

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 "in the Spirit".

Weekly Readings For the Sabbath of July 21, 2007

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

The person conducting the service should now read or assign to be read Revelation chapter 1, followed by chapter 4.

Commentary: John the Revelator wrote, ἔγενόμην ἐν πνεύματι ἐν τῇ κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ ["I was **in spirit** in the **Lord's Day**" – Rev 1:10).

When was John *in spirit* [ἐν πνεύματι]? Was he *in spirit* on a particular day of the week, or *in spirit* in the vision, or *in spirit* at the end of the age, when the prophets of old used the expression "day of the Lord" [and "that day"] as a euphemism for the coming of the Messiah?

Was John in the flesh and only dreaming when he saw the events he describes? Or was he, as he claims, *in spirit*, as in being a spiritual creature?

The Apostle Paul did not know whether he was in the flesh or out of the flesh [i.e., in spirit] when he visited the third heaven (2 Co 12:2-3)—he repeats the qualifier, "whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows" because of its apparent importance to what he experienced. Flesh and blood cannot enter heaven; so what Paul experiences is either a dream experience related to other dream experiences, or he saw himself as a spirit being [post resurrection] in heaven, which would mean that his salvation was certain. Now, this is a distinction that relates back to Jesus' transfiguration and to the quality of timelessness that defines the heavenly realm. Thus, the importance to Paul of ascertaining whether he was "dreaming" while still in the flesh or whether he was actually seeing himself post resurrection, when the things he heard truly cannot be told for those things haven't yet happened, enters into the discussion of John being *in spirit*.

John was in spirit in the same third heaven that the Apostle Paul entered. There aren't "many" third heavens as some denominations teach, with layering through which one ascends before finally beholding the face of God. Scripturally, there is one third heaven, that supra-dimensional realm in which all other dimensions remain furled, and there is the bottomless pit. Hence, the quality of timelessness allows the *Logos* to see Satan fall before He enters His creation as His only Son (John 3:16), and to have His feet washed by Abraham both years after and years before He came as His Son ... if

timelessness is perceived as a point around which time flows as a river, from that one point a person can enter the river at any moment, then step back to that point and enter the river elsewhere. From that one point, all that occurs anywhere within “time” is knowable and observable. Thus, God knows the beginning from the end, for both are simultaneously seen. Therefore, the use of the past tense is appropriate when speaking of fire coming from the belly of the fallen anointed cherub (Ezek 28:18-19), and when discussing predestination (Rom 8:29-30); for both of these futuristic events have already occurred from the perspective of God.

For John to say that he was *in spirit* and not in the flesh dreaming introduces a level of complexity that has not been well explored.

Revelation begins, “The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must **soon** take place” (1:1 emphasis added) ... if the events described in John’s vision must “soon” take place, then the time setting for the vision was not the 1st-Century CE. No assignment of meaning to *soon* allows for the passage of two millennia to transpire between when John transcribed his vision and when the events described within the vision take place.

The vision closes with, “These words are trustworthy and true. And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must **soon** take place” (22:6); plus, “And he said to me, “Do not seal up the words of the prophesy of this book, for the time is **near**” (v. 10); and, “Behold, I am coming **soon**” (v. 12); and, “He who testifies to these things says, ‘Surely I am coming **soon**’” (v. 20 – emphasis has been added to each of the bolded words).

From the perspective of timelessness, all events (if they have not already happened) will “soon” occur, for the events are certain to occur—and without the passage of time, an event will occur as soon as the context for the event develops. In other words, because of the limitations of a paradox [no two things can occupy the same time and space], in heaven all change must co-exist with what is for the “moment” is unchanging. Without the decay that comes from one moment becoming the next moment, what enters heaven must coexist (as in unity that produces oneness) with what is already there. There can never be anyplace in heaven for dissention [all dissention remains in the bottomless pit]. Thus, the new creature which is born of Spirit that came from heaven can return to heaven if this new creature remains “one” with the Father and the Son. This new creature began as one with God through being constructed of the divine Breath of the Father [*Pneuma 'Agion*], but this new creature was placed in a tent of flesh consigned to disobedience.

The writer of Hebrew said, “For he who sanctifies [Christ Jesus] and those who are sanctified all have one origin. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers” (2:11) ... what is translated as *all have one origin* could be better rendered as *from one all*. Thus, the one who sanctifies and the sanctified are one and are from one, a reason used by neo-Arians to make Christ a created being, originating initially in the womb of Mary or earlier as the created brother of Lucifer and Michael. But this same writer of Hebrews said that the one who sanctifies is not ashamed to call disciples brothers; so either the Father calls disciples *brothers* or the firstborn Son calls disciples *brothers*. Regardless, the one who calls disciples brothers is *from one* with those who are called brothers. And it is the one who sanctifies “for whom and by whom all things exist” (v. 10). Therefore, those who are sanctified are spirit; i.e., composed of spirit. All that exists, now, has been created for them, the *brothers* that “share in flesh and blood” (v. 14).

Because Christendom accepted the lie of the old serpent, Satan the devil, that human beings would not die—this is the lie the serpent told the first Eve (Gen 3:4)—Christians have, for nearly two millennia, had problems of one sort or another with the concept that the new creature born of Spirit is like the “stars” of heaven. Considerable cultural junk is attached to this concept; for Egyptian pharaohs built funeral pyramids to conduct them upward until they would become *stars* in heaven.

The Lord [YHWH] asked Job where he was “when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy” (Jon 38:7). Israel is told by the Lord to take up this taunt against the king of Babylon, “How have you fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! ... You said in your heart, “I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God”” (Isa 14:12-13). In vision, the prophet Daniel sees a *little horn* that grew great, “even to the host of heaven. And some of the host and some of the stars [alt reading: some of the host, that is, some of the stars] it threw down to the ground and trampled on them” (8:10). John the Revelator sees a great red dragon whose “tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth” (Rev 12:4). So the *stars of God* are, in Scripture, angels, “all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation” (Heb 1:14).

The Lord [YHWH] told Abraham [then still Abram] that Eliezar of Damascus would not be his heir. The Lord then brought Abram outside and said, “Look toward the heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them. ... So shall your offspring be” (Gen 15:5). Abraham’s offspring shall be as many as the stars and shall be like the stars. Plus, Jesus told the Sadducees who doubted the resurrection that when resurrected, the saints would “neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven” (Matt 22:30) ... Israel will not marry in heaven, for to get into heaven Israel will have married the Bridegroom and will have become “one in spirit” with the Bridegroom. This is an important concept to understand: no person can enter heaven unless one with God. The means through which glorified human beings are able to enter is through “marriage” to the Son, who is one [as in unity as opposed to singleness] with His Father. And when glorified disciples marry the Son, they will not marry again for this union shall not be set aside. Marriage and divorce cannot simultaneously exist, and timelessness dictates that “all that is” presently in heaven co-exist with “all that will be.” Therefore, once married—as with once living—means “always married,” as that which has life has everlasting life. Only by *Theos* entering His creation as His Son was His conjoined relationship [as disclosed in the Tetragrammaton YHWH] with *Theon* severed. And to sever this relationship, *Theos* had to first create the universe [i.e., all that is].

The use of figurative language, made necessary because human words serve as mimetic representations of the things of this world and are unable to directly serve as representations of heavenly things, makes distant suns in the second heaven the metaphor for spiritual beings in the third heaven; makes human marriage the metaphor for the conjoined relationship by which the Son and His glorified disciples are one in unity and purpose. And because of the use of figurative language, an extraordinary means becomes necessary for assigning meaning to the words comprising Scripture.

The more complex the concept represented by the figurative language, the more difficult it is for those who have not truly been born of Spirit to grasp the subject under discussion, let alone the nuances of the subject. For much of the past five years, those who are of *Philadelphia* have been figuratively swinging machetes to clear away the

vegetative growth of error and disbelief that had overgrown the charred debris concealing the foundation of the house of God that the Apostle Paul laid (1 Co 3:10-11)—and when swinging a machete, subtle distinctions are severed or missed as the larger errors are dragged away. But once the saplings and false vines are dragged away, the real work of theological archaeology begins.

In a manner inversely analogous to angels being subjected to the concealed iniquity of an anointed cherub in heaven, the new creature is domiciled in flesh imprisoned in sin.

- Angels are “stars.”
- Both angels and new creatures born of spirit are “sons of God.”
- The glorified new creature will be like an angel, will be a “star.”
- But angels are ministering spirits sent to serve those who are to inherit salvation.

The writer of Hebrews said, “Although he [Jesus] was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him, being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek. About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing” (5:8-11). ... There is much that is difficult to explain to those who have lost their hearing, but the problem is an old one.

From the single anointed cherub in whom iniquity was found came the spread of iniquity to a third of the “stars.” Like a retrovirus infection, iniquity hid in the obedience of the stars until one “son”¹ disagreed with something God did². Then iniquity burst forth, causing God to cast those in whom lawlessness was found into outer darkness and the bottomless pit (2 Pet 2:4)—as the earth opened under Korah and those who rebelled with him (Num chap 16), the fabric of heaven opened into a bottomless pit characterized by darkness, which is the absence of life. In this pit, the creation came into existence as a glorious death chamber. And in this creation, change is mandated through decay that produces the passage of time. Therefore, the presence of life in the present moment can become the absence of life in the next moment, and will with certainty become the absence of life at some future moment for the creation is passing away (1 John 2:17).

Rebellion against God was, in the heavenly realm, concealed until it broke out. How long it was concealed cannot be known, for the moment is unchanging. All that can be said is that this infection of iniquity was concealed until it was found. And this infection of iniquity produced death and darkness and the natural world: in the bottomless pit, it is from death that life comes, from darkness that light comes, and from the natural world that the spiritual sons of God come. It isn't that life follows death or that light follows darkness, but that those things which are done in death and in darkness and in this natural world—namely, rebellion against death and the darkness and the things of the flesh—produce life and light. Thus, death is not merely the benign state of sleep, but includes the dreams and visions which occur during sleep. For these dreams and visions are analogous to the spiritual life dwelling in tents of flesh, this spiritual life having come from God by receipt of His Spirit.

These things are hard to understand even for those who hear the voice of Christ ... the inverse relationship between iniquity being found in the angelic sons of God and

¹ Angels are sons of God because they have no parent but God, who created them.

² This son was the great horn, the first horn of the king of Greece. And he is “broken” at the second Passover because he was first.

what the Apostle Paul wrote—“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness” (Rom 6:12-13)—has the bodily members of a person consigned to sin inversely equating to angels “imprisoned” in obedience. The new creature born of Spirit and born free to keep the laws of God [born free to obey God] becomes the inverse of the anointed cherub in whom iniquity was found. So as a rebellion of disobedience was spread to angels imprisoned in obedience, the new creature born of spirit should spread a rebellion of obedience through the fleshly members of the mortal body that has been imprisoned in sin. And as the anointed cherub dragged down a third of the angels formerly concluded in obedience in heaven, the new creatures born of spirit should drag upwards a third of humankind consigned to disobedience.

The new creature born of spirit is “spirit.” He is composed of the Spirit of Christ (Rom 8:9) and the Spirit of the Father (v. 11). He is not physical in any sense, so the mind set on physical things (or the things of the flesh) is not set on this new creature, or on God, this new creature’s Father. The mind set on the flesh remains focused on death and darkness.

Back now to what John wrote: John was “projected” forward to the Lord’s day where he watched a panorama of events unfold, with this panorama culminating in the arrival of New Jerusalem, when the physical earth and all that is in it has passed away (1 John 2:17). He was in the third heaven when he saw these events occur; so from the moment he stepped out of time and entered the third heaven (where he would have seen the resurrection of the firstfruits, among whom he would have been numbered), a scenario occurs of being doubly “in spirit.”

The “when” of when he is doubly “in spirit” occurs in Revelation 4:1 — “After this I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, ‘Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.’ At once I was in the Spirit [ἐν πνεύματι – *in spirit*], and behold, a throne stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne” (vv. 1-2). That first trumpet like voice was the voice of the glorified Christ (cf. 1:10; 4:1).

If John were dreaming while in the body, it could not truthfully be said that he was “in spirit” on the Lord’s day. His vision could well be an “in the body experience” as nightmares are that awakens a person from sleep when the body needs to relieve itself. So by saying that he was “in spirit” on the Lord’s day, John makes a declaration of fact that his vision’s perspective was from that of the new creature within him, and the location of the vision was on the Lord’s day when the kingdoms of this world would be given to the Son of Man. Therefore, when within the vision, John says that he is *then* transformed and was, “At once I was in the Spirit” (Rev 4:2), then John fulfills what Jesus said to Peter: “If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you” (John 21:22). What John experiences while on the Isle of Patmos is seeing the new creature, born of Spirit as a son of God, glorified when Jesus comes.

Yes, John lives to see himself glorified, but to do this, the new creature that is the son of God dwelling within the fleshly tabernacle that was visibly the son of Zebedee must be transported forward to the Lord’s Day. John has a true “out of the body” experience.

Therefore, the following are true:

1. *The Lord’s day is the day of the Lord*, then John’s vision occurs at the end of the age, when dominion is taken from the four demonic kings (Dan 7:9-14) and the kingdom of this world is given to Christ Jesus (Rev 11:15). At that

time, all of the events described within the vision will “soon” occur. The vision is, now, true and trustworthy, but not for the 1st-Century, or even the 20th-Century.

2. On a specific day, dominion over humankind will be taken by force from the prince of this world and his angels (Rev 12:7-10), and the single kingdom of this world will be given to one like *a son of man*. This is a one time occurrence. It doesn't happen earlier than *the time of the end*, and it hasn't happened yet. Thus, humankind has not yet arrived at that moment in time when the seals on the scroll (Rev chap 6) are removed.
3. In the vision, the angel tells John not to seal the vision ... the vision doesn't occur in the 1st-Century but in the 21st-Century [or later], and the letters that John is told to deliver to the seven churches were not to be delivered in the 1st-Century, but are to be delivered in the 21st, meaning that God has again used shadows to seal and keep secret a vision He openly placed before the saints. For at the close of the 1st-Century the seven named churches co-existed on a Roman mail route. And their existence (plus the fact that the letters accurately reflect the strengths and weakness of each of these churches) has caused theologians for nearly two millennia to wrestle with the imagery and symbolism of John's vision.

In Revelation, appearance functions as attributes. For example, Jesus functions as the Lamb of God. He doesn't appear as a lamb in chapter 1, verses 12 through 20; however, once past the seven letters, He appears as a Lamb, slain³, with seven horns and seven eyes, which are seven spirits. These seven spirits function as eyes as Jesus functions as the Lamb of God. The seven churches will now function as seven horns. So the seven churches are not 1st-Century fellowships, but spiritual fellowships in the same way that the seven eyes are seven spirits.

4.

The change that occurs within the vision marks when John lives to see Christ's return by consciously entering the heavenly realm. This opportunity was not given to Peter, but it was apparently also given to Paul even though Paul was prevented from telling what he saw. Thus, John's vision has credibility even though it hasn't been understandable.

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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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To skin and process, a slain lamb is held by its head upright, so the image given is that of a lamb standing upright on its hind feet.