

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 Christology.

Weekly Readings For the Sabbath of June 28, 2008

The person conducting the Sabbath service should open services with two or three hymns, or psalms, followed by an opening prayer acknowledging that two or three (or more) are gathered together in Christ Jesus' name, and inviting the Lord to be with them.

The person conducting the services should read or assign to be read 1 John chapters 1 through 3.

Commentary: John writes, "Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth" (3:18).

John writes about disciples loving one another, supplying the needs of one another, about walking in light and not in darkness, with walking in darkness encompassing the practice of sinning, or committing sin, the transgression of the law. Sin is, simply, lawlessness (3:4). Thus, the disciple who walks in light—the one who walks as Jesus walked—keeps the commandments, specifically His commandments.

Paul faced an ongoing battle throughout his ministry with the Circumcision Faction, a battle that he never really won. The Apostle John, apparently spending many of his latter years at Ephesus, also was engaged in one or more theological battles, with his battles being about the nature of Christ Jesus; i.e., about Christology. And as Paul vigorously fought against those who came from Jerusalem—converted Pharisees most likely—John fought false teachers who, clinging to monotheism's numerical singleness, taught that Jesus was not of the same type and order as the Father but was a lower created being.

What John writes about antichrists follows what he has written in his gospel, which was apparently written two or three years earlier than this epistle ... the historical dating of when John wrote (like the dating of when the prophet Daniel wrote) has undergone considerable scholarly revision in the past few years. Justin Martyr wrote of John still being a contemporary, which is hard to accept considering that the traditional date of John's death is approximately 100 CE and Justin Martyr lived from approximately 100 to 165 CE. Plus, in his early adulthood Justin Martyr did not identify himself as a "Christian" but as a pagan philosopher—he allegedly wore his philosopher robes throughout his life, even after his "conversion."

But it is through Justin Martyr through Irenaeus that great age has traditionally been assigned to John, and it is through Irenaeus that the story of John refusing to even stay under the same roof with the Egyptian convert and teacher Kerinthus comes to endtime

disciples. Apparently because of Kerinthus' teaching about the nature and divinity of Christ Jesus, John refused not merely to eat with him but to even momentarily share the same roof. Yet when Kerinthus' doctrines as received from Irenaeus are examined, they better represent what Scripture teaches than do the doctrines of conciliar Christendom. Therefore, separating oneself from a false teacher was, for John, of much more importance than most endtime Sabbatarian disciples give to marking and avoiding those who teach error.

So many schisms exist within Christendom that marking and shunning has become a mockery of itself. Dozens of Amish fellowships, none willing to eat with another, exist within a few miles of each other in Pennsylvania's Lancaster valley, with this valley and these fellowships a representative microcosm of Christianity worldwide. And John apparently would have both condemned and approved of this sort of separation for theological reasons.

The message John emphasizes is that disciples are to have love for one another—he writes not because disciples do not know the truth, but because they know it (1 John 2:21) ... question: if disciples know the truth, then why is he writing? And the answer can only be that false teachers and those who deny the pre-Advent divinity of the *Logos* are successfully persuading disciples to abandon the truth and follow a lie.

Consider for a moment: if you know the truth, what reason would anyone have for writing to you about the truth other than to bolster your faith at a time when you are under a theological attack? John said, "I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment you had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word that you have heard" (1 John 2:7) ... this old commandment includes that everyone "who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness" (1 John 3:4); that Christ appeared to take away sins, and in Jesus there is no sin (v. 5); that no one who abides in Christ keeps on sinning (v. 6). John warns, "Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he [Jesus] is righteous. Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning" (v. 7).

The Sabbaths of God are the *rests* of God, with entering into *rest* being a euphemistic expression for entering into God's presence; thus the Sabbaths are those occasions when natural and spiritual Israelites enter into the presence of God, or more precisely, those occasions when inner new creatures born of spirit as sons of God bring the tents of flesh in which they dwell into the presence of God as they are daily in the presence of God.

Satan is no longer in the presence of God as an anointed cherub, but goes to and fro on the earth, walking up and down on it, and only occasionally enters into the presence of the Lord (Job 1:7; 2:2). And by not being continually in the presence of God, Satan doesn't rest or enter into a rest or keep a Sabbath day.

Keeping the Sabbath and commemorating what the Sabbath represents is a privilege that can be taken from a disciple, and will be taken from disciples who do not begin keeping the Sabbaths of God when "the promise of entering his rest still stands" (Heb 4:1) ... as Israel in the wilderness of Paran rebelled against God and because of unbelief did not enter into God's rest [i.e., the Promised Land, upon which God's eyes were continuously set — Ps 95:10-11] when the promise of entering stood but tried to enter on the following day and was turned back, the Christian Church rebelled against God, and with very few exceptions, would not enter into Sabbath observance when the promise of entering stood but has continuously tried to enter into God's rest on the following day

almost from the beginning, with God preventing the Church from entering into His presence because of its lawlessness. As the Lord [YHWH] gave natural Israel “statutes that were not good and rules by which they could not have life” that He might defile Israel “through their very gifts in their offering up all their firstborn” that He might devastate the nation (Ezek 20:25-26), the Father and the Son have given the Christian Church traditions that are not good and by which disciples cannot have life, traditions that will send lawless disciples into the lake of fire, with the foremost tradition being that of Sunday worship: no disciple can enter into God’s presence on the following day. Jesus entered as the Wave Sheaf Offering, the First of the firstfruits. There is no other “first” of the firstfruits. Every other disciple will enter at the end of the seven years of tribulation, at the end of the week represented by Unleavened Bread, on the reality of the last high day of Unleavened Bread.

The above is worthy of repeating: Jesus as the Wave Sheaf Offering, as the reality of the first handful of ripe barley waved before God so that the barley harvest could begin, ascends and appears before the Father on the first day of the week. He is the First of the firstfruits. But disciples are not resurrected until the glorified Jesus comes again at the end of seven endtime years of tribulation. They represent the gathering into the barn of the entire harvest of firstfruits. They will be resurrected to glory at the end of seven years of tribulation; they will be resurrected as the reality of the last high day of the seven days of Unleavened Bread. Thus, disciples enter into the presence of the Father on the Sabbath, the seventh day of the seven day week.

- For a disciple to attempt to appear before the Father on the first day of the week instead of the seventh day is a usurpation of Jesus’ position as the First of the firstfruits.
- Disciples will appear in glory before the Father on the reality of the seventh day of the week, not the first day. Only Jesus is First. Only Jesus appeared in glory before the Father on the first day of the week. None of His disciples appeared with Him. All will appear on the seventh day, the last high Sabbath of Unleavened Bread.

A Christian practices sin when this Christian does not keep the Sabbath. The Sabbath commandment is part of the Law, a single law of ten facets (Jas 2:10) that can be likened to the single fruit of the spirit that has nine attributes: “But the fruit [καρπὸς — singular noun] of the Spirit [πνεύματός] is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law” (Gal 5:22-23). John writes, “Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil” (1 John 3:8), so whoever makes a practice of attempting to enter into the presence of God on the first day of the week practices sinning and is, unfortunately for the naïve, of the devil. And this should surprise no one: Paul wrote, “And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds” (2 Cor 11:14-15).

The prophet Isaiah wrote about Israel: “When the Lord has given you rest from your pain and turmoil and the hard service with which you were made to serve, you will take up this taunt against the king of Babylon” (14:3-4). This *king of Babylon* was not Nebuchadnezzar or any human king, but the present prince of this world, that old dragon, Satan the devil, who said in his heart, *I will ascend to heaven; / above the stars of God / I will set my throne on high / ... I will make myself like the Most High* (vv. 13-14). It is Satan who yearns to usurp the position of Christ Jesus and be like the Most

High; thus, it is both reasonable and logical to expect his servants [i.e., Satan's servants] to teach infants sons of God to also usurp the position of Christ by attempting to enter into the presence of the Most High on the first day of the week.

“God is light, and in him is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5), with *darkness* being a euphemistic referent for sin and death, the lawful wages for sin. Sin is the transgression of the law, or lawlessness (1 John 3:4). So the person who is of God does not practice lawlessness, meaning that when the new creature born of spirit as a son of God willingly practices sinning as in attempting to enter into God's presence on the first day of the week, the new creature who was born under no condemnation (Rom 8:1-2; 6:14) becomes the willing bondservant [slave] to sin and is no longer of God or under grace.

What about the infant son of God who doesn't know better, who enters into a Sunday fellowship with good intentions and love for God? And the answer is that in times past, God winked at (or chose not to see) such lawlessness for the Body of Christ was, itself, dead and lifeless. Hence the death that comes from such lawlessness was in place and was keeping these disciples as mental prisoners or exiles in spiritual Babylon, the single kingdom of the world. As the physically circumcised nation was not to leave earthly Babylon until Cyrus issued a decree that God had charged him to build for God a house at Jerusalem (Ezra 1:3), no spiritual Israelite (i.e., no Christian) was to mentally or spiritually leave spiritual Babylon until a remnant of the Christian Church, in the embodiment of the Radical Reformers, left participating in the governance of this world to rebuild the house of God in heavenly Jerusalem. As physical Jerusalem was without a temple for seventy years (586-516 BCE), spiritual Jerusalem was uninhabited for approximately 1,200 years (325-1525 CE). And as the second temple built by Zerubbabel was without the Ark of the Covenant and the Urim and Thummim—that is, without the presence of God—until the man Jesus entered this second temple (rebuilt by Herod) to cleanse it from the worldliness of buying and selling, the Christian Church was and remains without the presence of God until it is clothed with power from on high (Luke 24:49) as Peter and Paul were so clothed in the 1st-Century.

Therefore, when disciples are liberated from indwelling sin and death at a second Passover liberation of Israel, the phenomenon that begins the seven endtime years of tribulation, the time when God ignores transgression of the Sabbath commandment will have ended. The law of God will be written on hearts and minds. All disciples, not the few that know today, will know to keep the Sabbath, and every disciple will be empowered by the Holy Spirit so that the disciple can keep the commandments even though doing so will cost most disciples their physical lives. Only a remnant will escape physical death. Most genuine disciples will be martyred (and will thereby escape physically living through the remainder of these seven endtime years of tribulation). Most disciples, however, will rebel against God and will seek to save their physical lives by returning to the lawless practices of historical Christendom.

Jesus said that many are called but few will be chosen (Matt 22:14). Few disciples will live by the commandments when persecuted and afflicted for doing so. It will be just too easy to return to the lawless practices of today's Christianity if disciples do not now begin to live by the commandments, beginning with perhaps the least of the commandments: Sabbath observance.

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The reader should now read the remainder of 1 John; i.e., chapters 4 & 5.

Commentary: Overcoming the world begins with the disciple consciously making the effort to keep the commandments—and as Jesus' blood was shed on the Preparation Day for the Sabbath, disciples' blood will be shed throughout the Tribulation, but especially from eight months into the first year to eight or so months after Satan has been cast from heaven halfway through these seven endtime years.

The first 1260 days of the seven endtime years forms the mirror image of the last 1260 days—and during the first 1260 days, Sabbath observance will mark those who are of God, thereby allowing them to be easily identified by the man of perdition, as the tattoo of the cross [χξς'] will mark those who are of the Antichrist during the last 1260 days ... no symbol or mark better represents those disciples who today attempt to enter into God's presence on the 1st day rather than on the Sabbath than does the cross.

As Paul while he still lived saw all in Asia leave him and rejection by those in Achaia and Judah, John while he still lived saw the death of the Body of Christ, for disciples such as Diotrephes (3 John v. 9) had gained control of congregations. These false disciples were John's little antichrists, disciples that went out from them, for they were not of them even though at one time they had fellowshipped with John. Such is the case today, even within *Philadelphia* where those who still use the name went out from us because they were never of us.

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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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