

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 *answering questions when asked*.

## **Weekly Readings For the Sabbath of May 12, 2007**

*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 who has truly been born of Spirit following repentance will, by faith, keep the precepts of the law (Rom 2:26), which will cause the person to keep the weekly Sabbath—a visible separation from the person's surrounding world comes through Sabbath observance.

Usually, those disciples who choose to separate themselves from this world do so through physical means, such as not participating in the activities of this world: not voting or standing for political office, not going to war, not seeking the pleasures of this world, not pursuing the wealth of this world. Often their women wear caps and distinctively plain dress, such as today's Amish disciples. Sometimes they will join with others in "separatist" colonies or communities. They seek to show that though they remain "in this world," they are not "of this world" (John 17:15-16). They claim Jesus' prayer to keep them "from the evil one." Yet despite their physical separation from this world—a separation made in the flesh and through outward means—they do not inwardly or spiritually separate themselves from this world. Rather, they remain in spiritual rebellion to Christ Jesus, about whom the Apostle John wrote, "And by this we know that we have come to know him [Jesus], 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 be sure that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked" (1 John 2:3-6).

A person cannot walk as Jesus walked and fail to keep the Sabbath.

\*

*The person conducting the services should read or assign to be read Matthew chapter 12, verses 1 through 14; followed by Mark chapter 2, verse 23 through to chapter 3, verse 6; and Luke chapter 6, verses 1 through 11.*

**Commentary:** Jesus makes the unambiguous statement that He is Lord of the Sabbath ... if Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath—and He is—then how can a disciple fail to keep the Sabbath and still profess that Jesus is Lord?

How can a disciple profess that Jesus is the disciple's Lord and Master, and then worship Jesus on the day following the Sabbath when Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath?

There are two verses that everyone who is of *Philadelphia* should never forget: Exodus 20:11 & Deuteronomy 5:15. Both verses are part of the Sabbath commandment as included in the *Decalogue*, and as repeated forty years later.

- Ex 20:11 — For in six days the [YHWH] made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the [YHWH] blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.
- Deut 5:15 — You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the [YHWH] your [Elohim] commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.

Note the difference: in the third month of the year God took Israel “by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt” (Heb 8:9). *Yah* spoke from atop Mount Sinai, and was seen by Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel (Ex 24:9-11). Forty years later, the men counted in the census of the second year (Num 1:1-2) except for Joshua, Caleb, and Moses, were dead. So those who were commanded to remember that they had been slaves in Egypt were either children in Egypt, or the uncircumcised children born in the wilderness of Sin/Zin. For the children born in the wilderness to remember that they were slaves in Egypt poses an interesting juxtaposition: how were they slaves? If not by the same logic that had the Levitical priesthood paying tithes to Melchizedek through the patriarch Abraham (Heb 7:4-5). So the historical record—especially the record recorded in Scripture—serves as personal memory of that which occurred before a person's physical birth. And as personal memory is “selective,” recalling significant events and forgetting other events, Scripture is selective, recording the shadows of spiritual events and omitting events that are not shadows of what happens in the heavenly realm.

Death had reigned over humanity since Adam (Rom 5:14). Death had reigned over Israel in the form of the Pharaoh and through the weakness of the flesh: if the Pharaoh did not have an Israelite killed for whatever reason he chose, then old age [the weakness of the flesh] would kill the Israelite. So liberation from Egypt and the Pharaoh was also liberation from death by the first cause, with this visible liberation forming the shadow and copy of liberation through the weakness of the flesh.

On the day (well, three months later) God took Israel by the land to lead that nation out of Egypt, the reason given to that nation for keeping the Sabbath was remembrance of the physical creation and the giving of life through the creation process, which has God resting on the 7<sup>th</sup> day, not on the 8<sup>th</sup> day. This is an easily understood and taught reason for Sabbath observance. This is the usual reason Sabbath-observing Christians give to others for keeping the Sabbath instead of Sunday. And this is the wrong reason for Christians to keep the Sabbath ... so there is no mistake, Christians are to keep the Sabbath, but for the reason given by Moses on the plains of Moab in the second covenant.

The focus on the Sabbath as a day of “rest,” not work, was so understandable that this focus was taken to ridiculousness by the remnant of Israel that returned from Babylonian captivity in this nation's attempt to never again profane the Sabbath (Ezek chap 20). But this focus on physically resting is a physical focus. On the Sabbath, the hand and body are to “rest” from the labors that are of the flesh for the support and

maintenance of the flesh. Neither the hand nor the body should do mundane work. But when the hand and the body are ruled by the desires of the heart and the thoughts of the mind, and when the desires of the heart and thoughts of the mind are fully on God on the Sabbath, then no external law is needed to prevent the hand and the body from doing mundane work on the Sabbath. Jesus as Lord of the Sabbath reigns on the Sabbath through the disciple's thoughts being fully on Christ Jesus on the Sabbath. Thus, the inside of the cup has been made clean, and the outside reflects this inner cleanliness. So the genuine disciple will not perform mundane work, or weekly shopping, or take advantage of special one-day-only sales on the Sabbath. All of these things pertain to the flesh and are for the prosperity of the flesh. Instead, the genuine disciple will be fully focused on Jesus and the things of God and the renewing work of the Holy Spirit throughout the Sabbath. Worrying about what must be done physically, whether moving as has been occurring in the Port Austin area or making a living, only distracts from fully focusing on Christ Jesus—and these distractions make something other than Christ Jesus the person's lord on the Sabbath.

So to answer what is usually the first question asked of a Sabbath-keeping disciple—"Why not worship on Sunday?"—the disciple needs to remove the focus that the question places on Sunday, and return the focus on observing the Sabbath, making Christ the disciple's personal Lord of the Sabbath.

To repeat what should be familiar concepts, there is a real second covenant (Deut chaps 29-32), one that promises spiritual circumcision; that places before every Israelite [spiritual as well as physical] life and death; that requires the person when far from God to return by faith to God, loving Him with all of the person's heart and mind, while observing His commandments; that has had better promises added and its mediator changed—better promises cannot be added to a covenant that has been abolished, nor will an abolished covenant receive another mediator. An abolished covenant is **abolished**. It has ended. It no longer exists. It only "was." And it was the covenant made at Horeb or Sinai that was abolished, the covenant made on the day when God took Israel by the hand to lead this nation out from Egypt.

Death reigned from Adam to Moses (again, Rom 5:14), not until Christ Jesus came as the only Son of *Theos*. Death reigned until the promise of spiritual circumcision [i.e., circumcision of the heart] was offered to Israel (Deut 30:6) upon demonstrated obedience by faith, not by cultural practice or social obligation. Death reigned with Moses as the witness against Israel until Israel as a captive people in a far land (*vv.* 1-2) returned to God by faith, an event that first occurred when the *Logos* entered His creation as the man Jesus of Nazareth and lived without sin, not as a son of Adam but as the only Son of *Theos*, and the firstborn Son of *Theon*. Yes, Jesus was the only Son of *Theos* (John 3:16). Once He divested Himself of His divinity to enter His creation—an act that required Him to have absolute faith in *Theon* (from John 1:1-2) returning to Him the glory He had before the world existed (John 17:5), He separated Himself from the heavenly realm and from "life," and entered darkness of the creation as the light of this world.

For all of the physical beauty of the cosmos, the creation is in spiritual darkness. Its "physicalness" separates it from the supra-dimensional heavenly realm. Thus, in having a disciple separate himself or herself from this world, God and Christ ask only of the disciple what *Theon* asked of *Theos* when *Theos* left the heavenly realm to enter His creation as the man Jesus. This separation is required, but it is also voluntary, which is

not an oxymoronic statement but the reality of applied faith and manifested belief. No, a person does not have to separate from this world—the person who professes that Jesus is Lord but who is unwilling to walk as Jesus walked does not have to leave this world and begin to live as a spiritual Judean. This person can remain as he or she is. This person will, hopefully, live a good life and will be a model citizen and will contribute to the public welfare. This person will be and do everything that civil authorities expect from a God-fearing person. But this person will not enter heaven! This person is not willing to place God before the things of this world.

Unless a person, voluntarily and by faith, separates from this world and begins to live as a spiritual Judean, the person will not be part of the early harvest of firstfruits. This person might well receive life in the general resurrection, the great White Throne Judgment, but this person could have been one of the firstfruits, so within the plan of salvation there is a “catch” that bites: the person who remains of this world will remain in this world, suffering death because of the weakness of the flesh [“weakness” as if being unable to permanently sustain itself in the darkness of a decaying world], whereas the person who spurns this world even though remaining in it and who by faith chooses to live and walk as Jesus lived and walked will physically die but will spiritually live. The person who chooses to live and walk as Jesus lived and walked also chooses to be rejected by this world as Jesus was rejected. And therein lurks the concealed answer to why disciples are to keep the Sabbath: Christendom today functions for disciples as the Pharisees and Sadducees functioned for Christ Jesus. It wasn’t Rome that rejected Jesus even though Roman soldiers crucified Jesus on a Roman cross; for Jesus did not come to Caesar but to the people who professed to be of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Today, the last Elijah—the Elijah who restores all things—does not come to the U.N. or to its Secretary General but to those who profess to be of Christ. And Christendom will reject this last Elijah, the glorified Christ Jesus, just as the scribes and Pharisees rejected the man Jesus. So following the Pharisees wholesale rejection of Jesus as the Christ, the “good news” of Jesus being the Messiah was then preached to Gentiles. Likewise, following Christendom’s rejection of the last Elijah’s restoration of all things, the “good news” that *all who endure to the end shall be saved* (Matt 24:13-14) will be proclaimed to all the world as a witness to all nations. And this “good news” that all who endure shall be saved is now being proclaimed to all nations—the degree to which this gospel will be proclaimed as a witness is a matter for the last Elijah to determine.

The better promises added to the second covenant will have all who keep the precepts of the law, by faith, having their outer circumcision or uncircumcision counted as inner circumcision, by the Spirit, not by the letter of the law (Rom 2:26-29); the better promises added are not for physical life and prosperity, but for spiritual life and treasure in heaven.

\*

*The reader should now read Matt chapter 5, verses 1 through 28; followed by John chapter 5, verses 30 through 47, and Deuteronomy chapter 31, verses 24 through 29.*

**Commentary:** Jesus’ death on a Roman cross at Calvary abolished the covenant made at Horeb or Sinai (Eph 2:14-16); He came to preach peace to those who were far off and to those who were near (v. 17). But in preaching peace, He established the covenant made on the plains of Moab, the second covenant mediated by Moses and made between God and Israel after Israel left Egypt. And this second covenant causes the

commandments of God to move from being written on two tablets of stone to being written on two tablets of flesh, the heart and the mind of the person who professes that Jesus is Lord. As the person who had broken the laws written on stone tablets was to be “stoned” to death, literally killed with the broken tablets,” the person who breaks the laws written on fleshly tablets will die spiritually in a fleshly tabernacle (or tent of flesh) in the lake of fire—this person will suffer annihilation when baptized with fire; for it is a barrier of fire that separates the dimensions, physical from spiritual.

- The commandment against murder inscribed on a stone tablet regulated the acts of the hand; the commandment against adultery regulated the acts of the body; the commandment to remember the Sabbath caused those who were physically circumcised to remember the creation, that in six days God created the heaven and the earth and rested on the seventh day.
- The commandment that corresponds to murder—the commandment to love one’s brother, bearing the brother’s sins and transgressions against the disciple—that is written on a tablet of flesh prohibits anger by regulating the desires of the heart. The commandment that corresponds to adultery—the commandment not to lust after another—regulates the thoughts of the mind. And the commandment to remember the Sabbath causes those who are spiritually circumcised to look forward to liberation from death as physically circumcised Israelites looked back at liberation from physical bondage to Pharaoh.

When answering the question of why a Christian should keep the Sabbath rather than attempt to enter God’s rest on the following day, those who are of *Philadelphia* should not begin with God’s rested on the seventh day, the argument of Seventh Day Adventists and of Seventh Day Baptists and a shallow argument that leaves lawless disciples fully convinced that Jesus, as Lord of the Sabbath, changed the day of worship to the 8<sup>th</sup> day in honor of Himself. Rather, the *Philadelphian* should convey the movement of the commandments from stone to flesh, and the movement of circumcision from the outer cutting of the flesh to the inner cleansing of the heart by faith. The flint [stone] knives used by the children of the nation that left Egypt to circumcise themselves a second time after they crossed the river Jordan (Josh 5:2-7) bears to circumcision by the Spirit a relationship analogous to the relationship between the laws of God on stone tablets to the same laws of God written on hearts and placed in minds.

- The relationship between stone (the physical creation ground fine and made into clay vessels) and flesh (the elements of the earth with the addition of “life” coming from the breath of God) typifies the relationship between the absence of spiritual life and the presence of spiritual life in human beings.

Therefore, the answer to why Christians should keep the Sabbath always points forward to the liberation of spiritually circumcised Israelites from indwelling sin and death just as physically circumcised Israelites were liberated from bondage to Pharaoh. This liberation will occur at a second Passover, and this liberation is not far in the future.

The Sabbath marks those who are sanctified by God (Ex 31:13); its marks through causing separation from this world, separation that is not particularly outwardly discernible except through Sabbath observance. This does not preclude other means of marking separation from this world; nor should Sabbath observance preclude such

traditional signs of separation as plain dress. Rather, those who cover and who dress in plain apparel, yet who remain in Sunday fellowships, mock themselves through declaring that they have separated from the world while they actually remain part of this world and lawless Christendom.

If there was one simple answer that could be given in every instance, life would be simple ... there is actually a simple answer: the disciple who would be great in the kingdom of heaven keeps the commandments and teaches others to do likewise (Matt 5:19). So in true simplicity, it all comes down to whether a disciple really wants to be with God in the kingdom of heaven. If the answer is, Yes, then the disciple will, by faith, keep the commandments, including the Sabbath commandment. If the answer is, No, well, let the person go his or her way. There is no obligation that comes with the receipt of life that requires a person to believe God and be saved. The person is not born with an immortal soul—that is a Greek myth, and the lie that the old serpent, Satan the devil, used to deceive the last Eve as the serpent deceived the first Eve (Gen 3:4). Rather, everlasting life is the gift of God (Rom 6:23), given in this era only to those who hear Jesus and believe the one who sent Him (John 5:24). All others must wait until the 8<sup>th</sup> day, the reality of the High Sabbath that follows Sukkoth. No one is now permanently lost to the lake of fire—it is Christendom's orthodoxy that teaches this lie in its worship services.

\*

*The person conducting the Sabbath service should close services with two hymns, or psalms, followed by a prayer asking God's dismissal.*

\* \* \* \* \*

"Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved."

[ [Home](#) ] [ [Sabbath Readings](#) ]