

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 spiritual birth.

Weekly Readings For the Sabbath of July 11, 2009

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 concept that spiritual growth can occur before spiritual birth occurs—this concept mentioned in last Sabbath's reading—is a magnification of what has been taught about spiritual birth, but is contrary to what has been taught about a person having no interest in God prior to spiritual birth, that the act of the Father drawing a person from this world (John 6:44) must necessarily precede the person having an interest in God, with many being called or drawn but with few being chosen (Matt 22:14). If, however, a generational act of God drawing a person from this world and to Himself occurs as when the Lord made covenants with Abraham that apply to his heirs, then there is a generational interest in God that is unrelated to spiritual birth or to an individual calling. Such a generational interest within Christianity where the generations are not restricted to biology, but are usually biological; hence so-called *Christian nations* tend to be filled generation after generation with *Christians* as Islamic nations are filled with Muslims and biological Jews (natural descendants of the patriarch Jacob) head families of Jews, with each having a cultural attachment to the patriarch Abraham and an interest in God that does not derive from the person being individually drawn from this world by the Father and called by Christ Jesus.

Thus, the concept of spiritual or moral growth occurring prior to a person being born of God is understandable when considering the righteousness of Observant Jews or faithful Christians or Muslims, each believing that he or she is "right" with God. In the past, however, Sabbatarian churches of God have taught that the "good" [righteousness] of this world can only go, say, ceiling high rather than all the way to God because the Father has not drawn these individuals from this world. But these Sabbatarian assemblies were almost entirely composed of "converts" to Sabbath observance. When a second and a third generation of Sabbatarian disciples who had made no journey of faith (thus hearts were not cleansed and could therefore not be circumcised) began to enter into these fellowships, the same type of problems arose within these Sabbatarian fellowships as were observed by the first generation of Sabbath-keeping converts

in the “churches of this world.” In other words, the present Sabbatarian fellowships are just as spiritually dead as are the churches, mosques, and synagogues of this world.

But within the churches, mosques, and synagogues of this world are countless scores of individuals who earnestly desire to serve God, with their desire for a relationship with God coming from a cultural interest in God that is not unrelated to an endtime calling, but is not yet a calling by God—and will not be an individual calling as presently occurs. Therefore, because the Sabbatarian churches of God have devalued the moral “goodness” of those human beings who have sought righteousness without having been individually drawn from this world by the Father and called by Christ Jesus, there has been a general neglect of evidence of the work of the law being written on the hearts of those who are without the law. Paul writes,

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* 16 on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus. (Rom 2:12–16 — emphasis added)

Since the glorified Jesus breathed on ten of His disciples and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit [πνεῦμα ἅγιον]” (John 20:22), *Gentiles* have been all who are not born of spirit [πνεῦμα]. Thus, the Christian who worships on Sunday or the Muslim who worships on Friday or even the natural Israelite who keeps the Sabbath—all are spiritual Gentiles for they have not been born of God. They are numbered among the ones who, in the great White Throne Judgment, will be saved if the work of the law (love of neighbor as self) is written on their hearts. They are not now presently lost (if they are dead), for they never came under judgment in this world. Despite what they believed about themselves, they were never of the household of God for they were never born of God; therefore they were never under judgment although what they did in the life they lived will determine what their judgment will be when they come under judgment so they do not get a *pass* on habitually bad behavior. In other words, those who sinned without the law will perish without the law, but those who strived for moral goodness will obtain eternal life when Satan is no more.

Again, all moral or spiritual growth occurs in this world. That growth (this striving for righteousness) is essential for both the person born of God as one of the firstfruits and for those who will be born of God when resurrected in the great White Throne Judgment. The difference is when spiritual birth occurs and judgment comes upon the person ... for the person who has not been born of God, the person has his or her entire lifetime to work out righteousness, with the aging process assisting in this working out of righteousness: as the flesh begins to fail, the inner person loses some interest in the things of the flesh as the things of God

become more important to this inner person. But the person who has been born of God must bear fruit [the fruit of the spirit] within a season or two or the Father cuts away the person and salvation is lost (John 15:1–2). Yes, the disciple who has been truly born of God must bear fruit and does not have a lifetime to produce this fruit: the Father takes away those sons of His that do not bear fruit, and prunes or cuts back those that do bear fruit whereas the human being who has not been born of God grows as a wild tree that must also bear fruit.

Anglo-European settlers arrived on the coast of Oregon late in 19th Century. They began to clear land, logging the large firs, hemlocks, and spruce of coastal valleys; they cleared fields and planted small grains and orchards of apples, pears, quinces. After only a few years, the fields quit producing a crop, but the orchards continued and were still being tended when World War II beckoned, causing men to leave their scattered farmsteads for either military service or to work in towns for guaranteed wages. The fields and the orchards were abandoned: deer ate the apples that fell and bears broke down trees. State Forestry went around and burned down the remaining houses and barns when youthful hippies appeared on the Oregon Coast in the late 1960s. But the orchards were left alone—and some trees in these orchards continued to bear fruit while others did not. And so it is with “wild” human beings that are not really wild but rather are not pruned by the Father. It is these individuals that show that the work of the law has been written on their hearts.

But it is the person who has been grafted onto the Root of Righteousness [Christ Jesus] that must bear fruit year by year or be cut off from God, losing salvation while still physically living.

The Sabbatarian churches of God looked to what the prophet Ezekiel wrote that if a *Christian* ends his or her life well, the person will be saved:

But if a wicked person turns away from all his sins that he has committed and keeps all my [the Lord's] statutes and does what is just and right, he shall surely live; he shall not die. None of the transgressions that he has committed shall be remembered against him; for the righteousness that he has done he shall live. Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked, declares the Lord God, and not rather that he should turn from his way and live? But when a righteous person turns away from his righteousness and does injustice and does the same abominations that the wicked person does, shall he live? None of the righteous deeds that he has done shall be remembered; for the treachery of which he is guilty and the sin he has committed, for them he shall die.

Yet you say, “The way of the Lord is not just.” Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way not just? Is it not your ways that are not just? When a righteous person turns away from his righteousness and does injustice, he shall die for it; for the injustice that he has done he shall die. Again, when a wicked person turns away from the wickedness he has committed and does what is just and right, he shall save his life. Because he considered and turned away from all the transgressions that he had committed, he shall surely live; he shall not die. Yet the house of Israel says, “The way of the Lord is

not just.” O house of Israel, are my ways not just? Is it not your ways that are not just? (Ezek 18:21–29)

Israel was not born of God and could not be born of God for this Israel to whom Ezekiel spoke formed the shadow and type of the *Israel* that would be born of God after the spirit [πνεῦμα] was given—and this Israel was in Babylonian captivity because of its lawless ways. The generation that went to Babylon died there. Likewise, those Christians who are cut off for not bearing fruit die as bondservants to the spiritual king of Babylon. They have lost salvation; they cannot be restored to Christ. And they will tell (by their actions) the disciple who would restore them that they cannot be restored.

The concept of spiritual growth occurring prior to spiritual birth would seem to be at odds with the observable reality that unless a person is drawn from this world by the Father, the person has no interest in the things of God and certainly is not willing to believe God. But this observable reality is not seen until a person has been born of God: as long as the person remains a part of this world, the goodness or righteousness of people suggest that the path to God is a many-spoked wheel when that is not the case. Thus, those who have not been born of God are far more willing to accept someone of a differing faith as a righteous person than has been those individuals who “converted” to Sabbath observance when drawn from this world by the Father. And it is the lack of love by Sabbatarian converts that has been their undoing.

Culturally, Observant Jews have been interested in the things of God and in obeying the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as they knew/know this God through Moses. Likewise, a *Christian* culture developed in the 2nd and 3rd Centuries that prevented a person from obeying God, but caused those in the culture to be interested in the things of God. So as a matter of culture, there have been individuals since Moses who have earnestly sought to keep the commandments as they understood the will of God, but they have done so without being truly born of God. These individuals have grown large in the womb of disobedience, which stifled their movements ... ultrasound imagery has allowed late 20th-Century and early 21st-Century parents to see embryos and fetuses in the womb. When the fetus is small, it has room to move around, to get away from uncomfortable situations, to actually try to hide from saline injected into the womb to kill it. The fetus isn’t unviable tissue, but a living person that ought to be protected by its mother and by society. Abortion is morally wrong; abortion is murder committed by a mother. And as an adult, to cause another person to sin (regardless of why) is spiritually an abortion of an unborn son of God.

As the fetus grows in the womb, it has less and less room to move in as the womb expands but not really as fast as the fetus grows ... the person who chooses to be morally upright can do so for cultural reasons or for logical reasons or simply out of fear, which has been used to compel good behavior for centuries. But this person has made a decision: this person is morally upright because he or she chooses to be so—and this is the case throughout devout Islam and Judaism, and mostly the case within Christendom. However, within Christianity are a few (a very few) who have been truly born of God, a situation that will change suddenly following the second Passover when all of Christianity will be born of

spirit, born filled with spirit, when the Son of Man is revealed (Luke 17:30) or disrobed.

It is easy for a Christian today to say that he or she has been born of spirit—most base the claim on a feeling within themselves, or upon having made a decision for Jesus—but few who make the claim can pass the test Paul gives or the test John gives.

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The person conducting the services should read or assign to be read Romans chapter 8, verses 5 through 8; followed by 1 John chapter 3, verses 4 through 10.

Commentary: The “Christian” who does not submit to God’s law, keeping the commandments by faith, has not been born of spirit. Likewise, the “Christian” who does not love his or her brethren has not been born of God. So it is not enough to keep the commandments if a disciple has no love for fellow human beings, all of whom will eventually be born of God either before the end of this age or in the great White Throne Judgment. And it is not enough to have accepted Jesus as the person’s Savior; for being born of God comes through receipt of a second breath of life, the fire that sustains life in the heavenly realm.

Being born of God is not a manner of making a decision by the person: a human infant doesn’t decide to “be” before it is. A human being doesn’t have eternal life within the person because the person wants to be immortal. A human being is born mortal and remains mortal throughout his or her life unless—and this is the caveat—the Father draws this person from the world and gives to this person salvation ahead of time (before the great White Throne Judgment). The person can only inherit eternal life when the person comes under judgment, and again, judgment is only now upon those born of God.

The person who claims to have been born of spirit but who makes a practice of sinning (such as worshiping on Sunday) doesn’t understand spiritual birth ... Christianity *as visibly practiced in this world* serves the purpose of the dead burying the dead—

What is the primary function of the local Christian pastor or priest if not to bury the dead? This local pastor or priest doesn’t prophesy, and doesn’t really teach parishioners the words of the Father and the Son. He or she sprinkles with water (or dunks) individuals, sometimes marries these individuals, but for certain shows up to bury these individuals, promising the deceased’s loved ones that the deceased has gone to a better place when that is not the case at all. The deceased goes nowhere, but awaits here on earth for the person’s resurrection from death.

Those disciples who were born of God in the 1st-Century—the “waters” (of humanity) above the expanse or canopy that is heaven (Gen 1:6)—are those “souls” [ψυχᾶς] that now sleep under the altar, awaiting the slaughter of those saints who will be killed as they were (Rev 6:9–11). But with the death of John (ca 100–102 CE), the Body of Christ died and has not been alive since, a declaration no “Christian” is truly willing to accept. And this is what Zwingli understood when Anabaptists emerged as Radical Reformers in 1527 CE. Zwingli and other Protestant leaders were unwilling to even entertain the possibility that

Christianity had been dead since the Council of Nicea (ca 325 CE). In actuality, the Church was dead two centuries earlier.

Few new “souls” were added to those asleep under the altar since the death of John.

But as the first Elijah stretched himself over the lifeless body of the son of the widow of Zarephath three times before the child again breathed on his own, this child being the prophet Jonah according to Jewish tradition, the last Elijah (the glorified Jesus) has twice stretched Himself over the Church and will stretch Himself over the lifeless Church a third time before the Church again breathes on its own, with the first time He stretched Himself over this corpse occurring during the ministry of Andreas Fischer (ca 1528–1540 CE) and with the second time ending in 1962 when revelation was rejected by the then most visible administration of the Church of God.

The glorified Jesus is presently “stretched” over His Body in His third and successful attempt to cause the Church to breath on its own ... the widow of Zarephath said to the first Elijah, when he returned her son to her, “Now I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in your mouth is truth” (1 Kings 17:24). The world will, unfortunately, be less honorable than the widow of Zarephath: humanity will recognize the two witnesses as men of God in whose mouth is truth, these two witnesses being “the two anointed ones who stand by the Lord of the whole earth” (Zech 4:14), but most of the Christian Church will then rebel against Christ Jesus when the lawless one is revealed for they long accepted the two witnesses as men of God.

The Church will breathe on its own following the second Passover liberation of Israel from sin and death. Not until then will the prophet who is like Samuel be recognized as a man of God in whose mouth are the words of the Lord; the ministry of the two witnesses doesn’t begin until the second Passover liberation of Israel. And even then, their recognition as men of God will only last for 220 days before the majority of the Church rebels ... as ancient Israel rebelled against God and wanted a king like the nations around them; as Israel in the wilderness rebelled against God and wanted to return to Egypt; as Israel at Sinai rebelled against God and wanted visible gods like the Egyptians had, the Christian Church will rebel against God and return to its present lawless practices.

If the liberation of the Church occurs on the second Passover of a year like 2011, when the calendar dates and days of the week are like that of the year when Jesus was crucified (the 14th of Lyyar in 2011 will be on a Wednesday, the 15th on Thursday, the 17th on the weekly Sabbath — on rabbinical Judaism’s calculated calendar, Jesus was crucified on the 14th of Lyyar in the year 3791, a Wednesday), then day 220 of the Tribulation will occur on Christmas 2011, with day 1260 (when Satan and his angels are cast from heaven) occurring on Halloween (Oct 31/Nov 1) 2014. The fifth seal (Rev 6:9–11) will be opened when the rebellion occurs; the sixth seal would be removed on the December solstice 2012, and the seventh seal a year later. The half hour of silence would last for three and a half months (roughly 105 days). The seven trumpets begin about the 1st of Abib. Christ will return four years later on the 1st of Abib with the month on Abib beginning with the first sighted new moon crescent following the northern hemisphere’s

vernal equinox (this month will be the month of Lyyar on Judaism's calculated calendar).

The celebration of Christmas is not of God but of this world, and to celebrate Christmas once liberated from indwelling sin and death will be rebellion against God.

Did that pass too quickly to be grasped? Observance of Christmas by *Christians* after the second Passover liberation of Israel will be rebellion against God.

What is morally allowable by sons of disobedience will not be tolerated by God from His sons ... the lawlessness of all sons of disobedience is covered by these sons of disobedience being bondservants to the present prince of this world. But following the second Passover when the Son of Man is revealed or disrobed, disciples have no covering for disobedience other than their own obedience. Sin will not be counted against them (for they will be under the New Covenant), but their failure to believe God when the Torah has been written on their hearts (Jer 31:33; Heb 8:10) will cause God to send a strong delusion over them so that they will not believe the Truth and cannot turn to God, repent, and thus be saved (2 Thess 2:10–12).

When born of spirit following the second Passover, Christendom will be under the New Covenant in that the Torah will be written on hearts and placed within minds so that every Christian *Knows the Lord*. No Sin will be reckoned against any Christian, but Christians will no longer be under grace, the garment of Christ Jesus' righteousness. Therefore, the *Christian* who does not love the truth sins against God through his or her unbelief, with the person's transgressions of the commandments not being counted against the person, but with God sending a strong delusion over the person so that he or she cannot be saved ... once Christians are filled with spirit, sin will no longer be transgression of the law but simple unbelief that will lead to transgression if allowed to go unchecked. And since unbelief cannot be checked by any physical activity, the person washes out: he or she loses salvation. The person was given a chance, but by the person's actions, he or she demonstrated to God the person's unbelief and actual rebellion against God when the man of perdition is revealed.

From pulpits around the world, a person can hear Christendom's protestations: Christians love Jesus, but oddly enough, they will not obey Him. It is the desire of every Christian to go to heaven, but they don't believe either the Father or the Son but mock both by assigning personhood to their breaths. Christians are as Israel was at Sinai (Ex chap 32) and as Israel was in the wilderness of Paran (Num chap 14) and as Israel was in the days of Samuel (1 Sam chap 8) and as Israel was when Jesus was before Pilate (Matt chap 27). In their hearts, most Christians are loveless murderers as were the Pharisees. (If a person doubts the truthfulness of this claim, ask a Mormon what he or she thinks of a Catholic, or ask a Lutheran what he or she thinks of a Jehovah Witness, or a Baptist what he or she thinks of a Mormon.)

Again, in this world the societal function of the Christian Church is to bury the dead—in this world today, Christians are the dead that bury their own dead (Matt 8:22).

But the salvation of today's lawless Christian Church lays in the fact that it is spiritually dead and is, therefore, not under judgment. If it were under judgment, no Christian would be saved for grace doesn't apply to the disciple who willingly returns to sin and thereby makes him or herself a bondservant to sin, which leads to death (Rom 6:16) when sin has no dominion over the person (v. 14).

Grace covers the transgressions of the law that the disciple who earnestly seeks to obey God inadvertently commits, and every disciple will commit these transgressions, some through lack of knowledge, some through weakness of character, both situations rectifiable by further maturing in the faith. What is not rectifiable is unbelief. Thus, the disciple who does not believe the Father will be cut off from Christ and there is nothing anyone can do to restore the person who has been cut off.

What Ezekiel writes about the person who turns from righteousness must be understood in the context that the person's righteousness is to the Lord as a bloody menstrual rag: it is the righteousness of Christ Jesus that the Father honors. So the person who turns from Christ after having known Christ cannot be restored, and to accept the Sacred Names heresy or to reject Christ Jesus (as the Logos) as the Creator of all that is is to turn from Christ, regardless of what the person believes. This person—the one who has accepted the Sacred Names heresy, or the one-Godder—cannot be restored to Christ. The Father will not permit their restoration, for the one whom He has cut off is cut off permanently.

But what cannot be comprehended by those who are still in the womb of disobedience is the freedom that those who are born of God have ... try to imagine yourself in your mother's womb, and consider how much you can know, how much you can see, how much you can hear. Then imagine yourself just having been born into a world of light. You are still helpless. Your needs must be met, but you are now ready for milk, and you are like the saints at Corinth (1 Cor 3:1–3) or as the Hebrews were (5:11–14) who should have been ready for solid food. You must still mature and grow before you can walk uprightly before God as Abraham was to walk (Gen 17:1–2), and you must still make a journey of faith equivalent to Abraham's journey of faith before your heart is cleansed so that it can be circumcised. You will not be able to understand dual referents until you are spiritually the equivalent of a human three year old, but think about how far you have come since you were in the womb.

What fellowship does a child have with a fetus? The womb separates them so that the child can be excited about having an unborn little brother or sister and can feel the fetus kick against the child's hand when the child touches the mother's stomach, but no true fellowship is possible—and so it is with disciples who have been born of God and either *Christians* or Jews.

The liberty that comes with being born of God simply is not comprehensible by the righteous Jew who remains in the womb of disobedience and is righteous only by the exercise of commandment keeping. But this liberty was badly abused in the 1st-Century, so badly abused that martyrdom of saints was required if those who were born of God were to be saved. And such will again be the case following the second Passover liberation of Israel, when *Christians* that haven't practiced keeping the commandments as acts of faith must do so or perish because of their unbelief ... no responsible parent permits an infant to grow up wild, but trains the

child in the way that he or she should go. And so it will be when the Father places the Law within every disciple so that all *Know the Lord*. Thus, the son of God who doesn't believe the Father cannot be glorified because of this unbelief.

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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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