

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 unanswered prayers second part.

[Printable/viewable PDF format to display Greek or Hebrew characters](#)

Weekly Readings *For the Sabbath of May 10, 2014*

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.

For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through [a] righteousness of faith. For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression. That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring—not only to the adherent of the law but also *to the one who shares the faith of Abraham*, who is the father of us all, as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations"—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. (Rom 4:13–17 emphasis added)

11.

Who is the Christian that "shares the faith of Abraham"? Faith tested four centuries before the Law was given; faith tested by Abraham himself having to negate the Promise he believed, his belief of this Promise being counted to him as righteousness. Abraham's faith was tested when the Lord commanded him to sacrifice Isaac, the seed of the Promise. There was no escape clause in the Lord's command:

After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here am I." He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you." (Gen 22:1–2)

Abraham's obedience to the Lord, not his faith alone, was now in play ... Adam's obedience failed when Adam saw Eve, his wife, eat forbidden fruit and

not die. Adam then ate what he had been commanded not to eat (Gen 2:16–17). But Abraham had his knife poised to slay Isaac, thereby carrying out the command to offer Isaac as a burnt offering, when a voice from heaven called out, “Abraham, Abraham! ... Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me” (Gen 22:11–12).

Did the Lord not know beforehand that Abraham feared God? When Abram had his belief of the Promise counted to him as righteousness (Gen 15:3), did not the Lord know that Abram/Abraham feared God? Again, was faith [belief] counted as righteousness not enough alone to establish that Abraham feared God?

James writes,

For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment. What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder! Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"—and he was called a friend of God. You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? For as the body apart from the spirit [*pneuma*] is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead. (Jas 2:13–26)

Oh, foolish person, you pray for the healing of this person or that person, but you do not bind wounds or cut away tumors—what good is your prayers? Will they be answered? You neither set bones nor amputate limbs poisoned by gangrene? Can God heal the patient? Yes He can! But will He do for you or for the patient what you can do for yourself, or what you can do for others? Sometimes. But most of the time, no, He won't.

The person who has the faith of Abraham has faith sufficient to move mountains; has faith sufficient to say to the young men who accompanied him and Isaac to Mt. Moriah, “Stay here with the donkey; *I and the boy will go over there and worship and come again to you*” (Gen 22:5 emphasis added).

When Jesus told His disciples,

"Truly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what has been done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' it will happen. And whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith." (Matt 21:21–22)

And,

“Have faith in God. Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.”

(Mark 11:22–24)

the clause, *whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive*, is conditioned with having faith sufficient to move mountains; is conditioned with having the faith of Abraham, whose faith caused the Lord to produce a ram,

And Isaac said to his father Abraham, "My father!" And he said, "Here am I, my son." He said, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" Abraham said, "*God will provide for Himself the lamb* for a burnt offering, my son." (Gen 22:7–8 emphasis added)

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If your faith is not equal to the faith of Abraham, and you pray for the healing of yourself or of another person with doubt in your heart, do you sincerely expect God to answer your prayer?

You live in the *real world*, the one in which men cannot walk on water nor do seas part so that people can pass through the sea dry shod. You live in a world assailed by doubts: you are assailed with doubts. You wonder about how you will pay your bills? Whether your car will make it another ten thousand miles before breaking down. You worry about children at school, about the safety of a son or daughter fighting overseas, about a registered child molester now living in the neighborhood. You worry about the emergence of a Caliphate: the *Islamic State of Iraq and Syria*. You are concerned about Iran getting a nuclear bomb. You fear world war, the collapse of the global economy, what's happening to freedom. You cannot afford healthcare, and cannot afford to be without healthcare. What are you to do? Doubts magnify doubts—and you pray to God for relief, for a way out, and it is as if your prayers fell upon deaf ears. And you doubt whether God even heard your prayer ...

Do you honestly expect God to answer such a person as yourself? No, you don't! Why should God answer you? You don't even know for certain if God exists? What about evolution? What about space aliens? What about the universe being 13.7 billion years old?

There is so much that you don't know; so many questions, and no answers to prayers. Yet you continue to pray, hoping against hope that God will hear your words, despite how small they are. And with each unanswered prayer, the doubts multiply ... you feed your doubts, not your faith—and you grow more doubts. Now you cannot even imagine a faith sufficient to move mountains, or to transform even one loaf of bread into two loaves.

And on top of everything else, *Philadelphia* contends that the Book of Acts is a Second Sophist novel, and not good history ... what is a person to believe? Who is the person to believe? Moses? Mohammad? Karl Marx? President Obama, a liar with insincerity in his voice?

Yes, you live in the *real world*, the world of the Adversary, who can prevent any prayer from being answered by producing doubts in you ... welcome to 21st-

Century reality, where the American Government prepares for Zombie attacks and the person you just met on-line says he or she loves you.

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Initially, Adam had believed the Lord and had been obedient. He feared eating forbidden fruit, and he feared that Eve would eat so much so that he added to the command of the Lord. It was Adam, not the Lord, that told Eve not to even touch the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil—and Eve, not knowing or realizing that her husband had added to the words of the Lord, faithfully relayed to the serpent what she had been told; what she had been taught.

The serpent, hearing the addition Adam had made to the Lord's words, used the added words to cause Eve to doubt Adam, not the Lord. For Eve, believing the Lord was never an issue: the Lord had not spoken to her, but to Adam.

Jesus' words were not written down, nor did Mohammad write down his visions. The New Testament comes to humanity through the words of converts, with Jesus' words being ephemeral, here this moment then gone, with only memories of them remaining in this world. Mohammad's visions are even farther removed from being factual; for Mohammad didn't record his visions while he was having them. Rather, he retold his visions after the fact and others recorded what he, a man, said he saw in vision; what he remembered of his visions.

How much was added to the words of Jesus, or added to the visions of Mohammad? How much was lost ... there would have been loss, for the words spoken over a three and a half year ministry are not all recorded in the Gospels. Even the words Jesus would have spoken over a month exceed what is recorded. Thus, the New Testament is a text with a bias that excluded more words of Jesus than it admitted in.

Unimportant words? We will never know; for we don't have those words so that we can judge their importance or unimportance.

What we have is a story about the faith of Abraham being made complete through testing four centuries before the Sabbath was given in the absence of manna on the seventh day; four centuries before Moses said to the frightened people of Israel, “Do not fear, for *God has come to test you*, that the fear of Him may be before you, that you may not sin” (Ex 20:20 emphasis added) ...

What Paul repeatedly neglects is the testing of Abraham's faith, testing of the sort Israel underwent at Sinai when the giving of the Law brought sin to life so that sin (transgression of the Law — from 1 John 3:4) could devour the people who rebelled against the Lord in Egypt and refused to listen to Him (Ezek 20:8).

In Egypt, the people of Israel worshiped the gods and idols of the Egyptians in addition to worshiping the God of Abraham, the God of living ones (Matt 22:32) ... they never ceased worshiping the idols of Egypt; thus, the Lord knew even before He brought Israel out from bondage that Israel was a flawed nation, one that sin—when brought to life—would quickly devour.

Consider what would have become of greater Christendom if only those individuals genuinely taught by God identified themselves as Christians in the 1st-Century? Would there have been enough Christians to keep knowledge of Jesus

alive? As it was, there was barely enough to for humanity to retain knowledge of Jesus.

In a way, the Father benefitted from the Adversary hijacking the Jesus Movement in the 1st-Century ... there is no competition between God, Father and Son, and the Adversary for the souls of humanity. Any such teaching is a lie. For if the Father wanted to prevent the Adversary from hijacking the Jesus Movement, He could have easily done so by simply preventing anyone from writing anything down. *Jesus* as a historical figure would have disappeared into the flotsam of the Near and Middle East. No *Jesus*, no Jesus Movement. The Body of Christ, presently blown about by every whim of man, would have been dust settled into antiquity. The 21st-Century Body of Christ would have to be reformed, reorganized, reconstructed in a different form from what is being done today. But it is what happened that we must address.

However, what Paul wrote about the mid 1st-Century Christians being Isaac does not and will not apply in the 21st-Century ... Isaac was born of promise, but to Isaac were born two sons by Rebekah, who conspired to deceive Isaac when he was old. These two sons were also born by the power of prayer, and born to the same end that he was born, that Abraham's seed should be as stars in the heaven:

These are the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham fathered Isaac, and Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel the Aramean of Paddan-aram, the sister of Laban the Aramean, to be his wife. And Isaac prayed to [YHWH] for his wife, because she was barren. And [YHWH] granted his prayer, and Rebekah his wife conceived. (Gen 25:19–21)

In Genesis, and in Scripture overall, narrative breaks are represented by passages of genealogy. The narrative about Abraham ends, and a new narrative begins with, *These are the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham fathered Isaac, and Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah ... to be his wife*. And Christian recognition of narrative breaks is important for what is recorded in the Torah forms the earthly shadow and copy of what will occur during the ministry of spirit in the Christian era, the Tribulation, and the Millennium.

What Paul wrote about disciples being the offspring of Abraham if they are Christ's (Gen 3:29), with 1st-Century disciples being like Isaac, is "modified" by the narrative break or transition located in Genesis 25:19–20 ...

One narrative ends, another begins. The 1st-Century Church of God that was the spiritual Body of Christ (1 Cor 12:27) died from want of breath [loss of the holy spirit] with the death of John (ca 100–102 CE), but as the gates of Hades could not prevail against the earthly body of Christ, the gates of Hades will not prevail against the spiritual Body of Christ ... the Body of Christ will live again, but not as typified by Isaac, but as typified by Esau and Jacob.

Apparently, Caleb [the name meaning <dog>] was of Esau even though he was the head of Judah when the twelve spies were sent out (Num 13:6) ... there has been debate over Caleb's ancestry: was he or was he not a proselyte as would seem to be the case? From the modeling that serves as the shadow of endtime phenomena is coupled to Caleb's name and ancestry, it would seem that Caleb was indeed of Esau, with the different spirit he had about him not originating in

his venture into the Promised Land as a spy, but preceding Israel's exodus from Egypt. In other words, Caleb voluntarily joined himself to Israel when Israel was still a slave nation in Egypt as Christians will—and actually, have to—voluntarily join themselves to Israel, living as Judeans without being outwardly circumcised.

Caleb had about him a spirit that differed from even Joshua [in Greek, *Iesou* — Jesus], the reality of which will see Christendom in the Affliction divided between the Elect, already born of spirit through the indwelling of Christ Jesus, and greater Christendom that will be filled-with and empowered by the spirit of God, but not born of spirit. This difference is evident in Revelation:

When He opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come!" And I looked, and behold, a black horse! And its rider had a pair of scales in his hand. And I heard what seemed to be a voice in the midst of the four living creatures, saying, "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius, and do not harm the oil and wine!" (Rev 6:5–6)

The harvest of firstfruits—those Christians from within greater Christendom who will be glorified at the Second Advent—is represented by the early barley harvest of Judeans hillsides. The main crop harvest of humanity that occurs in the great White Throne Judgment is represented by the wheat harvest in Judea. And the Elect are the already processed fruits of the Promised Land, the oil and the wine that Sin cannot harm; for the Elect are foreknown by God, predestined, called by Christ, justified by Christ, and glorified by Christ through the indwelling of the spirit of Christ [*pneuma Christou*] in the spirit of the man/person [*to pneuma tou 'anthropou*], with the spirit of God [*pneuma Theou*] being in the spirit of Christ.

Ironically, the veil that signified the way to God was not open to even Israel—

These preparations having thus been made, the priests go regularly into the first section, performing their ritual duties, but into the second only the high priest goes, and he but once a year, and not without taking blood, which he offers for himself and for the unintentional sins of the people. By this the holy spirit indicates that the way into the holy places is not yet opened as long as the first section is still standing (which is symbolic for the present age). According to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper, but deal only with food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until the time of reformation. (Heb 9:6–10)

—was not lifted or rent for most of humanity when the curtain separating the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place was torn from top to bottom upon Jesus' death. Rather, if the Father doesn't draw the person from this world (John 6:44), the person cannot come to Christ. And if the Father draws the person, He will also teach those whom He draws from this world—and He does not need to use Scripture to teach His sons the fundamentals of salvation. In fact, Scripture might well be a greater hindrance to God teaching His infant sons to walk uprightly before Him than a help; for it seems that the more closely Scripture is read, the more Scripture reveals itself to be a human book, authored by human persons, some inspired, some not, with Scripture including a Greek Second Sophist novel [the Book of Acts], a secular redacted Gospel [Luke], three falsified epistles [the Pastoral Epistles], and the entirety of the Old Testament redacted two or three

times before being placed in the form in which endtime disciples receive it. In these redactions, the linguistic determinative *YHWH* that previously identified the semantic category of the speaker was transformed into a naming noun to which singular verbs and pronouns were assigned, except in four cases, the nearest to us in time being Isaiah 6:8 ... the transformation of the linguistic determinative *YHWH* into a naming noun occurred late in the reign of the kings and in the deportation; thus, the transformation in the writings of Ezekiel is only partially complete.

12.

Since the invisible things of God are revealed by the things that are physical, the partial hardening that came upon Israel until the fullness of Gentiles come to God reveals a partial hardening of hearts that came upon spiritual Israel (greater Christendom) and will continue to be upon spiritual Israel until the fullness of Gentiles come to God ... the fullness of Gentiles coming to God has not yet occurred. Plus, there is the question: are the endtime descendants of Ishmael and of the sons of Keturah Gentiles? They are not of Isaac, or of Israel. They are mostly Muslim, as are most of the natural descendants of Esau. In addition, are the descendants of Lot, Abraham's nephew, Gentiles?

In a narrow focus, every endtime person not born of spirit as a son of God—born of spirit through the indwelling of Christ Jesus—is a Gentile, a person of the nations. Thus, for the fullness of the nations to come to God, all peoples must come to God, something that will not happen until the third part's rebellion against the Adversary 250 days into the Endurance (day 1010 of the Endurance, a day that has binary significance) ... the fullness of Gentiles coming to God cannot happen until the spirit of God [*pneuma Theou*] is poured out on all flesh (Joel 2:28); on all Gentiles—

Elsewhere, Paul writes of this partial hardening of natural Israel:

Since we have such a hope, we are very bold, not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face so that the Israelites might not gaze at the outcome of what was being brought to an end. But *their minds were hardened. For to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains unlifted*, because only through Christ is it taken away. Yes, to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their hearts. But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. (2 Cor 3:12–16)

A veil remains over the hearts of Sabbatarian Christians as well as Jews ... it is the ministry of spirit—of the spirit of Christ [*pneuma Christou*—that removes the spiritual blindness that came upon natural Israel once this people rebelled against the Lord at Sinai. It will be a new ministry of spirit that removes the spiritual blindness that is presently upon greater Christendom as darkness came upon Egypt for three days,

Then [*YHWH*] said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, a darkness to be felt." So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was pitch darkness in all the land of Egypt three days. They did not see one another, nor did anyone rise from his place for three days, but all the people of Israel had light where they lived. (Ex 10:21–23)

The darkness that came upon Egypt was a physical thing—a *darkness to be felt*—and as such formed the shadow and type of the spiritual darkness that came over greater Christendom when the spiritual Body of Christ (from 1 Cor 12:27) “died” spiritually as the physical body of Christ Jesus died physically at Calvary; for again, Paul wrote,

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For His invisible attributes, namely, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. (Rom 1:18–20)

And,

Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit [*pneuma*]. But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven. (1 Cor 15:45–49)

But we have gotten away from, *a partial hardening of hearts came upon spiritual Israel (greater Christendom) and will continue to be upon spiritual Israel until the fullness of Gentiles come to God ...* collectively, Christians have a veil over their hearts so that they cannot understand Paul or John or James, Matthew, Mark, Peter, Jude. Whenever the New Testament is read, their hearts are hardened, thus causing Christians collectively to turn away from Moses, from Abraham, from Christ Jesus, who said in John’s Gospel,

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. I do not receive glory from people. But I know that you do not have the love of God within you. I have come in my Father’s name, and you do 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. For 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 5:39–47)

It is Sabbatarian Christendom that is nearest to natural Israel. It is Sabbatarian Christendom that is most unlikely to admit that they are spiritually blind; for all Sabbatharians keep the Commandments, but most do so without love for neighbor and brother. As with the natural descendants of Israel, the spiritual descendants of the Apostles believe that they have a “special” relationship with God, one that gets their prayers answered. However, many more prayers are said by Sabbatarian Christians than are answered by God. So if Sabbatharians have a special relationship with God, the relationship is with a deity that ignores requests for intervention when things are not going well for the Sabbatarian.

Although in the John chapter 5 citation Jesus was speaking to Jews seeking His life for healing an invalid of 38 years on a Sabbath of Passover week,

Christians, especially Sabbatarian Christians, search Scripture daily *for they believe that in Scripture salvation can be found*, this belief encapsulated in <*Sola scriptura*> (Latin for, *by Scripture alone*), the doctrine holding that the Bible discloses all knowledge necessary for salvation and holiness; that only teachings directly found in the Bible or indirectly drawn from the Bible by logical deduction or deductive reasoning are valid. Thus, the Christian who holds that in Scripture alone salvation can be found is analogous to the Jew who searched Scripture daily for eternal life yet who would not come to Christ ... the Christian who clings to *Sola scriptura* but who comes before God on the day after the Sabbath [*te mia ton Sabbaton*] presumes he or she is equal with Christ Jesus, a presumption that mocks *Sola scriptura*. Likewise, the Sabbatarian who clings to *Sola scriptura* but who believes that Jesus' disciples received the holy spirit [*pneuma 'agion*] on the Pentecost [Feast of Weeks] following Calvary, believe a fiction; for the Book of Acts is a Greek, Second Sophist novel that is based upon the journeys of Paul—

Compare Paul's description of the so-called *Jerusalem Conference* with that of the author of Acts:

For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it. And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers. But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone; nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother. (In what I am writing to you, before God, I do not lie!) Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. And I was still unknown in person to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. They only were hearing it said, "He who used to persecute us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy." And they glorified God because of me. *Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me. I went up because of a revelation and set before them (though privately before those who seemed influential) the gospel that I proclaim among the Gentiles, in order to make sure I was not running or had not run in vain.* But even Titus, who was with me, was not forced to be circumcised, though he was a Greek. Yet because of false brothers secretly brought in—who slipped in to spy out our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might bring us into slavery—to them we did not yield in submission even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you. And from those who seemed to be influential (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)—those, I say, who seemed influential added nothing to me. On the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to the circumcised (for He who worked through Peter for his apostolic ministry to the circumcised worked also through me for mine to the Gentiles), and when James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the

grace that was given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. Only, they asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do. (Gal 1:11–2:10 emphasis added)

You can read Acts chapter 15 for yourself, but if Paul, accompanied by Barnabas and Titus, privately set before *those who seemed influential* the good news that he, Paul, proclaimed to Gentiles, good news that had come to him through a vision twice given, the first time through a revelation of Christ Jesus three years before he went to Jerusalem and met with Peter and James, Jesus' brother, and the second time approximately fourteen years after he had initially traveled to Jerusalem. Two visions, the first of which Paul identifies as a revelation. Two visits to Jerusalem to discuss doctrine. Both private meetings. The first with Peter and James—

The Acts' account of the *Jerusalem Conference* morphs the two occasions Paul went to Jerusalem to privately discuss doctrine into one account that has Peter standing up to speak, then James giving his judgment—

And the second time Paul went to Jerusalem, a private meeting with those who seemed influential but who added nothing to what Paul taught, Paul specifically excludes (by saying that those who seemed influential added nothing to his gospel) James' *Jerusalem Conference* declaration that would have Gentile converts abstaining from what had been sacrificed to idols, from blood, from meats that have been strangled (so as to retain the blood), and from sexual immorality (Acts 15:29).

Remember, the author of Acts has God the Father being the Creator of all things physical (see Acts 17:22–32); whereas the author of John's Gospel has the Logos [*o Logos*] who was God [*Theos*, no definite article] and who was with [*pros*] the God [*ton Theon*] in primacy [*arche*] being the Creator of all things physical—and the author of Matthew's Gospel has his Jesus tell Sadducees that the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob was the God of living ones, not the God of dead ones who sleep in the grave, thereby making a distinction between the God of the living [the Creator of all things physical] and the God of the dead that raises the dead from death. So contractions between texts—what color was the garment Roman soldiers put on Jesus when mocking Him—provides justification for scrapping *Sola scriptura* as a doctrine, which means that the Bible as Holy Scripture, the Word of God, cannot carry the full authority of God, therefore negating the teaching that *every statement of the Bible calls for instant, unqualified and unrestricted acceptance*; for again, when was the holy spirit given to Jesus' disciples:

On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." And when He had said this, **He breathed on them** and said to them, "Receive spirit holy [*pneuma 'agion*]. If you forgive the sins of any, they are

forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld." (John 20:19–23)

Jesus directly transferred His holy breath [*pneuma Christou*] to ten of His first disciples by “breathing” on them, with the Greek linguistic icon <*pneuma*> representing deep breath [as in *pneumonia*] or moving air [as in *pneumatic tools*]. Thus <*pneuma*> is the linguistic icon that best represents the deep breath of a man or the breath of a god, which would then translate into Latin as *spīritus*, from which we get the English word <*spirit*>.

The holy spirit cannot have linguistic personhood because of the definite article assigned to the icon: *to pneuma*. The icon is linguistically neuter. Thus, if *Sola scriptura* were rigidly applied to Christian doctrine, all vestiges of a triune deity would cease to be. The divine breath of God cannot possess personhood.

But with the Reformation and its rejection of Roman Church authority, *Sola scriptura* became the principle doctrine greater Christendom employed to teach received error.

A partial hardening came upon Israel; came upon both the physical descendants of the patriarchs and the spiritual descendants of last *Abraham*, Christ Jesus, until the fullness of the nations come to God. *In this way all Israel will be saved!*

Endtime Israel has a work to do, or at least what remains of Israel has a work:

And when the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time. The serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, to sweep her away with a flood. But the earth came to the help of the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river that the dragon had poured from his mouth. Then *the dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war on **the rest of her offspring***, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus. And he stood on the sand of the sea. (Rev 12:13–17 emphasis and double emphasis added)

The first offspring of this Woman is Christ Jesus:

And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she bore her child he might devour it. She gave birth to a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne, and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which she is to be nourished for 1,260 days. (Rev 12:4–6)

The Woman twice flees into a wilderness, once before the Adversary and his angels are cast from heaven, and again after the Adversary is cast from heaven.

When the Woman flees the first time, she is separated from her offspring; for the male child is caught up to heaven so the wilderness to which the Woman first flees cannot be heaven.

But when the Woman flees the second time, Satan is here on earth—he wasn’t when she first flees into the wilderness—where this old serpent goes after the rest of the Woman’s seed ... this wilderness to which the woman flees a second time

cannot be here on earth or the Adversary, when cast into space-time, could find the Woman and would not have to pursue the Remnant of her offspring:

And when the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time. The serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, to sweep her away with a flood. But the earth came to the help of the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river that the dragon had poured from his mouth. *Then the dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.* And he stood on the sand of the sea. (Rev 12:13–17 emphasis added)

Now, hold the preceding thoughts and consider what Paul wrote,

Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "And to offsprings," referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your offspring," who is Christ. This is what I mean: the law, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void. (Gal 3:16–17)

But what was it that was actually promised to Abram:

And behold, the word of [YHWH] came to him: "This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir." And He brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and *number the stars, if you are able to number them.*" Then he said to him, "*So shall your offspring be.*" And he believed [YHWH], and He counted it to him as righteousness. ... Then [YHWH] said to Abram, "Know for certain that *your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years.* But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. As for yourself, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete." When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. *On that day [YHWH] made a covenant with Abram,* saying, "To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites and the Jebusites." (Gen 15:4–6, 13–21)

On the day when Abram had his belief of God counted to him as righteousness—his belief that his heir would come from his loins—the Lord made a covenant with Abram that gave to Abram's offspring (more than one in number) the land between the Nile and the Euphrates. So what does Paul mean when he writes that *the promises were made to Abraham and to his seed* [offspring]. *It does not say, "And to seeds [offsprings]," referring to many, but referring to one* ... but the promise does refer to many, to as many as there are stars in heaven. So does Paul make his point by citing Scripture? Or has Paul missed the mark, thus negating *Sola scriptura* at a rudimentary level?

Better yet, Paul speaks of the Law that came 430 years after the promise was made to Abraham not being able to annul a covenant previously ratified by God

so as to make the promise void, but does not the Lord speak to John in vision of the remainder of the seed of the Woman keeping the Commandments—the Law—and having the testimony of Jesus (Rev 12:17), which is the spirit of prophecy (Rev 19:10)? Clearly the subject under discussion (the covenant being referenced) is not the same; for Paul's epistle to the Galatians is a public rebuke of the fellowships in Galatia beginning to outwardly circumcise Gentile converts

...

What is the ratifying sign for the covenant made with Abram that will have aspiration [spirit/*pneuma* — the /ah/radical] added to his name and that will required Abram to walk uprightly (as a spiritual biped) and be blameless before the Lord? The ratifying sign is the outward circumcision of foreskins of male descendants of Abram and of all in his household. For the Law takes a backseat to outward circumcision:

About the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and began teaching. The Jews therefore marveled, saying, "How is it that this man has learning, when He has never studied?" So Jesus answered them, "My teaching is not mine, but His who sent me. If anyone's will is to do God's will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority. The one who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory; but the one who seeks the glory of Him who sent Him is true, and in Him there is no falsehood. Has not Moses given you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law. Why do you seek to kill me?"

The crowd answered, "You have a demon! Who is seeking to kill you?"

Jesus answered them, "I did one work, and you all marvel at it. Moses gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. If on the Sabbath a man receives circumcision, so that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with me because on the Sabbath I made a man's whole body well? Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment." (John 7:14–24)

Circumcision is from Abraham, and circumcision on the eighth day trumps the Sabbath Commandment; for circumcision is a spiritual work, the making of the male infant naked before God so that this infant will cover himself with the garment of obedience that Adam neglected when he traded belief of God that leads to obedience for a fig leaf. And Jesus makes the point that if causing a man to cover himself with the garment of obedience so that the man is no longer naked before God has always been permitted on the Sabbath, where is the fault in making a man whole on the Sabbath, thereby setting the man free from the imprisonment of being an invalid? Circumcision should set a man free from sin; from disobedience. And if circumcision is permitted, then setting a man physically free from disabling conditions will serve as the physical shadow and type of spiritual circumcision, in which the heart of the person [inner self of the person] is liberated from indwelling disobedience by the soft breath of God [*pneuma Theou*] in the breath of Christ [*pneuma Christou*].

Paul wrote without awareness that his words would become Holy Writ and scrutinized more closely than he intended; for does the Law come 430 years after the Promise was made to Abraham? No! Paul writes in generalities:

- Then [YHWH] said to Abram, "Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. (Gen 15:13)
- Now [YHWH] said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." So Abram went ... and Lot went with him. *Abram was seventy-five years old* when he departed from Haran. (Gen 12:1–4)
- When Abram was ninety-nine years old [YHWH] appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless, that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly." Then Abram fell on his face. And God said to him, "Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you. And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God." (Gen 17:1–8)

The covenant that Paul references is the covenant made with Abraham when he was 99 years old, the covenant by which the Lord promised to give the land of Abraham's sojourning, not salvation, to Abraham and his seed throughout their generations—

Isaac was not yet born. A year would pass before Isaac was born. Then forty more years would pass before Isaac married Rebekah (Gen 25:20), and an additional year or more would pass before Rebekah gave birth to Esau and Jacob.

Isaac was old and Jacob was a grown man when Isaac sent Jacob to Laban, whom Jacob served for seven years, then for another seven years before he returned to the Promised Land, where he would become an old man before he went down to Egypt. More than a century has passed since the Promise was made to Abraham. Most likely, nearly two centuries have passed. And the seed of Abraham still has to be afflicted for 400 years in Egypt, with Moses recording, "The time that the people of Israel lived in Egypt was 430 years" (Ex 12:40), which is where Paul gets his 430 years.

Paul doesn't write with the precision of a literary critic who has the luxury of an inscribed text that can be closely read and deconstructed: Paul writes in haste, and writes the text that the critic analyzes. Therefore, if Paul gets a detail wrong, such as how much time transpires between when the Promise is made to Abraham and when the Law is given—if what Paul declares is wrong; if the text itself hasn't been adulterated, redacted to make the text fit a much earlier scribe's perception of what was true—and if Paul gets exactly what was promised to Abraham wrong (for salvation was not promised), Paul can be forgiven for Paul is using the shadow of heavenly events to reveal these heavenly events to a people

dull of hearing and injured by false prophets, false teachers, charlatans, Christian evangelists wise in their own sight.

Simply put, how can any Christian read the Gospels as a unified text? How can rabbinical Judaism read Moses and continue to do what it does? The Book doesn't support what teachers of Israel, wise in their own sight, claim. Never has supported what these teachers of physical and of spiritual Israel claim. However, because meaning must be assigned to words and by extension to texts by readers, Scripture can be twisted into spiritual darkness, this turning away from Light being necessary to allow the fullness of the nations to come to God.

As general dating, Israel's exodus from Egypt occurred about 1450 BCE, and while some scholars have worked out a more precise date, for the purpose of this Reading, 1450 BCE is accurate enough. Therefore backing up Paul's 430 years would have the Promise being made to Abraham about 1880 BCE ...

There is a phenomenon that occurs when using a long focal length telephoto lens: depth perception is lost. What is distant (i.e., behind the object to be photographed) is pulled up close to, say, the Dall ram being photographed, while the foreground is blurred. Simply put, from Paul's perspective, he could see the past and the future, but not with the precision with which an endtime Christian sees the future that is actually near to this Christian in time.

Sola scriptura probably seemed like a good idea when spiritual infants were rebelling from the tyranny of the Roman Church in the 16th-Century CE, but five centuries of filtering revelations from God through the spiritual milk Paul served up in his epistles has caused the milk to curdle so that it now appears like cottage cheese.

The truly sad part of the preceding is that lives have been ruined; lives have been prematurely lost, because well intentioned but exceedingly ignorant Christians have set themselves up as teachers of Israel when God did not call them to teach His sons. And the primary evidence against them comes from their own mouths: *trust God and you will receive whatever you ask, if you ask in the name and by the authority of Jesus*. Really? Ask to be healed from cancer, then do not seek medical help or an herbal treatment. Simply trust God to heal you, your body—and watch the cancer continue to grow, to spread, until medical intervention will not help. Watch your body die; feel your body die in agony. And who is responsible: you are! For you lacked the good sense to know that you didn't have the faith sufficient to move mountains. You took as reliable someone else's word ... did you not do what Jesus accused those seeking His life of doing? “I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me. If another comes in his own name, you will receive him” (John 5:43).

Indeed, if another comes in his or her own name, you will receive him or her; you will believe him or her. But you will not believe Christ Jesus, who said, “*You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, He may give it to you.*” (John 15:16).

Unless Christ has called you, chosen you, appointed you, the concluding clause does not pertain to you: *whatever you ask the Father in my name, He may give it to you.*

Did Christ chose you? How do you know? Are your prayers consistently answered? Even when Paul asked to have his eyes healed, he received an answer:

So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." (2 Cor 12:7-9)

Again, the Christian who would have another Christian trust God to heal the ailing person comes in his or her own name, not in the name of Christ Jesus, who either is or isn't faithfully quoted in the Gospels. If He is, then the person who will have his or her prayers answered is the person with faith sufficient to move mountains. No doubts. If He isn't, can it be determined what He did say, if He said anything about answered prayer?

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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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