dispute that murder is sin, and perhaps even less dispute that adultery is sin. Paul writes, "What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I

would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, ‘You shall not covet.’ But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. For apart from the law, sin lies dead” (Rom 7:7–8).

Apart from the Law (the Torah — from Jer 31:33; Heb 8:10), no one would know to keep the Sabbath, the sign between the Lord and Israel (now the nation circumcised of heart — Rom 2:28–29) that God sanctifies only Israel. Apart from the Law, knowledge of God would lie dead, and apart from the Sabbath, no one would enter into God’s rest, a euphemism for salvation.

The above is correct: apart from the Law with its righteous requirements that lead to life or death, there would be no coming of Christ Jesus, no covering of sin or raising of the dead, no promise of entering into God’s rest. So yes, transgression of the Sabbath is sin, equivalent in heinousness to murder and adultery! It just doesn’t seem as terrible because how common it has become ... a half century ago, young men and women were just as interested in sex and forming sexual unions as they are today or as they were in the 1st-Century CE. Occasionally, a couple would begin to live together; they *shacked up*, a socially unacceptable temporary union. Marriage almost inevitably followed pregnancy: couples seldom stayed *shacked up*, and they certainly didn’t advertise their unmarried status. But today, couples cohabit without social stigma. Men and women introduce their sexual partners as their boyfriends or girlfriends. Living together as unmarried singles now is common enough that cohabitation no longer seems like sexual immorality; yet it is. It was sexual immorality in the 1st-Century; it was sexual immorality in the 1950s; and it still is sexual immorality and reason enough to prevent the couple from entering into Christian fellowship (Acts 15:20). But how many “Christian” pastors will tell a cohabitating couple that until they rectify their marital status, either marrying or separating, they are not welcome in services? Instead pastors say that services are for sinners; that the cohabitating couple (because of their sexual immorality) needs God all the more.

What is so difficult about rectifying a person’s marital status? And what is so difficult about applying the criteria established at the Jerusalem conference for entering into fellowship with other saints? And further, what is so difficult about observing the Sabbath? The person who claims to have a personal relationship with Christ Jesus should, if he or she walks with Christ, actually walk as Jesus walked, what John states:

My little children, I [John] am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked. (1 John 2:1–6)

So we may not sin ... again, when did transgressing the Sabbath quit being sin?

The person who claims to have a personal relationship with Christ Jesus but who does not keep His commandments, with these commandments being the Ten Commandments, is a liar ... the Logos [ὁ λόγος], who was the Theos who

created all things (John 1:1–3), spoke the ten living words to Moses then twice inscribed these living words on tablets of stone before entering His creation as His only Son (John 3:16), the man Jesus (John 1:14); thus, it is always wrong to say that the Ten Commandments are not the commandments of Christ.

If the person who has turned his or her life over to Christ doesn't keep the commandments, to whom has this person turned his or her life over to? Has this person not turned his or her life over to the Adversary, who appears disguised as an angel of light (2 Cor 11:14)? Does this person practice sinning and is therefore a child of the devil? Certainly the *Christian* who doesn't strive to keep the precepts of the law by faith doesn't know Christ Jesus.

Paul adds to what is cited above: "I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died. The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good" (Rom 7:9–12) – and sin, coming alive to the person because he or she has been brought near to God, deceives the *Christian* into believing that transgressing the Sabbath is the expectation of all Christians.

The above is important for this Sabbath *Philadelphia* has a pastor in the Philippines who has only recently begun observing the Sabbath, and who is now unemployed because his former boss, a "good" spirit-filled Sunday-observing Christian, wants to punish him for obeying God. Last week was the first Sabbath that this pastor met with others on the Sabbath, and this week, he has been fired from his job, mocked by friends, accused of being deceived, and generally dumped on by the present prince of this world. His wife worries about how they will survive, and he is trying to bear up under everything Satan can bring against him—and Satan is using "good," self-proclaimed spirit filled Christians to do his dirty work for him.

Return to Ezekiel chapter 20: Israel rebelled against the Lord in Egypt, then in the wilderness, then the children of Israel rebelled against the Lord in the Promised Land by not walking in His statutes and profaning His Sabbaths—and finally, He, the Lord, gave to Israel "statutes that were not good and rules by which they could not have life, and [He, the Lord] defiled them through their very gifts in their offering up all their firstborn, that [He, the Lord] might devastate them. [He, the Lord] did it that they might know that [He, the Lord, is] the Lord" (20:25–26).

Yes, your Bible says what you have just read: because Israel would not walk in His statutes and continued to profane His Sabbaths, the Lord gave to Israel statutes and rules that caused Israel to burn the nation's firstborns. He gave Israel these statutes and rules that they might know Him. And the Father has given to endtime Israel traditions and practices by which Christians cannot have life, but will cause the indwelling firstborn son of God to perish in the lake of fire—and the foremost of these traditions and practices is Sunday worship.

When the Tribulation begins and the fifth seal of the Scroll is removed, the saints will again be martyred as they were martyred in the 1st-Century (Rev 6:9–11). The removal of the sixth seal is the wrath of the Lamb, His reaction to what He thinks of the world martyring those disciples who keep the commandments of God. So what do you suppose the Lamb is thinking right now as a Christian pastor who has only recently come to the Truth has his character, his family, and his income attacked by well-intentioned "Christians"?

Persecution of the saints is guaranteed—and so is the wrath of the Lamb, followed by the wrath of God when the earth is harvested.

Every person will experience persecution by those who are of this world or the wrath of God as He exercises His vengeance:

Then another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, the angel who has authority over the fire, and he called with a loud voice to the one who had the sharp sickle, "Put in your sickle and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, for its grapes are ripe." So the angel swung his sickle across the earth and gathered the grape harvest of the earth and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden outside the city, and blood flowed from the winepress, as high as a horse's bridle, for 1,600 stadia. (Rev 14:17–20)

With persecution will come salvation so you decide which it will be.

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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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