

6The 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 plagues.

Weekly Readings For the Sabbath of May 9, 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 Genesis chapter 13, verses 14 through 17; followed by chapter 18, verse 1, and by chapter 20.

Commentary: The Lord promised Abram that when looking from where he was after he separated from Lot, his nephew, all the land to the north, south, east, and west that he could see would be his and his offspring forever, that his offspring shall be as the dust of the earth, too many to be counted—and Abraham was told to go through the length and breadth of the land that the Lord would give him. And Abram moved his tent and settled by the oaks of Mamre. Although this land was promised to Abram, it was not then given to Abram. It still belonged to the Amorite Mamre, who either willingly permitted Abram to dwell on his land, or couldn't do anything to prevent Abram from dwelling on his land. Either scenario, the land still belonged to Mamre, and Abram was a squatter or renter.

In Scripture, Abram is not seen paying any rentals; thus, the assumption has to be that because the Lord promised Abram the land, Abram treated the land as his own even though he knew that it had not yet been given to him as he knew that he had a shortage of offspring, that Eliezer of Damascus would inherit his household if he were to die (Gen 15:2).

When Abram brought it to the Lord's attention that he had no offspring, he said, "Behold, you [God] have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir" (Gen 15:3), the Lord answered, "This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir" (v. 4). And the Lord had Abram look at the stars, and told Abram that his seed shall be as the stars. Abram believed him and this act of believing what seemed impossible was counted to Abram as righteousness (v. 6) ... if Abraham's faith in, and belief of God is counted to him as righteousness (Heb 11:8–10; Rom 3:3–5), then the works of Abraham that would seem to negate righteousness (a half-truth is a full lie) are themselves negated by Abraham's faith. But Abraham's faith was not a simple profession with his mouth, but belief that caused Abram to leave the land of Haran and continue and complete his journey from Ur of the Chaldeans to Canaan.

Faith is of the heart, the inner self, and faith will always be manifested in action of some sort; for in believing the Lord that his heir would come from his loins, Abram tried to help the Lord out by taking Sarai's handmaid Hagar as a surrogate wife.

When Sarai gave Hagar to Abram after they had lived ten years in the land of Canaan—how long can a person reasonably wait for the Lord to fulfill His word—Hagar bore Ishmael, a mistake that did not negate Abram's righteousness that was based on belief ... in analogy, Abram going into Hagar is similar to Moses killing the Egyptian (Ex 2:11–12). Moses had to suspect that his unusual upbringing as the child of Pharaoh's daughter, nursed by his own mother, occurred so that he could deliver Israel from Egyptian slavery. But as Abram couldn't imagine how his heir could come from Sarai's dead womb, Moses couldn't imagine how Israel could be delivered except by the sword; so both of them sought to "help God out."

If Abram could wait ten years or less for an heir to come from his loins before taking matters into his own hands, so to speak, how long would Abraham wait to receive the real estate promised to him, considering that he and his servants (trained men born in his house, 318 in number) had already defeated the four kings? Certainly Abraham had not yet learned that he could fully trust the Lord, for he would tell King Abimelech a half-truth that nearly got Abimelech killed "because I thought, There is no fear of God at all in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife" (Gen 20:11–12). If Abraham had fully believed the Lord, he would have known that since no promised heir had yet come from Sarah's womb (that Sarah's womb was still closed up), Abimelech would not be permitted by the Lord to kill him. But rational thought suffers when faced with either perceived or real danger, as Israel faced on the shore of the Sea of Reeds (Ex chap 14).

Abraham's faith was not where it should have been until he was asked to sacrifice Isaac ... when arriving at the foot of the mountain, Abraham tells his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; I and the boy [young man] will go over there and worship and come again to you" (Gen 22:5). Abraham tells his servants that he and Isaac will return, meaning that now Abraham truly believes that his heir will come through Isaac so nothing will prevent Isaac from returning, including being sacrificed.

Yet long before Abraham's faith was perfected, it was counted to him as righteousness—while sin remained in Abraham's mouth, the Lord identified Abraham as His prophet (Gen 20:7). Thus, it wasn't the absence of sin that was counted as righteousness, but the presence of faith manifested as belief leading to action.

It was the presence of unbelief in Abraham when encountering Pharaoh and later Abimelech that discloses the important chiral relationship that plagues which lead to death form the shadow and copy of opening wombs leading to life, with death being the left hand enantiomer of Christ sitting down at the right hand of the Most High in everlasting life.

Therefore, returning to Abraham: after years of dwelling as a squatter under the oaks of the Amorite Mamre, Abram (now named Abraham), still childless, relocated to Gerar, part of the land promised to Abraham, had flocks and servants and would have appeared as a wealthy but homeless man. Thus, apparently seeking to ally Abraham to himself (and because Sarah would have still been an attractive woman), Abimelech, king of Gerar, took whom he sincerely believed was Abraham's sister as his wife, a marriage that would have functioned as a treaty obligating Abraham to remain in Gerar and to support Abimelech ... Abimelech and Phicol, the commander of his army, would negotiate such a treaty with Abraham after the king returned Sarah.

(There are those who would teach that Sarah, late in life, must have been tremendously physically attractive to be of sexual interest to Abimelech, but those who teach such nonsense do so because they are preoccupied with sex.)

The marriage of Abraham's sister to Abimelech would have been an alliance that hindered Abraham and his servants from making war against Abimelech, and an alliance that would have added Abraham's wealth and strength to Abimelech's. But the marriage was not consummated for long enough that the wombs of Abimelech's wife and female slaves were known to have closed (Gen 20:18)—no children were being born into Abimelech's household, and in order for it to be known that wombs had closed, months had to have passed. Therefore, there is a narrative gap between chapter 20 verse 2 and verse 3. This gap consists of most of the period between when the Lord promised "Sarah shall bear to you at this time next year" (Gen 17:21) and the conception of Isaac (Gen 21:2), meaning that when the Lord healed the wombs of Abimelech's household He also healed Sarah's womb, for she had been of Abimelech's household.

To endtime disciples it seems odd that the Lord would close wombs, only to open them when Sarah's womb was opened. But again, plagues and opening wombs are enantiomorphs. So in Sarah's womb being long closed, Abram was experiencing *death* of a type that comes via a plague. Liberation doesn't come through exiting Egypt as liberation would come to the physically circumcised nation of Israel. Rather, liberation came to Abraham when liberation comes to Abimelech, the Philistine, and his household.

The story of Abimelech is a repeat of what happened with Pharaoh (Gen 12:10–20), with Pharaoh making Abraham a wealthy man for his venture into sin/Egypt. And when narratives are repeated in Scripture, there is a reason other than the lesson wasn't learned the first time; for the structure of Scripture has the visible things of this world revealing the hidden or invisible things of God, meaning that when a narrative is repeated the first telling of the narrative unit will pertain to the physical things of this world while the second telling will pertain to the invisible things of God. Thus, disciples see that when Abram and Sarai entered Egypt, "the Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful." And when the princes of Pharaoh saw her, they praised her to Pharaoh. And the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house" (12:14–15) ... what happened to Sarai's name? Her physical beauty is seen, and she becomes *the woman*, an object for male gratification and child bearing. And because she was *objectified*, Pharaoh "dealt well with Abram; and he had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, males servants, female servants, female donkeys, and camels" (v. 16). Abram's half truth (all lie), told in Egypt, caused Pharaoh to make Abram a wealthy man.

But in *objectifying* Sarai, "the Lord afflicted Pharaoh and his house with great plagues" (v. 17), and Pharaoh returned to Abram his wife then "gave men orders concerning [Abram], and they sent him away with his wife and all that he had" (v. 20).

There is parallelism with the Exodus story that must be examined before returning to Abimelech:

- Pharaoh takes Sarai as his wife as Pharaoh [a different pharaoh] takes Israel, the Lord's firstborn son (Ex 4:22), as bondservants or slaves.
- The Lord sends plagues upon Pharaoh's household to convince Pharaoh to return Sarai to Abram as the Lord sends plagues upon all of Egypt to convince Pharaoh to return His firstborn son to Him.

- Abram is forcibly evicted by the men of Pharaoh as Pharaoh commands Moses and Aaron to take Israel and its flocks out of the land (Ex 12:31–32).

Abram's exodus from Egypt and Israel's exodus are linked by chirality; for Abram married Sarai before entering Egypt and the Lord marries Israel after the nation leaves Egypt. Thus, Abram functions as a shadow and type of *Yah*, the Logos [ὁ λόγος], the metaphor central to Paul's analogy of disciples being like Isaac, children of promise (Gal 4:21–31).

Remember, John asserts that in “the beginning was the Logos [ὁ λόγος], and the Logos was with [πρὸς] the God [τὸν θεόν], and God [θεὸς] was the Logos [ὁ λόγος]. This one was in the beginning with the God [τὸν θεόν]. All things through him came to be and without him came to be not one thing” (1:1–3 direct translation). It was the Logos as God [θεὸς] who entered His creation as His only Son (John 3:16), the man Jesus (John 1:14). He came to reveal the God [τὸν θεόν], whom Israel never knew. And while case endings visually separate the God [τὸν θεόν] from the Logos [ὁ λόγος] who was also God [θεὸς], these two form one God [θεὸς], making θεὸς not the “name” of a deity but the linguistic icon that identifies “deity.” Thus, the Greek icon θεὸς functions as the name of a kingdom (e.g., Animalia) in scientific classification; hence, the “kingdom of God” is both the possession [*kingdom*] of Most High as well as the house [*God*] of the Most High. Today in this kingdom there are two deities, the Father and the Son, both *God*, but following the Second Advent, in this house will also be the remainder of the firstfruits, of whom Christ Jesus was First, with *Christ* [Χριστὸν] being the linguistic icon that identifies the firstfruits, the firstborn son of the Father, the firstborn son of this house, with within this *son* the disciples of Jesus “marrying” the Son so that all glorified disciples are *one* with Jesus as the Body of Christ has been *one* with its Head¹.

¹ Paul said that the saints were individually and collectively the Body of Christ (1 Cor 12:27), and as a body is one with its head, the saints are and have been one with the glorified Jesus (John 17:11, 21–23). But a bridegroom doesn't marry his body, but marries his bride; thus a separation must occur that divides the Head from the Body so that saints will cease being the Body of Christ. And it is this separation that occurs at the second Passover when Christians are liberated from indwelling sin and death.

Unfortunately, the Christian Church that is liberated from indwelling sin by being filled with spirit (as a cup filled with a liquid has no room within it for another liquid) will rebel against God 220 days into the Tribulation and will take sin back within itself thereby figuratively forcing out spirit and committing blasphemy against the spirit of God. With the exception of a *Joshua* and a *Caleb*, all of the Christian Church will rebel as Israel rebelled in the wilderness (Num chap 14). And as the children of Israel—the children of the nation that left Egypt—as opposed to the nation that left Egypt entered into God's rest, the third part of humankind will be born of spirit when the world is baptized in spirit and will be saved if it endures to the end (Matt 24:13). But this third part is not today Christian and will not be Christian prior to the kingdom of this world being given to the Son of Man (Rev 11:15; Dan 7:9–14), so this third part will not ever have been one with Christ Jesus. Hence, this third part of humankind that will make up the vast majority of the endtime harvest of firstfruits must “marry” Christ Jesus to be one with Christ Jesus as pre-Tribulation disciples are one with Christ Jesus through being His Body—and it is His Body that Sin, the third horseman, is not permitted to harm (Rev 6:6).

Disciples who are today genuinely born of spirit and who cover themselves by drinking from the cup on the night that Jesus was betrayed are one with Christ Jesus through being the Body of Christ. These disciples will have already died physically, or with the exception of a *Joshua* and a *Caleb*, they will die physically during the 1260 days of the Tribulation. Therefore the 144,000 that followed the Lamb in the 1260 day long Endurance and the *great multitude* that comes out of the Endurance will not have been one with Christ Jesus by being His Body but will become one with Christ Jesus through marriage at the prophesied Wedding Supper.

The singularity of the English icon “son” hinders endtime disciples from perceiving that collectively, ancient Israel was the firstborn son of the Lord [the Logos — ὁ λόγος], the deity that Moses, Aaron, and seventy elders of Israel saw (Ex 24:9–11), as the saints are the firstborn son of the Father. Thus, ancient Israel forms the visible, physical type of the invisible (yes, invisible), spiritual nation of Israel that is the Christian Church, with ancient Israel and the Christian Church functioning as enantiomorphs, their relationship being chiral. The collective Christian Church is not the fleshly bodies of parishioners sitting in pews, but is the assembly of new creatures (new selves, each a son of God) that dwells within the tents of flesh of former sons of disobedience.

And Solomon adds a twist to the chirality of Israel: (Green’s translation) “What advantage (has) he who works that in which he labors? I have seen the task which has given God to the sons of men, to be humbled by it. Everything He has made beautiful in its time. Also eternity He has set in their heart without which not can find out man the work that makes God from the beginning even to the end” (Eccl 3:9–11).

- The task that the Lord has given man [humankind] to do was given to humble the sons of men.
- The work of the Lord is beautiful in its season, including the work of humbling the sons of men.
- But the work of the Lord, from beginning to end, cannot be discovered unless the Lord places “eternity” [*olam*] into the man’s heart.

The *eternity* or world that must be put into man’s heart is the spirit of God [πνεῦμα θεοῦ], the second breath of life that men receive when they receive the gift of eternal life in Christ Jesus (Rom 6:23)—this is not how the passage is usually read, but this reading will cause the passage to agree with what 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” (Rom 8:5). Only when a man or woman has his or her heart cleansed by faith and circumcised by spirit can the person “discover” the work that the Lord does and has been doing from the beginning.

The work that men do—tilling the dust of this earth, taking their living from among thistles and briars—is intended to humble humankind; whereas the work that the Lord does is beautiful in that *life* is given to men. Paul writes, “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 8:6–8).

Those who are in the flesh do not have “eternity” placed within them. Thus Israel without “eternity” within its heart forms the left hand enantiomer of the right hand Christian Church with *eternity* within its heart. The left hand looks like its right hand, but is the opposite form, the definition of chirality. And it is this principle that repeatedly appears in dual narratives in Scripture.

As Abram functions as a shadow and type of the Logos, Abraham (the insertion of aspirated breath into Abram’s name) functions as a type of Christ Jesus; for disciples are born of spirit through Christ Jesus who serves as both mother and elder brother for the saints, with grace (the mantle of Christ Jesus’ righteousness) functioning as the womb in which already living disciples grow to maturity.

The complexity of seemingly simple analogies become manifest in Abimelech’s narrative: whereas Pharaoh gave Abram great wealth when he took Sarai as his wife, wealth that Abram got to keep when driven from Egypt, Abimelech gave nothing to

Abraham but a relationship when he took Sarah as his wife. He would send Sarah back to Abraham with sheep and oxen and male and female servants and a thousand pieces of silver as a sign of Sarah's innocence in the eyes of all. Thus, the gifts that Pharaoh gave Abram when taking Sarai for his wife are reflected in the gifts that Abimelech gives Abraham when returning Sarah to him as his wife. The gifts form mirror images of each other as the left hand forms the mirror image of the right hand. Thus, the plagues that the Lord sends on Pharaoh and opening of the wombs of Abimelech's household by the Lord are also enantiomorphs—the plagues bring death as opening wombs bring life. Therefore, it can be asserted that the plagues God sent on Pharaoh that culminated in the death of the firstborn of Egypt gave life not to Israel but to the children of Israel, the nation that entered into God's rest.

- In the chiral relationship of Abram telling Pharaoh that *she is my sister* and Abraham telling Abimelech that *she is my sister*, the promised offspring that will enter into God's rest (i.e., that will be saved) is neither physically circumcised Israel nor today's Christian Church, but circumcised of heart Israel and the third part of humankind (Zech 13:9).
- In the Endurance, the 144,000 represent circumcised of heart Israel, and the *great multitude* represents the third part of humankind.

Abimelech didn't recognize Abraham as a prophet of the Lord (Gen 20:7), and endtime Christianity would not, considering that a half truth is indeed a full lie, recognize a prophet if the prophet came with the faults of Abraham. ... Did Abraham do what Abimelech accused him of doing: "You have done to me things that ought not to be done" (v. 9)? And if Abraham did things that ought not to have been done—and he did do such things—what physical thing could Abraham have done to cause God to remove him from the office of prophet? What thing can any prophet do to cause God to remove the person from the office?

Again, Sarah's womb is apparently healed when the women of Abimelech's household have their wombs opened.

Abimelech told Abraham, "Behold, my land is before you; dwell where it pleases you" (Gen 20:15), and as Abraham had dwelt as a squatter under the oaks of the Amorite Mamre, Abraham dwelt in Gerar, in the land of the Philistines (Gen 21:34). And Abraham dwelt as a prophet of the Lord.

The above seems incomplete, for the plagues of Moses' day and the prophesied plagues in Revelation have not been addressed or well addressed ... if Sarah's closed womb is a type of a plague, then the lack of spiritual births (Christians truly receiving a second breath of life) is also a plague, one through which the Christian Church is presently living.

Endtime disciples presently expect a "plague" to look like something that happened in ancient Egypt: frogs, lice, flies, water becoming blood, livestock dying, boils, hail, locust, darkness. But when moving from physical to spiritual, the Father not drawing disciples from this world is a plague; it is a shutting off of spiritual birth. Therefore, for the past 1,900 years one spiritual plague after another has occurred without humankind even being aware of what has been happening. And as it was the tenth plague that got Pharaoh's attention, it will be the tenth plague that gets the prince of this world's attention—and the paschal Lamb of God has already been sacrificed.

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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