

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 grace and mercy.

Weekly Readings

For the Sabbath of September 3, 2011

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.

πάσιν τοῖς οὖσιν Ῥώμῃ ἀγαπητοῖς θεοῦ, κλητοῖς ἁγίοις, χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ [to all the ones being in Rome, loved ones of God, called ones holy, grace to you and peace from God Father of us and Lord Jesus Christ] (Rom 1:7)

*

χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ [grace to you and peace from God Father of us and Lord Jesus Christ] (1 Cor 1:3)

*

χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ [grace to you and peace from God Father of us and Lord Jesus Christ] (2 Cor 1:2)

*

χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ [grace to you and peace from God Father of us and Lord Jesus Christ] (Gal 1:3)

*

χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ [grace to you and peace from God Father of us and Lord Jesus Christ] (Eph 1:2)

*

χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ [grace to you and peace from God Father of us and Lord Jesus Christ] (Phil 1:2)

*

χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν [grace to you and peace from God Father of us] (Col 1:2)

*

χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη [grace to you and peace] (1 Thess 1:1)

*

χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ [grace to you and peace from God Father and Lord Jesus Christ] (2 Thess 1:2)

*

χάρις καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς καὶ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν [grace and peace from God Father and Christ Jesus the savior of us] (Titus 1:4)

*

χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ [grace to you and peace from God Father of us and Lord Jesus Christ] (Phil 1:3)

*

χάρις ἐλεος εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς καὶ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν [grace mercy peace from God Father and Christ Jesus the Lord of us] (1 Tim 1:2)

*

χάρις ἐλεος εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς καὶ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν [grace mercy peace from God Father and Christ Jesus the Lord of us] (2 Tim 1:2)

Does grace [χάρις — *charis*] include or incorporate the concept embedded in mercy [ἐλεος — *heleos*], the concept of unmerited pardon for transgressing the Law, the concept of active compassion towards transgressors, or is mercy a distinct concept that Paul, late in his ministry, realized was in addition-to and separate from grace? Is active compassion toward transgressors not a part of grace, the garment of Christ Jesus' righteousness that covers every human son of God until the Second Passover liberation of Israel?

The authenticity of Paul's pastoral letters to Timothy have been in doubt for most of the past three centuries because of the writer of 1st and 2nd Timothy made "mercy" a concept separate from "grace" ... if grace were unmerited pardon—it isn't; it is, again, the garment of Christ Jesus' righteousness—then grace would fully incorporate the concept of mercy in its connotative and denotative meanings. If the Apostle Paul hadn't previously realized that mercy was separate from grace; if Paul, earlier in his ministry, hadn't realized that grace functions as a covering, a tent or house—a distinct possibility—and that two coverings are needed, these covering represented by the two goats that are Israel's sin offering on *Yom Kipporim*, and if the Apostle Paul wrote the pastoral letters to Timothy as their text would seem to indicate, then with the addition of *mercy* in his

salutation to Timothy, who was as a son to him, Paul discloses that even while he was imprisoned in Rome he was continuing to grow in understanding of the mysteries of God.

The above is the central issue for endtime Christians—

Rabbinical Judaism, today, doesn't understand that the bullock and the two male goats that were chosen on *Yom Kipporim* [day of coverings, plural, not singular, not one covering as would be represented in the word *Kippur*], with the high priest sacrificing the bull as a sin offering for himself thereby making atonement for himself and his house, and the one goat sacrificed on the altar to be a sin offering for the people of Israel thereby making atonement for the people and the temple, and the second goat to bear the sins of Israel in a far land, a wilderness to Israel—rabbinical Judaism, today, understands what the Pharisees in the 1st-Century understood, and this means that neither rabbinical Judaism today nor Second Temple Pharisees understood that the *Azazel* represents Christ Jesus bearing the sins of Israel in a far land, heaven. Neither Christendom nor Judaism understands that the Logos [ὁ Λόγος — from John 1:1] who was God [Θεός] and who was with the God [τὸν Θεόν] in the beginning “died” as God when He entered His creation (from John 1:3) as His only Son (John 3:16), the man Jesus (John 1:14) who was not fully man and fully God while He walked among men, but was a man tempted in every way as men were then and are today. Thus, in the bull that the high priest sacrificed on *Yom Kipporim* is represented the Logos' sacrifice in entering His creation, not as Himself, but as His only Son [He can only enter as His Son one time for He ceases to exist as the Logos when He enters as His Son, not Himself]. Then in the man Jesus of Nazareth dying on the cross/stake is represented the reality of the goat sacrificed on the altar by the high priest on *Yom Kipporim*, this sacrifice *covering* as in making atonement for all of Israel's [past, present, and future] transgressions of the Law in this world ...

First Century Pharisees, of whom Paul was one prior to his calling by Christ Jesus, had so little understanding of Scripture that they were killing the *Azazel* so that this goat that bore the sins of Israel wasn't bearing these sins in the wilderness but was dead, thrown over a precipice—Pharisees were killing the figurative representation of Christ Jesus before they actually had Him killed by delivering Him to Roman civil authorities that were the earthly representatives of the Adversary, the prince of this world. And this is appropriate considering that Israel in the 1st-Century and rabbinical Israel today have but one breath [πνεῦμα] of life dwelling within them: they were **not** in the 1st-Century, nor are they today born again, or born anew, or born from above—all expressions for having received a second breath of life, the breath of God [πνεῦμα Θεοῦ] in the indwelling breath of Christ [πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ], with receipt of this second breath of life being a mystery of God that apparently not all of Jesus' first disciples understood.

Paul understands through revelation what it means to be born of the breath of the Father:

For circumcision indeed is of value if you obey the law, but if you break the law, your circumcision becomes uncircumcision. So, if a man who is uncircumcised keeps the precepts of the law, will not

his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision? Then he who is physically uncircumcised but keeps the law will condemn you who have the written code and circumcision but break the law. For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God (Rom 2:25–29)

From the perspective of God, a *Jew*, once the spirit [πνεῦμα] is given when Jesus breathed on ten of His first disciples (John 20:22), is no longer an outwardly circumcised descendant of the patriarch Jacob, son of Isaac, but is any person whom the Father has drawn from this world and given a second breath of life, His breath in the vessel that is the breath of Christ, and who has then undertaken a journey of faith comparable in distance to the patriarch Abraham's physical journey from Ur of the Chaldeans [Babylon] to Haran where the old man, the old self represented metonymically by the Greek word ψυχή [*psuche*], remains and dies and the new man, new self [represented metonymically by the icon πνεῦμα] continues on to enter the Promised Land of Canaan, represented by Sabbath observance (see Ps 95:10–11; Heb 3:16–4:11; Num chap 14).

The scriptural literalist in the 1st-Century as well as in the 21st-Century cannot understand and will not intellectually accept the reality that outward circumcision and physical lineage is, today, of no importance—circumcision of the foreskin and biological lineage does not make a person an *Israelite/Jew* before God. What makes a person a *Jew* today is circumcision of the heart, which can only come after the person has made a journey of faith from Babylon, the kingdom of this world and its mental landscape, to Judea where the person will walk as Christ Jesus walked, professing that Jesus is Lord and believing that the Father raised Jesus from death.

By revelation, Paul understood that the flesh of a person and the person's physical life were no longer of significance, that the Law had moved from outwardly regulating the actions of hands and body to regulating the thoughts of the mind and the desires of the heart. But this understanding doesn't necessarily include understanding that Christ Jesus' death at Calvary introduced the garment of grace by which the record of our trespasses with their legal demand to our lives was erased *as well as* the garment of mercy, the active compassion represented by the *Azazel*, compassion that has the on-going transgressions of the Law committed by the new man—the son of God born by the receiving the breath of God—being *covered* but not erased by the glorified Christ Jesus in heaven.

Grace, the mantle or garment of Christ Jesus' righteousness that erases the record of debt that stood against each of us, is not *active compassion* (i.e., on-going mercy), but happened once, in the 1st-Century CE, just as the goat sacrificed for the people of Israel and the temple wasn't sacrificed many times but was sacrificed once on *Yom Kipporim* and was henceforth dead and no longer available to be sacrificed again. A different goat had to be chosen as Israel's sin offering for the following year. And this is part of what needs to be understood: the entirety of the plan of God occurs in one year, not in many years. The many years that we experience are part of one spiritual harvest year, a year that begins with a spiritual barley crop—the firstfruits—already planted as Israel was *planted*

in Egypt prior to when Moses returned from a far land to confront Pharaoh and demand that he let the people of Israel go, *that they may hold a feast to the Lord in the wilderness* (Ex 5:1).

The Christian Church, today, is analogous to the people of Israel in Egypt; for as the people of Israel were physical slaves [bondservants] of Pharaoh, Christians in this present era are in bondage to sin and death and as such are slaves of the Adversary, consigned to disobedience so that God may have mercy on all (Rom 11:32) ... Christians, with extremely few exceptions—regardless of what they claim about themselves—are without indwelling life. They have not been born of God, born of spirit, but await birth at the Second Passover liberation of Israel. At that time, not before, they collectively will be filled with and empowered by the spirit/breath of God [πνεῦμα Θεοῦ]. Until then, an occasional Christian (a person drafted to do a particular job in this present era) will receive the earnest of the spirit, thereby being born of God out of season. The first apostles were such individuals. Paul was such a person. But those disciples that left Paul (see Phil 3:18–19; 2 Tim 1:15) and those Jews that sought Paul's life were not born of God, a realization to which John comes and about which he writes late in life:

Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. You know that he appeared to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. *No one who abides in him [Christ] keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him.* Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. *No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God.* By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother. For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous. (1 John 3:4–12 emphasis added)

No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, and to sin is to transgress the commandments. Therefore, according to John, whom Jesus loved perhaps most, the Christian today who sins—who neglects the Sabbath and keeps Sunday as the Sabbath instead—has not been born of God. This is not something the Christian wants to be told, but it is the truth: it is what is no longer concealed, and that is in Greek what is *truth* (the negation of being concealed or hidden).

Those critics and skeptics that have determined that Paul's pastoral letters to Timothy were written by a different *Paul*, someone other than the apostle who was of the Pharisees when he left Jerusalem for Damascus, don't realize the significance of what Paul wrote when he conveyed to the holy ones at Rome that,

For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin. (Rom 7:15–25)

Even late in his ministry, Paul didn't understand—he says so—the ramifications associated with the new self being born of God as a son, but born into a house [body of flesh] that remains consigned to disobedience, and will remain consigned to disobedience until the Second Passover liberation of Israel. Thus, it wouldn't be surprising to learn that Paul, earlier in his ministry, didn't realize that two *coverings*, both Christ, are needed: grace and mercy, with grace analogous to the goat that is sacrificed on the altar on *Yom Kipporim* for Israel and the temple, and with mercy analogous to the *Azazel*. It should come as no surprise that Paul himself was still growing in grace and knowledge later in his ministry. Each of us should still be growing ...

As endtime disciples, we should not focus on whether the syntax of Paul's pastoral letters to Timothy supports the Apostle being their author; rather, we should be thankful that even though Paul was appointed to know the will of God, to see the Righteous One, and to hear a voice from His mouth (Acts 22:14), Paul would not come to know the will of God suddenly, all at once, but over time and through prayer, study, and realization. Paul was more like us than like the prophets of old.

When Paul was personally called by Christ Jesus on the road to Damascus, he knew Scripture but he didn't understand Scripture—and in this way, Paul was as rabbinical Judaism presently is and as theologians of greater Christendom have been for at least the past 1900 years. To know Scripture; to be able to read Scripture; to have a printed Bible close at hand—none of these things give to the scholar or theologian understanding of Scripture. Only receiving a second breath of life, the breath of God [πνεῦμα θεοῦ], and the accompanying Advocate [τὸν παράκλητον], the spirit/breath of the truth [τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας — *the breath/spirit that observes what's no longer concealed* ... again the Greek word ἀληθείας that is translated into English as “truth” is the negation of concealment, and *tes/τῆς* carries the concept of “watching” or “observing”] enables the Christian to understand the rudimentary mysteries of God.

Until a Christian has truly been born of God, the Christian is unable to understand the mysteries of God, regardless of intellect or education. Paul was

unable to understand the mysteries of God until he was personally called by Christ Jesus, with this calling not being a heartfelt feeling or inner yearning, but Paul hearing the audible voice of Christ Jesus. And so it is at the end of the age—

Too many well-intentioned Christians mistake an inner desire to do good and to serve the Lord as a calling to ministry ... in this present endtime era, the person who has been called by the Lord to ministry will hear or will have heard a voice as Paul heard an audible voice when on his way to Damascus. And that is as it has been with *Philadelphians*.

*

*The person conducting the Sabbath service should
close services with two hymns, or psalms,
followed by a prayer asking God's dismissal.*

* * * * *

"Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version,
copyright ©2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used
by permission.

reserved."

[[Home](#)] [[Sabbath Readings](#)]