

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 Israel's only king should be God.

[Printable/viewable PDF format to display Greek or Hebrew characters](#)

Weekly Readings *For the Sabbath of October 11, 2014*

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.

[Moses said,] “When you come to the land that [YHWH] your God is giving you, and you possess it and dwell in it and then say, 'I will set a king over me, like all the nations that are around me,' you may indeed set a king over you whom [YHWH] your God will choose. One from among your brothers you shall set as king over you. You may not put a foreigner over you, who is not your brother. Only he must not acquire many horses for himself or cause the people to return to Egypt in order to acquire many horses, since [YHWH] has said to you, 'You shall never return that way again.' And he shall not acquire many wives for himself, lest his heart turn away, nor shall he acquire for himself excessive silver and gold. And *when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself in a book a copy of this law, approved by the Levitical priests.* And it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear [YHWH] his God by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes, and doing them, that his heart may not be lifted up above his brothers, and that he may not turn aside from the commandment, either to the right hand or to the left, so that he may continue long in his kingdom, he and his children, in Israel. (Deut 17:14–20 emphasis added)

1.

If the king is to write for himself a copy of the Law, approved by the Levitical priests, then the king must necessarily be literate, able to read for himself the Law, the Book of the Covenant, which would have been in the partially alphabetized Hebrew language, inscribed in consonant clusters only. Vowels would have been added to the consonant clusters when these clusters were read aloud. The clusters could be read silently without being pronounced even in the mind—read through recognition that the particular cluster “means” such-and-such, with no sound being mentally produced [created].

I was born with an audio dysfunction, inherited from my father and passed along to my daughters. I learned to read without pronouncing words: the sight of a certain letter combination had meaning even though I could not pronounce the letter combination—couldn't hear how others pronounced the combination. Could sort of hear how others pronounced the word, but couldn't hear well enough to reproduce the sound myself. Understanding the speech of others became unconscious facial recognition acquired when young; thus understanding the speech of others when I couldn't see their faces was and remains difficult.

Because I read without pronouncing many words, I understand perhaps better than other English speakers how Hebrew could be read without inscribed vowels: consonant clusters represent meaning, not sound. But this meaning must be foreknown. For as an English reader assigns meaning to a word upon hearing the sound of the word either audibly or silently pronounced, a Hebrew or Arabic reader will assign meaning to the consonant cluster representing a word upon sight of the cluster, thereby adding to the cluster its appropriate vowels to make the cluster into the word that the reader assumes the cluster represents ...

What if the sight reader assumes a consonant cluster represents a word that it does not represent? What if the sight reader assigns wrong vowels to a consonant cluster, giving to the cluster similar but differing meaning than given to the cluster by someone assigning differing vowels to the cluster? Which one is correct? Are either correct? And how do future generations know what meaning to assign to consonant clusters in any partially alphabetized language?

The Lord told Moses, "Then [YHWH] said to Moses, 'Write this as a memorial in a book and recite it in the ears of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven'" (Ex 17:14) ... an essential part of inscription in any Semitic language is for the writer to read his or her work in the hearing of others so that the writer "teaches" future readers which meaning and by extension, which vowels to assign the inscribed consonant clusters. Any break in the direct transmission of meaning from author to auditor will compel future readers to guess at what meaning should be assigned to the partially alphabetized text. As a result, more so for Semitic texts than for Indo-European texts, a substantial body of explanation and criticism will come to future generations with the texts; i.e., the so-called *oral Torah* that addresses how an Israelite should wash hands among many more things.

It was enough for Moses to say that hands were to be washed, but what was the meaning that should be assigned to the consonant cluster used to represent washing hands? Should the person washing hands spend two minutes actually scrubbing hands as is done by surgeons entering operating rooms, or is getting hands wet and wiping them off on a towel, leaving dirty prints on the towel adequate? The consonant cluster Moses used to represent washing hands can have many differing vowels assigned to the cluster, most of which convey the essence of getting hands wet. So what Joshua heard Moses say when Moses read aloud what he wrote carries meaning forward that Joshua will then impart to others when they hear Joshua read the words of Moses.

Each king will now, by writing in his own hand a copy of the Law approved by the Levitical priesthood, know what meaning should be assigned to the consonant clusters representing the text of the Torah ...

Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jedidah the daughter of Adaiah of Bozkath. And he did what was right in the eyes of [YHWH] and walked in all the way of David his father, and he did not turn aside to the right or to the left. In the eighteenth year of King Josiah, the king sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, son of Meshullam, the secretary, to the house of [YHWH], saying, "Go up to Hilkiyah the high priest, that he may count the money that has been brought into the house of [YHWH], which the keepers of the threshold have collected from the people. And let it be given into the hand of the workmen who have the oversight of the house of [YHWH], and let them give it to the workmen who are at the house of [YHWH], repairing the house (that is, to the carpenters, and to the builders, and to the masons), and let them use it for buying timber and quarried stone to repair the house. ..."

And Hilkiyah the high priest said to Shaphan the secretary, "I have found the Book of the Law in the house of [YHWH]." And Hilkiyah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it. And Shaphan the secretary came to the king, and reported to the king, "Your servants have emptied out the money that was found in the house and have delivered it into the hand of the workmen who have the oversight of the house of [YHWH]." Then Shaphan the secretary told the king, "Hilkiyah the priest has given me a book." And Shaphan read it before the king. When the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, he tore his clothes. (2 Kings 22:1–11)

Was King Josiah literate, able to read the Book of the Law for himself, let alone make a copy of the Book of the Law? He certainly hadn't, as of his 18th year in office, made a copy of the Book of the Law for himself—the Book of the Law was lost within the confines of the dilapidated temple and only found when renovation of the temple was undertaken by Josiah's decree.

Perhaps the better question is one Christians are hesitant to ask: what did Moses write, if anything, about Israel having kings? Certainly the citation at the head of this reading is found in Deuteronomy and would seem to have been written by Moses, but would Josiah have known what was contained in Deuteronomy if he heard the Book of the Law read for the first time when Shaphan his secretary read him the book that Hilkiyah had found in the dilapidated temple? And would not Josiah have made for himself a copy of the Book of the Law if he had known what was in Deuteronomy concerning kings? Josiah was in all his ways eager to serve the Lord.

Consider what Samuel had to say about Israel and their kings:

When Samuel became old, he made his sons judges over Israel. The name of his firstborn son was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; they were judges in Beersheba. Yet his sons did not walk in his ways but turned aside after gain. They took bribes and perverted justice. Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah and said to him, "Behold, you are old and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint for us a king to judge us like all the nations." But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." And Samuel prayed to [YHWH]. And the LORD said to Samuel, "Obey the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for *they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them*. According to all the deeds that they have done, from the day I brought them up out of Egypt even to this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are also doing to you. Now then, obey their voice; only you shall solemnly warn them and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them." So Samuel told all the words of [YHWH] to the people who were asking for a king from him. He said, "These will be the ways of the king who will reign over you:

he will take your sons and appoint them to his chariots and to be his horsemen and to run before his chariots. And he will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and some to plow his ground and to reap his harvest, and to make his implements of war and the equipment of his chariots. He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards and give them to his servants. He will take the tenth of your grain and of your vineyards and give it to his officers and to his servants. He will take your male servants and female servants and the best of your young men and your donkeys, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your flocks, and you shall be his slaves. *And in that day you will cry out because of your king, whom you have chosen for yourselves, but [YHWH] will not answer you in that day.*" But the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel. And they said, "No! But there shall be a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles." (1 Sam 8:1–20 emphasis added)

And,

And Samuel said to the people, "[YHWH] is witness, who appointed Moses and Aaron and brought your fathers up out of the land of Egypt. Now therefore stand still that I may plead with you before [YHWH] concerning all the righteous deeds of [YHWH] that he performed for you and for your fathers. When Jacob went into Egypt, and the Egyptians oppressed them, then your fathers cried out to [YHWH] and [YHWH] sent Moses and Aaron, who brought your fathers out of Egypt and made them dwell in this place. But they forgot [YHWH] their God. And He sold them into the hand of Sisera, commander of the army of Hazor, and into the hand of the Philistines, and into the hand of the king of Moab. And they fought against them. And they cried out to [YHWH] and said, 'We have sinned, because we have forsaken [YHWH] and have served the Baals and the Ashtaroath. But now deliver us out of the hand of our enemies, that we may serve you.' And [YHWH] sent Jerubbaal and Barak and Jephthah and Samuel and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side, and you lived in safety. And when you saw that Nahash the king of the Ammonites came against you, you said to me, 'No, but a king shall reign over us,' *when [YHWH] your God was your king.* And now behold the king whom you have chosen, for whom you have asked; behold, [YHWH] has set a king over you. If you will fear [YHWH] and serve him and obey his voice and not rebel against the commandment of [YHWH], and if both you and the king who reigns over you will follow [YHWH] your God, it will be well. But if you will not obey the voice of [YHWH], but rebel against the commandment of [YHWH], then the hand of [YHWH] will be against you and your king. *Now therefore stand still and see this great thing that [YHWH] will do before your eyes. Is it not wheat harvest today? I will call upon [YHWH] that He may send thunder and rain. And you shall know and see that your wickedness is great, which you have done in the sight of [YHWH], in asking for yourselves a king.*" So Samuel called upon [YHWH], and [YHWH] sent thunder and rain that day, and all the people greatly feared [YHWH] and Samuel. And all the people said to Samuel, "Pray for your servants to [YHWH] your God, that we may not die, for we have added to all our sins this evil, to ask for ourselves a king." (1 Sam 12:6–19 emphasis added)

Thunder and rain on standing ripe grain is a bad thing, a curse: the people were cursed because they asked for a king. Yet if what is found in Deuteronomy about Israel asking for a king were true, then why did God curse Israel for rejecting Him?

Perhaps more important is the significance of what Samuel tells Israel: in the days of the judges, when Israel sinned and forgot their God, the Lord brought against them enemies that when Israel repented, He defeated by sending Jerubbaal, Barak, Jephthah,

and Samuel against them. The Lord was the king of Israel: He fought for Israel. Using human instruments, He defeated both wrongdoing and those whom He sent to punish Israel for its wrongdoing.

But now, consider what the future brought to Israel (cited in block form for the sake of economy of space, with meaning lost because thought-couplets have not been separated out):

But you [YHWH] have rejected us and disgraced us and have not gone out with our armies. You have made us turn back from the foe, and those who hate us have gotten spoil. You have made us like sheep for slaughter and have scattered us among the nations. You have sold your people for a trifle, demanding no high price for them. You have made us the taunt of our neighbors, the derision and scorn of those around us. You have made us a byword among the nations, a laughingstock among the peoples. All day long my disgrace is before me, and shame has covered my face at the sound of the taunter and reviler, at the sight of the enemy and the avenger. All this has come upon us, though we have not forgotten you, and we have not been false to your covenant. Our heart has not turned back, nor have our steps departed from your way; yet you have broken us in the place of jackals and covered us with the shadow of death. If we had forgotten the name of our God or spread out our hands to a foreign god, would not God discover this? For He knows the secrets of the heart. Yet for your sake we are killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered. *Awake! Why are you sleeping, O Lord? Rouse yourself! Do not reject us forever! Why do you hide your face? Why do you forget our affliction and oppression?* For our soul is bowed down to the dust; our belly clings to the ground. Rise up; come to our help! Redeem us for the sake of your steadfast love! (Ps 44:9–26 emphasis added)

When Israel asked for a king, Israel cut itself off from the Lord ... He would no longer fight Israel's battles for He was no longer Israel's king, what He through Samuel promised Israel. So why would the sons of Korah complain that the Lord was no longer fighting Israel's battles? This is what Israel brought upon itself by rejecting the Lord as the nation's king.

But if what is found in Deuteronomy concerning kings were true, even if Samuel never read these words of Moses, why would the Lord not fight Israel's battles?

Most Sabbatarian Christians—Worldwide Church of God splinters, Seventh Day Baptists, Church of God Seventh Day, Seventh Day Adventists—hold that the Bible is the infallible Word of God, absolutely true in its original autographs. But what are its original autographs? We have no text earlier than the 4th Century CE, and certainly the Torah, entrusted to Israel, has been redacted several times ***since being found in the dilapidated temple*** in Josiah's day.

The Lord's reaction to Israel asking for a king, both in the days of Samuel and later when He was seemingly asleep according to the sons of Korah (Ps 44), suggests that the portion of Deuteronomy addressing kings was not written by Moses, but added to Deuteronomy when Israel was in Babylon. But the "proof" for such a claim relies upon the faithful recounting of Israel asking Samuel for a king—and if one passage cannot be trusted, can any of Scripture be trusted? And the answer to this question is, Yes!

When the Law is written on the heart and placed in the mind of the disciple under the New Covenant (see Jer 31:31–34; Heb 8:8–12), it isn't the Ten Commandments only that is written on hearts and placed in minds: it is the Torah, all that Moses wrote. And

in the Torah to be written on hearts, there is nothing about Israel having any king but the combined Tetragrammaton *YHWH*, representing the Father and His Beloved.

By looking forward, the edit-addition made to Moses' words in Babylon can be quarantined. But doing so demands that the Christian ideology move past the Bible being the unerring infallible word of God, all the while not rejecting the Bible as the Word of God. For the Qur'an is not a reliable record of visions given by the angel Gabriel: it is a text with more errors and shortcomings than the Bible, for the Jesus of Mohammad has mention made of His youth, something that should not exist and a disqualifier of Luke's Gospel, a redacted text by the author's own admission.

This and similar subjects will be addressed in future Readings as *Philadelphia* grows past spiritual milk and engages solid food.

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