

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 *Christ as Creator*.

## **Weekly Readings For the Sabbath of May 26, 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.*

There is one especially grievous lie that has continued to plague Christendom for the past two centuries, the lie that God is a respecter of persons, offering to Gentiles one path to salvation and offering to natural Israel a different path to salvation—in essence, offering two salvations, one based on faith and one on works. This lie appears under the reasonable sounding identifier: *dispensations*, or *dispensationalism*. And it usually takes the form that God offers salvation through Grace to Gentiles while He offers salvation through the Law to Jews. But if God makes a distinction between Jew and Greek, than God privileges the flesh: He would offer an “easier” plan of salvation to Gentiles [Christians] than He does to natural Israelites.

The Apostle Paul clearly says that there is neither Jew nor Greek, male nor female, freeman nor slave among those who are one in Christ Jesus, for all who are baptized into Christ are sons of God and Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise (Gal 3:26-29). James the Just goes farther and says that if disciples show partiality according to the appearance of wealth of a disciple, those who show this partiality sin (Jas 2:1-4) or transgress the Law of God, which must necessarily remain in effect for sin to exist ... if disciples, after conversion, can have sin reign in their mortal bodies (Rom 6:12) and can present their “members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness” (v. 13) when sin no longer has any dominion over the disciple (v. 14), then the Law of God, which makes known what sin is (Rom 7:7; 1 John 3:4), remains alive and well and a determiner of good and evil; for “[a]part from the law, sin lies dead” (Rom 7:8).

An object of Trojan-horse Christendom has been to erase the Law of God from the heart and minds of disciples, thereby “slaying” sin through blotting out the Law with the blood of Christ Jesus. For a millennium, Trojan Christianity, as if protecting the State Church from spiritually transmitted dissent, limited access to Holy Writ while vigorously [more so in some periods than in others] marginalizing Judaism within Catholic lands. And throughout this millennium, the State Church controlled the production of knowledge—

A question too often ignored is how, when, and who produced “socially accepted knowledge.” In the case of Christianity, the Roman Church left behind an edited but

detailed account of its history of ideas, but seldom is this account itself challenged, for no other account really exists despite discovery of Gnostic texts.

From the 1920s through 1950s and in places a little beyond, Social Studies textbooks in American public schools routinely featured a picture of the “happy slave,” a picture produced by a son of a former slave owner. Black Activism on university campuses and Black Studies programs in the post-Vietnam era fought to eradicate this *happy slave* image from America’s social consciousness; for the image did not agree with their observations of the culture from which they came. Although the *happy slave* image was challenged from the margins of academia when it first appeared in the 1920s, the image put a “happy face” on an ugly aspect of America’s past so the image had intellectual endurance, regardless of its truth or falsity. It had *legs*. It allowed educators to minimize a social wrong just as Japan’s historical construction of accounts about its occupation of the Korean Peninsula minimize the social wrong of coerced prostitution ... every entity, wild animal to nation-state, seeks to protect itself when “caught.” And the usual way in which human beings protect themselves after the fact is to *produce a theory of history that minimizes the social wrong*. Thus, Southern slaves were happy; they sang while they worked. They became Christians in America—their immortal souls saved—while their “wild” relatives in Africa remained condemned to hell. But who told them that they had immortal souls? Who told them that their heathen relatives in Africa were condemned to hell? Was it not the same Greek philosophers who brought to the gates of Rome Trojan-horse Christendom, the means through which these philosophers sought to win an empire that Greek armies could not win on battlefields? Yes, it was—or at least it was the spiritual sons of those Greek philosophers who ended up crowning Roman Emperors. It certainly wasn’t Christ Jesus or the Apostle Paul.

The lie of human beings having immortal souls entered Christendom through Greeks seeking to protect the inherent good within *intellectual paganism*, a belief paradigm that had enslaved men to foolishness, causing intelligent men and women to worship sticks and stones and the work of human hands. These Greeks applied the trite idiom: *don’t throw the baby out with the bathwater*, with the *baby* in this case being the borrowed Greek concept of human beings possessing immortal souls from birth. Thus, this *baby* became part of the Trojan Horse that Greeks used to get inside Roman thought and its emperor-worship cult—and once inside, the physical might of Rome proved no match for the intellectual concepts of Greeks who had found in Jesus the solution to paganism’s most pressing problem: how does one know if he or she is “good enough” to go to heaven? This problem still plagues Islam, and will continue to be an active deterrent to peace until another means is found for Muslims to enter heaven without dying in jihad.

While Black Studies programs in American universities sought to eradicate a recent academia fabrication, the image of the *happy slave*, Biology Departments and entire Schools of Arts and Sciences sought to eradicate the even older fabrications of Christendom by substituting another account of history for the “history” of the Bible, little realizing that they were jousting with shadows. The irony of an “old” creation and theoretic evolution is that this modern pagan belief paradigm seeks to overturn not the Christianity of Christ Jesus, but the Trojan-horse Christendom through which Greeks won control over the Roman Empire. Although this 21<sup>st</sup>-Century paganism makes for interesting television programs on *The History Channel (as well on the Discovery Channel and others)*, it does not produce an end to the broad social lies that effectively

suppress dissent within *Democratic* societies: these lies pass into the realm of “fact” as *images of happy slaves*, each person within the democratic community possessing individual rights and sufficient material wealth so as not to question deeply their status as bondservants to the prince of this world.

If a person does not know that he or she is a slave—a premise behind the first *Matrix* movie—then the person will never revolt or even separate oneself from this world, for those who have separated themselves are socially marginalized and stigmatized as the Amish are. The Protestant Reformation was a reaction against the excesses of the Latin Church, and this Reformation did not have an effective counterpart in the lands where the Greek Church continued to hold control over belief paradigms of the masses. However, within the turmoil produced by the Protestant Reformation, a few individuals “escaped” from the prince of this world and emerged in the historical record as Anabaptists. This “slave revolt” did not last long: the prince of this world took immediate steps to halt the escape, using the Protestant Reformers to do much of his wet work (the killing of Anabaptists). And what is seen is that only in times of social turmoil can any significant escape from the prince of this world occur. That is, only in periods of social turmoil can escape occur until the kingdom of this world is toppled, taken from its present prince, and given to Christ Jesus (Rev 11:15; Dan 7:9-14).

Only when a serious Christian Studies movement emerges within official Christendom—as the Civil Rights Movement arose within the American Black population—will Biblical Studies escape its own *happy slave stereotype*.

A person is free to worship whatever stick or stone or work of his or her hand that the person wants to worship: a person can worship ghosts, or ancestral spirits, or the person’s own hallucinations. A person can find solace in sunsets, or in mountain scenery, or along seashores. But if the person is serious about worshiping the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the person must make a spiritual journey of faith equivalent in length to the physical journey made by the patriarch Abraham before he received the covenant of circumcision. This means that the person will have to remove the mask of being a happy slave to the prince of this world, the king of spiritual Babylon (Isa 14:4), mentally leave his kingdom of Babylon and mentally journey across the deserts of Iraq to the plains of Moab, where the person will only then choose life or death under the second covenant (Deu 29:1) ... death reigned from Adam to Moses (Rom 5:14), not Adam to Christ Jesus, of whom the first Adam was a type. Consider now what is implied within this one verse: all of human history between Adam and Noah, then between Noah (and the baptism of the world by water) and Abraham (the father of the faithful), then between Abraham and Israel entering Egypt to become [initially] favored slaves of Pharaoh, then between the birth of Moses and the return of Moses to Egypt where he confronted Pharaoh—all of this history forms the lively shadow of the history of the Church between the last Adam (the man Jesus) and last Elijah (the glorified Jesus), who will restore all things. The connection between Moses and Elijah is firm (Matt 17:4): Moses received the life-giving words of *Yah*, spoken openly at Sinai. And as the mediator of the second covenant, the covenant to which better promises were added when its mediator became the glorified Christ Jesus, Moses bore witness of the covenant that promised spiritual circumcision.

The second covenant—the covenant made on the plains of Moab (Deu 29:1)—is the connection between Moses and the last Elijah; it is the single tent that covers as “a bright cloud” the only means by which a human being can enter heaven, thereby

escaping death. God is not a respecter of persons, offering salvation through Moses to natural Israel and salvation through Christ Jesus to Gentiles. Rather, the salvation (means to “inherit” [Luke 10:25; 18:18] everlasting life) offered through Moses, salvation based on faith (Deu 30:1-2) that would have produced circumcised hearts (v. 6), remains as the only salvation offered of Gentiles. Both Jew and Greek must come to the Father through faith: the natural Israelite who keeps the law by the dictates of culture must by faith profess that Jesus is Lord (Rom 10:6-10) and believe that the Father raised Jesus from the dead [this requires the natural Israelite to accept by faith that a second deity exists]—and this journey of faith is mentally or spiritually equivalent to the geographic journey of faith made by the patriarch Abraham. Likewise, the Gentile who believes that Jesus is Lord and that the Father raised Jesus from the dead [two deities, not one or three] **and** who by faith keeps the precepts of the Law (Rom 2:26-29) stands on the identical theological constructs as does the natural Israelite who would be saved. Both will be saved by their journeys of faith, each comparable to the other although their starting points are far apart.

There is no favoritism with God: both the natural Israelite and the Gentile must, by faith, have his or her heart circumcised by Spirit. To teach otherwise is to make oneself into a false teacher and a false prophet. Circumcision by hands is meaningless in this era. The color of one’s skin is meaningless. One’s biological lineage is meaningless. One’s social status is meaningless—all these things pertain to the flesh, and not to the new creature born of Spirit that dwells in a tent of flesh as a physically circumcised Israelite dwelt in Egypt in houses of clay bricks, or in tents of animal skins and fabric.

The image of *happy slaves* well serves the purposes of the spiritual king of Babylon, but it was God who consigned every person to disobedience so that He could have mercy on all (Rom 11:32). And having mercy on all begins with the last Elijah causing his servants to preach repentance to all people as John the Baptist preached repentance to natural Israel ... repentance will have every person turning to God, and by faith, keeping the precepts of the Law, with the most visible sign of this repentance being Sabbath observance, the means through which one immediately separates him or herself from this world and its prince.

If a person will not openly proclaim that he or she is of God by observing the Sabbath rather than some other day or no day at all then the person has denied Christ Jesus, the present mediator of the covenant by which life came to Israel through Moses. Life did not wait to come until Calvary; life came when Israel, by faith, returned to God when in a far land. Unfortunately, it never returned by faith, but instead pursued God through the works of its hands (Rom 9:30-32).

Today, there is only one Israel: the nation that consists entirely of those who have circumcised hearts, this circumcision by the Spirit, not by the letter. There is no other Israel. And the natural descendants of the patriarchs—as natural branches of a cultivated olive tree—will not return to God until they are socially forced to do so by a second Passover liberation of Israel, followed by the prince of this world, like the Egyptian Pharaoh, coming after all his liberated and spiritually empowered slaves. Then, all who keep the precepts of the Law will again be marked for death as they were in Nazi Germany. And some of the natural branches will finally profess that Jesus is Lord, while believing that the previously concealed Father raised Jesus from the dead. Most, however, will die as they did before, only this time they will die while taking the world to the brink of annihilation.

The turmoil surrounding the second Passover liberation of Israel will provide the social cover for many of the prince of this world's slaves to escape from spiritual Babylon. These escaping slaves will proclaim loyalty to God, will begin keeping the precepts of the law, and too many of them will, 220 days later, rebel against God and return to bondage to the prince of this world. Only now, they will have tasted liberty; they will have been "enlightened." And once enlightened, when they return to sin they will commit blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, which will not be forgiven.

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*The person conducting the services should read or assign to be read Romans chapter 1, verse 16, through chapter 2, verse 16, noting especially chapter 2 verses 9 through 11.*

**Commentary:** What is "evil"? Is it limited to *fools who exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles* (1:23)? It certainly includes those individuals who are so foolish as to have exchanged that which is earthly for that which is heavenly.

The world has not known God for a long time although God has been "knowable" to every generation through the things that are. The visible reveals the invisible (Rom 1:20): the first Adam was a man of mud, but he was a type of the last Adam, a life-giving spirit (1 Cor 15:45). The first Eve was of Adam's flesh and bone; the last Eve was of the last Adam's spirit (Rom 8:9), created by God the Father when he raised a physically breathing but spiritual dead human being from "death" by causing the person to be born of Spirit [*Pneuma 'Agion* or "Breath Holy"] in a manner foreshadowed by *Yah* breathing into the nostrils of the man of mud to impart physical breath to the first Adam. Therefore, a physically breathing human being is directly analogous to the clay corpse of the first Adam prior to when God breathed into the man's nostrils: the physically lifeless clay corpse, though formed in the image of a man, did not become a *nephesh* [breathing creature] until after *Yah* breathed into the lifeless nostrils of the sculpted clay mud. Likewise, a breathing human being does not become a spiritually living son of God until this *spiritually lifeless corpse* receives the divine Breath [*Pneuma 'Agion*] of the Father. Therefore, for the son of *Theos* (John 3:16), the man Jesus of Nazareth, to fulfill all righteousness, He, too, had to be born of Spirit following baptism (Matt 3:15-17), the act that signifies repentance not inclusion into the household of God.

If baptism represents inclusion into the household of God as has been taught by most of Christendom for far, far too long—inclusion in the same way that physical circumcision represents inclusion in natural Israel—then circumcision of the heart by Spirit is a meaningless phrase. But it is not a meaningless phrase: "circumcision" of the outer flesh or of the inner heart is the inclusionary ritual for all Israelites. When outward, the son is made a part of the natural descendants of Abraham and is thus separated from everyone else in this world, male or female. When inward, the son of God is made a part of the restored Body of Christ and is thus separated from the remainder of the spiritual descendants of Abraham, Trinitarian Christian or Unitarian Christian. Therefore, spiritual circumcision in this period immediately prior to the restoration of the Body of Christ, is extremely rare. It only occurs after a person makes a journey of faith from living in this world as a son of disobedience to living as a spiritual Judean who keeps the precepts of the law.

Evil is, now, remaining in this world as a son of disobedience when the person has been called to make a journey of faith from Babylon to Jerusalem. Outwardly, evil is lawlessness; evil is the transgression of the commandments, the breaking of the

*Decalogue*. Inwardly, evil does not equate to transgressing the twenty-two or forty-four (or whatever number a person finds) so-called commandments of Jesus as if these commandments somehow differ from what *Yah* spoke from atop Mount Sinai; rather, evil is mentally and emotionally breaking the same commandments that were inscribed on two tablets of stone by the finger of *Yah*, who came in the flesh as His Son, His only, the man Jesus of Nazareth ... again, for those unfamiliar with previous Sabbath readings, *Yah* is not a contraction for the Tetragrammaton *YHWH*, but the Spokesperson for the co-joined God of Israel; *Yah* is the deity seen by Moses and the seventy elders, the only deity Israel (with the principle exception of King David, a man after God's own heart) knew. Thus, it was *Yah* not the Father that spoke from atop Sinai or Horeb. The Ten Commandments are His commandments, but they are also the Father's commandments; for neither as *Yah* the *Logos*, nor as the man Jesus of Nazareth did this Spokesperson speak words that were not the Father's. Before He came as His only Son and afterwards, He was to the Father as Aaron was to Moses (Ex 4:16). He delivered the Father's words to Israel, not to all peoples.

The words or speech-acts of the Father, however, cannot be contained in "sound," the modulation of human breath or of the wind [both represented by the Greek linguistic icon, *pneuma*]. Rather, modulations of divine Breath [*Pneuma 'Agion*] heals and renews (Ps 104:30) and brings life to that which was previously dead. With the utterance of divine Breath comes life; thus, death reigned from Adam to Moses (again Rom 5:14). The living words of the *Decalogue*, especially as repeated in Deuteronomy, hold the promise of life if these words are pursued by faith rather than by works (Rom 9:30-32).

Although the words uttered from atop Sinai were heard by all of Israel, these words were only spoken to Moses. The sound or sound-image heard—the "thunder and the flashes of lightning and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking" that terrified Israel (Ex 20:18-19)—contained only the visible, physical outward message that represented a portion of *Yah's* speech-act on that day. But even this portion would have caused Israel to inherit life if the nation had passed its test of not sinning or transgressing His uttered laws (v. 20); whereas the invisible portion (what could not be heard with ears or seen with eyes) that was to be "heard" with the heart and the mind was given to the man Moses through laws about altars, slaves, restitution, social justice, the Sabbath. The conquest of Canaan was promised—swords would not have to be swung; hornets would go before Israel (Ex 23:28). But all of these promises were conditioned on Israel doing what the nation said it would do, and this is to keep everything that the Lord spoke to Israel (Ex 24:7), even though the majority of the nation did not hear but part of the audible portion of *Yah's* speech-act.

Consider the scenario: Israel, frightened by the utterance of God, asked the man Moses to intercede with God while the nation stood far off. The nation promised to hear whatever Moses spoke (Ex 20:19), believing by faith that Moses spoke the words of God ... why would Israel agree to do and to keep what the nation did not hear with its own ears, nor well understand, especially when the death penalty would now be invoked for transgressions of God's law? Previously, God had indulged Israel, overlooking its lawlessness, its unbelief, its tempting of God, but with the giving of the law came responsibility to keep the law. Violating the Sabbath prior to Sinai caused the Lord to say to Moses, "How long will you refuse to keep my commandments and laws" (Ex 16:28), even though the Law had not been formally uttered, but the Lord required no

“loss of life” within Israel for the transgressions of the people who went out to gather manna. However following Sinai, a man found gathering sticks on the Sabbath was ordered stoned (Num 15:35). So a different standard was applied—in the vocabulary of Evangelical Christianity, a different *dispensation* began, one that required that transgressions of the Law be covered with the loss of life.

The nature of evil did not change: sin remained lawlessness (1 John 3:4). How God dealt with sin would seem to change, though. Whereas bondage to Pharaoh [Israel’s status as a slave people] had prevented sin from being assigned to Israel (Rom 5:13) just as humanity’s bondage to the prince of this world causes sin not to be reckoned against today’s sons of disobedience, the “dead” who are to bury the dead [because God has consigned all to disobedience – Rom 11:32], receipt of the Law brings accountability to the Law. Accountability brings responsibility to keep the Law. Responsibility turns belief and faith into action that appears as “works.” The person who professes faith in Jesus but who brings forth no fruit of that faith is merely a bag of wind, heat lightning, and lying clouds—a storm, dark and deceitful, starting fires and spreading destruction, good for nothing but an electrical show of wasted potential.

So what really changed with the giving of the Law? Was Israel in Egypt under a different *dispensation* than Israel in the wilderness of Sin? Or did the lives of Pharaoh and his army, swallowed by the waters of the Sea of Reeds, pay the price of Israel’s transgressions between Passover and the giving of the Law. Certainly the lives of firstborns in Egypt paid the ransom price of Israel’s liberation from bondage (Isa 43:3), but the lives of Pharaoh and his army were in addition to the firstborns slain when the death angel passed over all of Egypt. So really, Israel’s transgressions were temporarily covered by additional Egyptian lives, with these lives taken through their loss of breath (drowning). For after the giving of the Law and until Calvary, Israel’s transgressions would be temporarily covered by the blood of bulls and goats, whose lives “stood in” for the life of Christ Jesus, crucified on a Roman cross (crucifixion causes death through loss of breath and shock).

The lives of men were given as the ransom price for the liberation of Israel from bondage to Pharaoh; the lives of Egyptians were given as the “covering” sacrifice for the transgressions of Israel between the Sea of Reeds and Mount Sinai. In the short period between liberation from bondage to Pharaoh followed by escape from Egypt and the giving of the Law, a period of about six weeks (not seven weeks, for Moses was called forth into the cloud on or about the tenth day of the third month), Israel received the Sabbath as a law and commandment, with this “Sabbath day” denoted by the giving and withholding of manna, bread from heaven that foreshadowed Christ Jesus coming as the true Bread of Life (John 6:32-33, 35). Transgressions of the law within this short period grieved God, but were a testing of God that He nevertheless tolerated because they were covered by unholy blood.

In the broad application of the Law, nothing changed. No new *dispensation* began when Israel left Egypt, or when Israel received the Law. God required the life of Pharaoh for the transgressions of Israel, his bondservant, while in Egypt (Ex 12:29-30), and God required the life of Pharaoh again in the Sea of Reeds, the natural barrier that separated Egypt from the wildernesses beyond. God then required the lives of bulls and goats for the transgressions of Israel between Sinai and Calvary, when He required the life of His firstborn Son. And as the lives of Pharaoh and his army “reached forward” to cover Israel’s transgressions for six or so weeks, the life of Christ Jesus reaches forward in the

form of Grace to cover the transgressions of Israel, now a spiritually circumcised nation, from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries. But as the giving of the Law marked the end of when the loss of Pharaoh and his army's lives covered Israel's transgression, the beginning of the seven endtime years of tribulation will denote the end of grace: the Son of Man, Head [Christ Jesus] and Body [the Church], will be revealed (Luke 17:30) or made naked. The garment of Christ's righteousness will be removed when Israel is liberated from indwelling sin and death through empowerment by the Holy Spirit—and the lives of men will again be given as ransom (Isa 43:4).

If all transgression of the Law must be “covered” by the loss of breath, from Noah to Egypt and on until the fall of spiritual Babylon, what changes and when does it change? When does one *dispensation* end and another truly begin? When does sin not have to be covered by the loss of life? Satan will lose his life when he is first cast into time (Rev 12:9-10), then cast into the lake of fire (Rev 20:10) where he will be tormented until the end of that age [that age will end with him being cast into the lake of fire].

When Israel had no life but that which came from physical breath, the commandments were outside of the person. But when Israel became a nation born of Spirit and circumcised of heart, the new creatures that form this nation are all sons of God, not sons of this world [i.e., sons of disobedience]. Thus, each disciple is a new creation that has spiritually come from the heavenly realm in a manner foreshadowed by how the *Logos/Theos* came physically (in all things, the physical precedes the spiritual [1 Cor 15:46] as the visible reveals the invisible [Rom 1:20]), and this new creature is not ruled by commandments outside the person, but by the same Laws of God written on hearts and placed in minds (Heb 8:10). This new creation dwells in a tent of flesh as an alien invader, yes, as an alien invader born free (Rom 8:1-2) to keep the Law. He can rebel against the prince of this world, for he was never a slave to this prince. This new creature was not born consigned to the disobedience to which the tent of flesh into which he was born was consigned. Rather, he is born into a struggle that he must fight to win, or perish in unbelief. He is you and he is me—and he is all who are of *Philadelphia*. He is born as an infant son of God, and he will spiritually mature while dwelling in this tent of flesh, or he will die the second death when his judgment is revealed (1 Cor 4:5).

Spiritual maturity is about choosing to keep the Law, the precepts of God, until they are kept without any choice being made. And this means that disciples who choose not to keep the commandments have not even begun the maturing process, if they have been born of Spirit.

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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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