

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 Luke's Gospel.

Weekly Readings *For the Sabbath of May 12, 2012*

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.

It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour, while the sun's light failed. And **the curtain of the temple was torn in two**. Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last. Now when the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God, saying, "Certainly this man was innocent!" And all the crowds that had assembled for this spectacle, when they saw what had taken place, returned home beating their breasts. And all his acquaintances and the women who had followed him from Galilee stood at a distance watching these things. Now there was a man named Joseph, from the Jewish town of Arimathea. He was a member of the council, a good and righteous man, who had not consented to their decision and action; and he was looking for the kingdom of God. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. (Luke 23:44-52 double emphasis added)

*

Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" And some of the bystanders, hearing it, said, "This man is calling Elijah." And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine, and put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink. But the others said, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him." And *Jesus*

cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. And behold, ***the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.*** And the earth shook, and the rocks were split. The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many. When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, "Truly this was the Son of God!" There were also many women there, looking on from a distance, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him, among whom were Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joseph and the mother of the sons of Zebedee. When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. (Matt 27:45–58 emphasis and double emphasis added)

*

And when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" And some of the bystanders hearing it said, "Behold, he is calling Elijah." And someone ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink, saying, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down." And *Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last.* And ***the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.*** And when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God!" There were also women looking on from a distance, among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome. When he was in Galilee, they followed him and ministered to him, and there were also many other women who came up with him to Jerusalem. And when evening had come, since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the Council, who was also himself looking for the kingdom of God, took courage and went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. (Mark 15:33–43 emphasis and double emphasis added)

The three Synoptic Gospels (i.e., Matthew, Mark, and Luke) agree that from the sixth hour of the watch [noon] until the ninth hour [3:00 pm], there was darkness over the land, with this darkness not being from an eclipse, but a blotting out of the sun analogous to the Ninth Plague that Egyptians suffered in the days of Moses (see Ex 10:21–23), with an hour representing a day, and with the death of Jesus representing the sacrifice of Passover lambs in Egypt, leaving only the death of uncovered firstborns to occur—leaving the six hours in Egypt between when Passover lambs were sacrificed at sunset going into the dark portion of the 14th day until midnight of this 14th day when death angels passed throughout the land to represent the entirety of the Christian era, that period when the holy ones of Israel roast and eat whole the Passover Lamb of God.

But all of the Preparation Day—the 14th of *Aviv*—represents the Christian era in other modeling ... in the Synoptic Gospels, the midnight hour (about when Jesus was taken into custody) would be analogous to the death angel passing over the land of Egypt, with the ministry of Jesus ending with His arrest, ending before He is crucified. And in this analogy, there is a period during the era of Christianity when the way to God is barred due to Jesus' arrest and life, with the way not being open until after Jesus is crucified.

If Jesus' death at Calvary represents the atoning sacrifice that opens the way to God, then the way to God is closed until Jesus dies, with the curtain being torn following His death as is recorded in Matthew and Mark representing opening the way to God.

But there are two times of salvation represented in the New Testament, with two models for salvation for each *time of salvation* ... the harvest of this earth is represented by the twin grain harvests of ancient Judean hillsides, with the first harvest—the harvest of firstfruits, the barley harvest—to occur with the coming of the Messiah, and with second harvest, represented by the main crop wheat harvest, to occur in the great White Throne Judgment that follows the Thousand Years of the Messiah's reign as King of Kings and Lord of lords.

Four Gospels, four models of salvation, with the Gospels of Mark and Matthew best representing the harvest of firstfruits, and the Gospels of Luke and John best representing the latter harvest, the great White Throne Judgment. This is not to say that Luke and John have no relevance to firstfruits, of whom Christ Jesus was the First of the firstfruits; rather, this is to say that with judgment on the firstfruits while they still live physically (see 1 Pet 4:17), the firstfruits differ from those human beings who will be judged after they die and are resurrected in the great White Throne Judgment

The above is simple and straight forward: the Elect, those Christians who were foreknown by the Father, predestined, called, justified, and glorified [through receiving a second breath of life, the breath of God in the breath of Christ] (Rom 8:29–30) were *judged* through being foreknown. And it is their inner selves that have been glorified, not their fleshly bodies: the perishable flesh will put on immortality when Christ Jesus comes again.

The above is the first model for salvation in the resurrection of firstfruits. None of the Elect will fail. Again, by being *foreknown*, they were prejudged as

worthy, and they were given by the Father to Christ Jesus for *development*; thus, the Elect are not in charge of their salvation. They really have no freewill as the term is usually used: they were drafted by the Father into the Body of Christ as Jesus' first disciples were *called* by Jesus, with these first disciples having been given to Jesus by the Father (John 17:6). The *Elect* are given to the glorified Jesus by the Father, who will take care of their needs as they dwell in a world based upon making transactions (buying & selling) without being able to truly participate in this world of transactions.

The second model for salvation in the harvest of firstfruits is that of being filled with spirit but not born of spirit: because this Christian isn't born of God [i.e., because this person doesn't receive a second breath of *life* until the Christian's judgment is revealed at Christ Jesus' return], this Christian can fail, can rebel against God, can be condemned to the lake of fire. However, if this person endures to the end in faith, in belief, this person will be saved, the endtime good news that must be proclaimed to all the world as a witness to all nations (Matt 24:13–14).

At the Second Passover liberation of Israel, all Christians regardless of present denominational affiliation will be filled with spirit [ΠΝΕΥΜΑ] and thereby liberated from indwelling sin and death: all Christians will be able to keep the commandments if that is their desire. But most of greater Christendom will rebel against God as Israel rebelled against the Lord at Sinai (Ex chap 32) and in the wilderness (Num chap 14); therefore most Christians of greater Christendom will be replaced virtually person-for-person by the third part of humanity (from Zech 13:9) that will be filled with spirit when the holy spirit is poured out on all flesh (Joel 2:28) with giving the kingdom of this world to the Son of Man (Dan 7:9–14; Rev 11:15–18) halfway through the seven endtime years. Most of today's self-identified Christian Church will not enter heaven, but will be judged unworthy because of this *Most's* refusal to believe God. Hence, the Muslim, Buddhist, Atheist who, when filled with spirit, chooses to believe God will be saved whereas the Christian who remains in his or her present lawless ways will perish.

The person who is filled with spirit but not born of spirit will be under the New Covenant that has the Law [Torah] written on hearts and placed in minds so that all know the Lord (Jer 31:31–34; Heb 8:8–12). Thus, the majority of the harvest of firstfruits come from Christians who are under the New Covenant, with few being of the Elect.

Matthew's Gospel has Jesus saying that the person who relaxes [not breaks] the least of the commandments will be least in the Kingdom, whereas the person who keeps the commandments and teaches others to do likewise will be great in the kingdom, with this least/great determination stretching across the Elect and those under the New Covenant; so it isn't necessarily the Elect that will be great. It is the one who keeps the commandments when not doing so in this world would seem more logical.

Now, leaping forward a thousand years to the great White Throne Judgment (see Rev 20:11–15), a judgment that the Apostle Paul addressed in his gospel

message without knowing the judgment by the name given to it by endtime Sabbatarian Christians ...

God is not a respecter of persons, offering to this person salvation but condemning the mountain tribesman who never heard the name *Jesus the Nazarene* to damnation. Thus, consider Paul's gospel:

He [God] will render to each one according to his works: to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury. There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. For God shows no partiality. *For all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified. For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.* (Rom 2:6–16 emphasis added)

Gentiles who do not have the Law but who do what the Law requires (i.e., having love for God, neighbor & brother) shall be saved even if they have never heard the name *Jesus the Nazarene*. But both Jew and Gentile who do not keep the Law, regardless of whether the person is or isn't knowingly under the Law, shall perish, the Jew through being judged by the Law, the Gentile through his or her lack of love for neighbor & brother.

Neither the Jew nor the Gentile who physically died in past millennia was born of God—and here is where what Luke writes becomes important ... the person who was nailed to a cross/stake and raised up on that cross was not going to come down alive. This person was *dead* even though this person still lived, at least for a short while. Therefore, in Luke's Gospel having the curtain torn after Jesus was raised on the cross but before He died conveys a different model of salvation than the one seen when Peter told temple officials that by no other name than that of Jesus the Nazarene can a person be saved (Acts 4:10–12). For according to Paul's gospel—according to Luke's Gospel—Jesus' death is not the atoning sacrifice required for salvation. Repentance and voluntarily keeping what is written in the Moab covenant (Deut chap 29–32) is all that is necessary for salvation.

In the great White Throne Judgment—the judgment in which the two criminals crucified alongside Jesus will be judged—the person will be bodily raised from death without being given eternal life or being filled with spirit. The person will be as a dead one talking; will be as Jesus was, as the two thieves were at Calvary. Their physical death—symbolized by crucifixion—will not prevent them from bodily appearing in the great White Throne Judgment.

Now, could Luke have simply got when the curtain was torn wrong, mistaking placing the tearing of the curtain before Jesus died rather than after Jesus died? Possibly, but not really. In Luke's Passion Account, Jesus hardly seems to suffer as opposed to Mark's and Matthew's, something academics have long noted. Plus, in Luke's Gospel, Jesus is fairly talkative—and by using the expression, *Daughters of Jerusalem* (Luke 23:28), the author of Luke's Gospel links his Passion Account to Canticles, which is a Millennium piece (the argument for this is in earlier Sabbath Readings).

If there were only one *fault* that separated Luke's Gospel from Matthew and Mark, this *fault* being when the curtain was torn, then the *fault* might well be a mistake. But when there are many subtle differences and some major ones, then something other than error is at work.

Let us here back up and start over ...

It is in the simplicity and purity of the analogy that Jesus' death opened the way for all of humanity to come to God, with this analogy represented by the curtain being torn after Jesus dies, that is challenged by Luke's account of when the curtain was torn: Luke's account introduces a serious complication. The curtain that separated the Holy of Holies [the Most Holy Place] from the Holy Place in the temple was analogous to the veil with which Moses covered his face so that Israel could not see the glory of God that shown from his face. In Christ, this veil is removed (2 Cor 3:16): every disciple born of God can appear before the Father in prayer. But with Christ Jesus as Israel's High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, the way to God the Father goes through Christ Jesus who entered into the heavenly Holy Place once and forever, cleansed not by the blood of a bull and a goat but by His own blood.

As long as the Christian Church lived spiritually, Christ Jesus was its high priest: salvation could only come through professing that Jesus is Lord (Rom 10:9). But this Christian Church was the Body of Christ (1 Cor 12:27) that is the temple of God (1 Cor 3:16–17; 2 Cor 6:16). Jesus' earthly body that formed the shadow and type of Jesus' spiritual Body died at Calvary, but the gates of Hades did not prevail against Jesus' earthly body that was raised from death after the third day. Nor will the gates of Hades prevail against Christ's spiritual Body (Matt 16:18) that died at the end of the 1st-Century, the beginning of the 2nd-Century (ca 100–102 CE).

The writer of Hebrews records,

Now even the first covenant had regulations for worship and an earthly place of holiness. For a tent was prepared, the first section, in which were the lampstand and the table and the bread of the Presence. It is called the Holy Place. Behind the second curtain was a second section called the Most Holy Place, having the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden urn holding the manna, and Aaron's staff that budded, and the tablets of the covenant. Above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail. 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. But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God. Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant. (Heb 9:1–15 emphasis added)

For as long as the earthly temple stood, the way to the Lord was closed off to Israel as well as to the remainder of the world: only the high priest and then only once a year could come into the presence of the Lord. And the same pertains to the spiritual temple, the Christian Church: for as long as the Church had life, received through receipt of a second breath of life, the only way to God was through Christ Jesus, the heavenly High Priest. But once the Church died, the way into the presence of God was open to all, Jew, Muslim, Christian, even atheist. But—and this is a large caveat—when the Church is restored to life through the Elect being glorified, the way to God is again closed except by going through Christ Jesus, the Elect’s High Priest.

Philadelphia today is a significant portion of the Elect although not all of the Elect.

Because of length of this Sabbath Reading, this subject will again have to be continued over. However, before continuing this to the 19th, it needs stated: Luke prefaces his Gospel with an ancient literary convention:

Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught. (Luke 1:1–4)

Luke doesn’t claim to be an eyewitness, but a chronicler of events that happened in earlier times, perhaps fifty years earlier: there is no way to know for certain when Luke writes, but he certainly doesn’t write until after Paul was taken prisoner—and then not until some time after that. Scholars usually date Luke’s Gospel to after the destruction of the temple (ca 70 CE), and often to a decade

and a half later. And the dating of Luke has some importance; for the Body of Christ—the Christian Church as an entity born of spirit through having received a second breath of life, the breath of God [ΠΝΕΥΜΑ ΘΕΟΥ] in the breath of Christ [ΠΝΕΥΜΑ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ]—died with the death of John (ca 100–102 CE), meaning that the spirit had quit being given to disciples about the time of the destruction of the temple. As the physical temple perished, the spiritual temple died in a manner analogous to Jesus being crucified (He was a dead man the moment He was raised on the cross for He wouldn't come down alive) yet living as Jesus lived after he was crucified. The spiritual temple was dead once the Father quit giving a second breath of life to converts; however, the converts who physically lived gave to the Church life of the sort that Jesus had until He died physically.

Crucifixion doesn't kill instantly. Crucifixion kills through suffocation and shock, and the coming of death could take days and would certainly take hours. But again, the crucified person's death wasn't when the person ceased to draw breath but when the person was raised on the cross/stake. So Jesus was dead as far as Roman soldiers were concerned at the sixth hour even though He didn't die until the ninth hour ... the Christian Church was dead when the Father ceased giving disciples the spirit, but the Body of Christ didn't die until the last disciple truly born of spirit died physically, with again, this being about the end of the 1st-Century, the beginning of the 2nd-Century.

The concept of being dead but alive lies at the heart of Luke's Passion Account, with the movement of when the curtain was torn and the way to God being open to all forming the core of Luke's more talkative Jesus:

In Mark's Passion Account (Mark 14:53–15:39), Jesus speaks three times,

1. "Again the high priest Him, 'Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?' And Jesus said, 'I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.'" (14:61–62)
2. "And Pilate asked him, 'Are you the King of the Jews?' And he answered him, 'You have said so.'" (15:2)
3. "And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, 'Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?'" (15:34)

In Matthew's Passion Account (Matt 26:57–27:56), Jesus says the same three things: (1) Matt 26:64, (2) 27:11, and (3) 27:46.

But in Luke's Account (Luke 22:54–23:49), Jesus has more to say:

1. "And they led Him away to their council, and they said, 'If you are the Christ, tell us.' But He said to them, 'If I tell you, you will not believe, and if I ask you, you will not answer. But from now on the Son of Man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God.' So they all said, 'Are you the Son of God, then?' And He said to them, 'You say that I am.' (22:66–70)
2. "And Pilate asked Him, 'Are you the King of the Jews?' And He answered him, 'You have said so.'" (23:3)

3. "And there followed him a great multitude of the people and of women who were mourning and lamenting for him. But turning to them Jesus said, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold, the days are coming when they will say, "Blessed are the barren and the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!" Then they will begin to say to the mountains, "Fall on us," and to the hills, "Cover us." For if they do these things when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?"' (23:27–31)
4. "And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. And Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.'" (23:33–34)
5. "And he said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.' And He said to him, "Truly, I say to you today, you will be with me in Paradise.'" (23:42–43)
6. "Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, 'Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!' And having said this He breathed his last. (23:46)

Luke is not an eye-witness, nor does the author of the Gospel claim to be an eyewitness: he is, again, a compiler, someone who assembles the accounts he has (evidently, there were many such accounts), the testimony he has heard, and the stories that he deems reliable—and he sets out to write a better account, a better biography than any he has read. For if he didn't believe that he could produce a more reliable biography, there would be no reason for him to write. He would simply forward the best biography of Jesus that he has read. Thus, by implication, the biographies he has differ in some small or in some significant ways from each other. It is his apparently self-appointed task to produce the definitive biography. And to do this, assuming he understands the gravity of his task, requires making *adjustments* to the biographies of the "many [who] have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us" (Luke 1:1). And one such adjustment seems to be when the curtain was torn, with another being what words he put into Jesus' mouth that may or may not have been uttered by Jesus.

The curtain into the Holy of Holies cannot be torn before Jesus died as well as after He died: once torn, the curtain is torn and the way is open to the God for as long as the temple—the Body of Christ—lacked life ... it is this point that has been missed by scholars and pundits: the existence of the temple prevents Israel from coming into the presence of the God. As long as the temple stands, only the high priest can enter into the presence of the God. Therefore, as long as the Body of Christ lives, only Christ Jesus can enter into the presence of God.

John's Gospel, the fourth Gospel, differs from the Synoptic Gospels as the Millennium will differ from this present era. And this will be shown as we loop back to Mark and Matthew next Sabbath.

*

*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.
reserved."

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