

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 August 15, 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 person conducting the service should read or assign to be read Ephesians chapter 4, verse 1, though chapter 5, verse 21.

Commentary: Paul wrote, "For what can be known about God is plain to them [the unrighteous], because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made" (Rom 1:19–20) ... if God's divine nature has been clearly perceived, then other invisible aspects of God and what He is doing are perceived by the things that have been made, with these other things including the spiritual maturation of the sons of God; for elsewhere, Paul writes, "And because you [Galatians] are sons, God has sent the Spirit [$\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$] of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!' So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God" (Gal 4:6–7).

A son is a son, making disciples not like Abraham's servant Eliezar of Damascus (Gen 15:2) who stood to inherit Abraham's household because the patriarch then had no seed, nor like angels that are called sons of God (Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7) because they have no parent but God—angels were created to be ministers or servants in the household of God. Although a son stands to inherit from the moment of birth, sons do not inherit adult responsibilities until they are themselves adults. A son must mature before he is ready to inherit, and this maturation is the subject of this Sabbath's reading.

But before beginning, a concept that is usually considered metaphorically needs to be applied literally: the indwelling of Christ Jesus. Evangelical Christians speak of inviting Jesus into their hearts and claim that Jesus dwells within them, but the churches of God have vigorously avoided using expressions suggesting that Jesus dwells with disciples ... whether Jesus comes to dwell within a person when invited is open to speculation; for the writer of Hebrews said that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (13:8). When here on earth, Jesus walked as an observant Jew, and John tells disciples that if they say they are in Christ, they ought to walk in the same way as He walked (1 John 2:6); i.e., they are to walk as the 1st-Century sect of the Nazarenes walked. Churches are to imitate the churches of God in Christ Jesus that were in Judea

(1 Thess 2:14). Paul writes that disciples are to imitate Paul as he imitates Christ Jesus (1 Cor 4:16; 11:1; Phil 3:17; 1 Thess 1:6). The writer of Hebrews said, “Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith” (13:7) ... these Hebrew disciples were not walking as pagan Greeks, but were walking as Jews. Paul said about himself, “Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar have I committed any offense” (Acts 25:8). So it is hard to imagine Jesus walking as a Gentile, eating the flesh of swine and worshiping on Sunday—didn’t happen, and among disciples, shouldn’t happen today. While it isn’t what enters the belly that defiles a person but what comes from the mouth, it is what is in the mind that defiles.

Peter writes, “As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy’” (1 Pet 1:14–16). ... What defiles a person is the person’s conduct, with this conduct coming from what is within the mind and heart of the person.

Where is it written that *you shall be holy, for I am holy*? Is it not written in Leviticus 11:44, when the Lord commands Israel to make a distinction between clean and unclean [common] meats?

While the Lord gave to the descendants of Noah all flesh as food (but not the blood that was in the flesh), the Lord “called” Israel out from this world to be an uncommon people; to be His firstborn son (Ex 4:22). Death reigns over men from Adam to Moses (Rom 5:14), but with the separation of Israel from this world manifested in the nation leaving Egypt following the Passover, one people was made distinctive, unusual, uncommon, with this uncommonness daily reinforced by the physical food this people ate, with clean meats forming the shadow and type of the spiritual food which disciples are to ingest.

A person is what he or she eats. If a person eats what is *common*, the person becomes *common*. A biological Jew that eats “the other white meat” (an insidious advertising slogan) joins him or herself to the common stock of humanity even though this common stock isn’t about to forget the ancestry of a biological Jew. In other words, the world does not soon forget its prejudices, its racism, its anti-Semitism. Spain’s *new Christians* were, during the Inquisition, never really trusted.

Israel isn’t to be *common* ... Peter writes to the Elect of the dispersion, “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his [God’s] own possession” (1 Pet 2:9). Israel, physically circumcised and circumcised of heart, has been called to be “special,” that word which embarrassed many pip-squeak scholars in what was a half century ago the most visible work of God here on earth. Because of the word’s overuse, even ministers of this work celebrated when they could no longer be special but could be spiritually dead instead.

Being called to be special doesn’t imply that the person was special prior to being called; being called to be special gives to the disciple the opportunity to produce the fruit of God in darkness. And as any orchardist will attest, fruit grown in the shade of another branch doesn’t ripen properly, so for fruit to ripen in darkness is an impossible task but one that must necessarily be accomplished for with God nothing is impossible.

Ripening the fruit of the spirit comes with spiritual maturity—and the disciple that doesn’t bear fruit will be cut off from God (John 15:2).

If disciples are to be special, they will not spiritually ingest what is common, nor will they physically eat what is common, such as the flesh of swine and shellfish, with physical food forming the shadow and type of spiritual food. It is the juxtaposition of a disciple ingesting physical food, beginning with milk, before ingesting spiritual food (with the physical preceding the spiritual — 1 Cor 15:46) that lies concealed in clean and unclean meats.

A human infant isn't born of spirit as a son of God, but is born of a human father. It will not be born of spirit until after reaching physical maturity ... regardless of how badly human parents that are disciples want to see their children join their faith, the Father doesn't call physical children to be His sons. He doesn't begin the spiritual maturation process in physical children; He doesn't ask human babies still nursing their mothers to suddenly ingest the milk of the word of God. So what Paul writes about children being sanctified (1 Cor 7:14) doesn't mean that these children are born of God because they are holy. It means that they are as natural Israel was, in the position where they can inherit eternal life upon demonstrated obedience, with this inheritance following biological death.

A common concern within the churches of God has been the loss of the second generation following every revival of the Church: the children of disciples seldom make a journey of faith that cleanses hearts so that these hearts can be spiritually circumcised. If these children continue in the belief of their parents, they literally make no journey of faith. If they leave their parents' beliefs, they usually return to the world and to being the seed of Satan. It is extremely rare when a child of disciples does what Timothy did, and Timothy is the example every second generation Christian should follow.

Paul said to the saints at Corinth that he only fed them milk, that even when he wrote to them they were not ready for solid food (1 Cor 3:1–3). The writer of Hebrews told these Hebrew converts that they had become dull of hearing and again needed milk for they were spiritual infants when they ought to have been teachers. So the correspondence of physical food forming the shadow and type of spiritual food is well established in Scripture, and this takes us back to eating what is unclean or clean, with this dietary restriction forming the chiral image of those things which circumcised of heart Israel is to *eat* or *not eat* spiritually.

Again, nothing that enters the person through the mouth will defile the person, but if spiritual swill enters the disciple through the eyes and ears, the disciple sets him or herself up to defile this son of God with his or her tongue ... Jesus, during the physical portion of His ministry, feeding the four thousand (Matt 15:38) and the five thousand (John 6:10) forms the left hand enantiomer of Jesus, during the Tribulation, spiritually feeding the crowds who will then follow Him.

Because they are special; because they are a holy nation, Christians are not to eat what is common to the culture. Likewise, they are not to fill their minds with the entertainment and distractions of this world. And while all knowledge and entertainment is allowed to those human beings who are "common" (i.e., not born of God) as all meat is food (Gen 9:2–3) for human beings who are of common stock, those things that do not edify the Body of Christ are spiritually unclean ... no Christian can justify gazing at pornography regardless of the context in which these pornographic images appear; nor can any Christian justify watching many of the movies coming to television sets in the privacy of one's own home, or most television programs.

Establishing lists of what is and what isn't acceptable entertainment is pointless: the person born of God knows whether a movie, a novel, a television show is edifying. If it isn't, the person needs to quit watching or reading as is appropriate as a reasonable expectation of the household of God, for as human bodies reflect the foods the person eats, the spiritual new self reflects the food it is fed—and if it is fed a diet of American primetime television—a diet rich in unbecoming behavior—this inner new self will be spiritually starved.

Entering into the realm of determining what is spiritually “clean” versus “unclean” is fraught with risk, for the knowledge possessed by the disciple and spiritual maturity of the disciple will have a bearing on what the disciple is capable of ingesting. However, what is spiritually unclean is *unclean* and is not food for disciples who would be holy as God is holy.

What Paul wrote about the visible things of this world revealing the invisible things of God has not been adequately applied to spiritual birth and maturation:

Jesus said to Nicodemus, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3), and “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and [πνεύματος—*spirit*] he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of flesh is flesh, and that which is born of [τοῦ πνεύματος—*the spirit*] is [πνεῦμά—*spirit*]” (vv. 5–6) ... the structure of what Jesus tells Nicodemus equates being born of water with flesh; thus, the water Jesus referenced is that of the womb and not baptism. It is always wrong to equate being born of water with baptism; for baptism represents death as came to the world in the Flood of Noah's day. Baptism is the symbolical killing of the old self or old nature that is necessary for a disciple to come under judgment in the household of God.

A person has one breath of life when born of woman, the breath that *Elohim* [singular in usage] breathed into the nostrils of the first Adam (Gen 2:7), thereby transforming the corpse made from the elements of the earth into a *nephesh*, a breathing creature. The person must then receive a second breath [πνεῦμα] of life, the breath of God [πνεῦμα θεοῦ], before the person becomes a son of God. The adoption about which Paul writes begins with receiving a second breath of life, the breath of the Father (πνεῦμα θεοῦ – from Matt 3:16) that descended upon Jesus in the form of a dove. Only after receiving a second breath of life—life that is not of this world, but that has invisibly come from heaven—can a person be said to be born of spirit [also, πνεῦμα], which is like wind [in Greek, πνεῦμα – from John 3:8].

A person who has been born again, or born from above, or born anew has actually received a second breath of life; this person, who was numbered among the dead [νεκρούς – from Matt 8:22] even though the person was physically living, was made alive when he or she received indwelling eternal life through receiving the breath of the Father [πνεῦμα θεοῦ]. As the Logos [ὁ λόγος], the Creator of all things (John 1:3), breathed into the nostrils of the man of mud and transformed lifeless elements into a breathing creature from whom all men (and women) have come, the Father breathed His breath (in the form of a dove) onto the man Jesus and transformed a man without sin, His Beloved (Matt 3:17), into His firstborn Son and the First of many sons (Rom 8:29), all of whom form the firstfruits of the harvest of the earth.

A disciple needs to pay attention to the language of Scripture: John writes, “For [ὁ θεὸς—*the God*] so loved the world, that he gave his only Son [τὸν υἱὸν τὸν μονογενῆ –

the son the unique one], that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). The Logos [ὁ λόγος] who was God [θεός] and was with the God [τὸν θεόν — John 1:1] in the beginning entered His creation as His only Son to become the First of the firstfruits of God. Understand, it was the only Son of Him, ὁ θεός, who entered His creation as the man Jesus of Nazareth (John 1:14). The Logos divested Himself of His divinity to be born as a man so that He would be a spiritual corpse as the man of mud was a physical corpse until *Elohim* breathed into the nostrils of the first Adam. The man Jesus became the Son of the Father when He, Jesus, received a second breath of life, the breath of the Father [πνεῦμα θεοῦ]. Therefore, the visible, physical creation of the man Adam reveals how the last Adam was created at the beginning of His ministry, making Jesus’ ministry analogous to the first Adam being put into the garden of Eden to work it and keep it (Gen 2:15).

The following correspondences hold:

- Adam is created outside the Garden of God as Jesus is born of Mary into the tribe of Judah which was not to serve in the temple.
- Adam was created before any other living thing, plant or creature, was made (Gen 2:8–9), meaning that Adam is not the man of Genesis 1:27, for Adam was created on the day when the Lord God made the earth and the heavens (Gen 2:4; Gen 1:1).
- Adam was created in darkness (death), the dark portion of Day One ... the light that came from darkness on Day One is the last Adam, Christ Jesus (2 Cor 4:6); so no disciple should confuse the two creations accounts in Genesis, nor place the events recorded in chapter two chronologically after the events recorded in chapter one.
- Adam was placed in the Garden as the Father made Jesus the priest of Israel after the order of Melchizedek.
- When Adam named the animals (Gen 2:20), he formed the shadow and type (chiral image) of Jesus naming spiritual animals (Matt chap 23).
- The deep sleep that came over Adam is the chiral image of Jesus being three days and three nights in the grave.
- When Jesus breathes of ten of His disciples and said, “Receive the πνεῦμα ἅγιον [breath holy]” (John 20:22), He creates the Church, the last Eve, at a time analogous to when *Elohim* presented Eve to Adam.
- Therefore, the serpent tempting Eve equates to the old serpent, Satan the devil, tempting the Church.
- The pain that Eve would have multiplied in childbearing prophetically represents the pain the Church will experience during the Tribulation when many sons of God are born into the household of God.

Human birth (i.e., being born of the water of the womb) is analogous to spiritual birth as the left hand is like the right hand; being born of water forms the shadow and type of being born of the breath of God [πνεῦμα θεοῦ]. Thus, if the first Adam forms the chiral image of the last Adam (and this is true), with the “birth” that the first Adam experiences when *Elohim* breathes into his nostrils forming a copy of the second “birth” the second Adam experiences when the breath of the Father descends upon the man Jesus as a dove, then human physical maturation forms the chiral image of spiritual maturation, individually and collectively.

- A person's fleshly body forms the visible representation of this same person's invisible inner *old man* (before receiving a second breath of life) and *new self* (after being born of God).

Medically, human nature cannot be x-rayed or scanned by MRI, but a person's human nature can be taken from the person as easily as a computer program can be overwritten ... ancient King Nebuchadnezzar saw in vision a holy one come down from heaven and issue a proclamation concerning the king, "Let his mind be changed from a man's, and let a beast's mind be given to him. The sentence is by decree of the watchers, the decision by the word of the holy ones, to the end that the living may know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will and sets over it the lowliest [basest] of men" (Dan 4:16–17). One year later, the sentence was executed: Nebuchadnezzar's *reason* (i.e., ability to think as a man) was taken from him and for the following seven years the king's body was governed by the mind of an ox.

What King Nebuchadnezzar had taken from him was his human nature, which exists apart from the person's fleshly body ... there should not be any controversy about the separateness or separation of the inner self from the outer self: as a person ages, the flesh fails but the person's inner self remains at a mostly unchanging age that corresponds to early adulthood. Plus, many homosexual individuals will insist that they are not gay by choice, but that their inner selves are not the same gender as their biological plumbing. In the case of Nebuchadnezzar, the inner self was metaphorically unplugged and a differing inner self plugged in, the inner self of an ox.

Early Greek philosophers built on the work of Egyptians before them: when these philosophers realized there was an inner self that differed from the flesh, these philosophers assigned immortality to this inner self because it did not seem to age as the fleshly body aged; so when Odysseus visits the kingdom of the dead (Book 11, *The Odyssey*), the dead exist after death as shades, with the shade of Achilles telling Odysseus, "No winning words about death to me, shining Odysseus! / By god, I'd rather slave on earth for another man— / some dirt-poor tenant farmer who scrapes to keep alive— / than rule down here over the breathless dead" (11.555–558 Fagles' translation) ... 7th-Century BCE Greeks knew that "breath" separated the living from the dead; that "breath" was of the fleshly body; that the state of the dead wasn't in an ever-burning hell but in darkness; that the state of dead wasn't something to be desired but something to be endured, for even a hero as great as Achilles wasn't in heaven but was with the rest of the dead in an underworld that could be visited if an immortal such as Circe told a person how to get to the realm of the breathless dead.

Early Greek philosophers were certain that men are born with immortal souls, a dogma that bedevils Christian orthodoxy even today; for again, Scripture holds that eternal life is the gift of God in Christ Jesus. Nevertheless, as the "Christian" Church evolved away from its Hebraic roots to escape 2nd-Century persecution against the Jews during the reign of Hadrian, Christendom embraced more and more of Greek paganism, including paganism's teaching that men physically receive immortal life, an oxymoron. The only problem was that Jesus changes not (Heb 13:8); thus, every movement away from imitating Jesus, an observant Jew, is movement away from God. And no Christian can walk as Jesus walked and not keep the Sabbaths of God.

But it is the concept that a person's fleshly body forms the visible representation of this same person's invisible inner *old man* to which we must return: with some exceptions, the body does what the mind wills; thus, human nature which cannot be

seen or measured is manifested in the acts of the fleshly body, with these acting needing to necessarily change when the person is born of God. In order to bear the mature (ripe) fruit of the spirit, the person who was not before patient must demonstrate patience; the person who did not before have love must demonstrate love; the person who was without joy, without peace must demonstrate possessing joy and peace.

But ripe fruit is not the fruit that is set in the spring of the year, when a disciple is a spiritual infant, capable of only ingesting milk. But without the setting of fruit when a branch blooms in the first-love of a disciple—with the blooming of a fig tree not seen by human eyes, but occurring within the undeveloped fruit—the Father removes the disciple as a branch is pruned away by an orchardist.

Human nature is present in a person, the reason why a person behaves as a person and not as a cat or as a dog. In Nebuchadnezzar's case, we see that a human being's *old man* or *old nature* (i.e., the nature with which a person is born) is not a shade as early Greeks apparently believed, but is like computer software. And it isn't just human beings and beasts that have this exchangeable operating software: the prophet Daniel also records, concerning the false prophet (i.e., the first beast of chapter seven),

I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea. And four great beasts came up out of the sea, different from one another. The first was like a lion and had eagles' wings. Then as I looked its wings were plucked off, and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a man, and *the mind of a man was given to it.* (Dan 7:2–4 emphasis added)

The four beasts of Daniel chapter seven are demonic kings; they are the four horns that sprout from around the stump of the great horn of the king of Greece; they are the four horsemen of the Apocalypse; and the first of these kings (Dan 7:17) had its wings plucked off, was made to stand on two feet like a man, and was given the mind or nature of a man just as Nebuchadnezzar was given the mind of a beast (Dan 4:16).

If human beings are given human nature but can suddenly receive the nature of beasts as angels can receive the nature of men, then human beings can also be given the “nature” or mind of Christ Jesus just as suddenly. And giving human beings the mind of Christ lays at the heart of the endtime gospel that all who endure to the end shall be saved (Matt 24:13). The sudden “conversion” of the previously unbelieving into believers when the kingdom of this world is given to the Son of Man (Dan 7:9–14; Rev 11:15–18) halfway through the seven endtime years of tribulation will leave these new sons of God in a spiritual state analogous to the first Adam's physical state when *Elohim* breathed life into the man of mud's nostrils—Adam was created as an adult human male, and the third part of humankind (from Zech 13:9) that will be born of God when the world is baptized in spirit will be born filled with or empowered by spirit from their birth. They will be “born” spiritually as the first Adam was born physically; thus, they will not have the luxury of spiritually maturing from infancy through adolescence to reaching their majority. They will be “born” in their majority, but without ripe fruit, the reason why they have to experience the Endurance.

The descendants of the first Adam undergo a physical maturation process that reveals the spiritual maturation process of disciples under grace—this forms a key to understanding what happens at the second Passover when the Christian Church is liberated from indwelling sin and death as natural Israel was liberated from physical slavery in the days of Moses; for when the Son of Man is revealed (Luke 17:30), disciples

will no longer be clothed or covered by grace. As the body of Christ and by extension, the Body of the Son of Man, they will be disrobed; they will only be clothed by their own obedience. But they will also have the mind of Christ Jesus, meaning that the spiritual maturation process will have been abbreviated.

The fleshly body of a person discloses crucial information about the invisible inner self: a person “breathes” on his or her own when born of water. Before then, the fetus’ breath was its mother’s breath. And following birth, the infant human being grows from utter dependency on his or her mother (sometimes father) through a series of stages that will see this human person as a small child feeding him or herself, then dressing him or herself, to being of some help to its parents and finally as an adolescent (or an older child) to being able to work on his or her own to support him or herself, especially before child labor laws came into existence.

A son of God is “born of spirit [πνεῦμα]” when a spiritually dead human being is drawn from this world by the Father (John 6:44, 65) through the Father giving to the person a second breath of life. If the person was previously a *Christian* as many infant sons of God claim to be prior to the person being truly born of spirit, the person was as a fetus in the womb of the last Eve. This person was not born of spirit even though many such converts will claim to have been so-born. If this person truly had a relationship with Christ Jesus (some will have had), the relationship wasn’t through the person being born of God but through the person receiving spiritual sustenance from the last Eve as a human fetus receives the oxygen its needs for cellular combustion of sugars across the placenta.

Understand, the physical life of every *nephesh* is sustained by the cellular oxidation (burning) of simple carbohydrates, with the oxygen molecules necessary to fuel this ongoing inner fire coming through the person’s breath, with these molecules being transferred from the person’s breath to his or her blood in the lungs; thus the “life” of every *nephesh* [breathing creature] is in the blood (Gen 9:4), with this life being the “breath” of the *nephesh*.

The life of every son of God is the breath of God [πνεῦμα θεοῦ], but God is not of this world and does not breathe oxygen molecules needed to fuel inner cellular fires within the flesh. Rather, the breath of God is a non-oxidizing fire ... a scriptural description of a spirit being is recorded in Ezekiel 1:26–27,

And above the expanse over their heads there was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like sapphire; and seated above the likeness of a throne was a likeness with a human appearance. And *upward from what had the appearance of his waist I saw as it were gleaming metal, like the appearance of fire enclosed all around.* And downward from what had the appearance of his waist I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and there was brightness around him. (emphasis added)

The “fire” within this *being* that had a human appearance is the life that comes from the Father; this “fire” is πνεῦμα ἅγιον [*breath holy*], and the fleshly body of human beings are not able to hold or contain this *fire*. Thus, before any human being could be born of spirit the man Jesus had to be born humanly, then born of spirit when the breath of God [πνεῦμα θεοῦ] descended upon Him as a dove, then die humanly and be resurrected after the third day; for “the gift of God is eternal life in [ἐν] Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom 6:23). Elsewhere, Paul writes, “Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ [πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ] does not belong to him. But if Christ is in [ἐν] you, although

the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit [πνεῦμα] is life because of righteousness” (Rom 8:9–10).

A human being is only able to “hold” indwelling eternal life that comes from the Father through Christ being “in” the person, with the spirit of Christ functioning as the only container able to contain the life/fire that has come from the Father.

Again, a person doesn’t usually think in terms of having “fire” within the person, but the cellular oxidation of simple sugars is, by definition, *fire*—and this inner *fire* serves as the chiral image of spiritual life that comes with receipt of a second breath of life. Fire in this world occurs through the oxidation and destruction of combustibles, but fire in the heavenly realm represents life. To pass through fire is to live spiritually.

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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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