

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 disciples as sons of light.

Weekly Readings For the Sabbath of October 25, 2008

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 John chapter 8, verses 12 through chapter 10, verse 42.

Commentary: The reading is a little longer than some, but the events described in chapters eight through ten occur between the Feast of Tabernacles [Sukkot] and Hanukah, with Jesus saying that He was the light of the world, that whoever followed Him would not walk in darkness but would have the light of life (8:12). With the Feast of Dedication also dubbed the festival of lights, John compresses Sukkot and Hanukah together into a condemnation of darkness, disobedience, and unbelief, with the dedication of the temple becoming the Son giving life to the saints who are today men in whom the Father has placed life, thereby making every saint a son of God with life that has come down from heaven as Jesus had life that came from heaven.

The above passes quickly: disciples are today the temple of God (1 Cor 3:16–17; 2 Cor 6:16), so the dedication of the temple comes from having the light of life, a light that never runs out, that never ends, that is not of this world but of the timeless heavenly realm burning throughout the season of darkness. This light is the glorification of the saints, and the glorification of the firstfruits form the shadow and type of the glorification of the larger main crop wheat harvest of humankind. So Hanukah becomes a type of Sukkot, with the light (oil) that doesn't run out until additional oil is ceremonially purified representing the glorified firstfruits, each a son of God and younger brother to Christ Jesus (Rom 8:29), each of the house called "God," each then dwelling in this house as the Father and the Son today dwells in this house (John 14:2).

In general, Christians are uncomfortable identifying themselves as sons of God. There has been a long history of Christian teaching that Satan's sin was attempting to be like the Most High:

How you are fallen from heaven,
O Day Star, son of Dawn!
How you are cut down to the ground,
you who laid the nations low!
You said in your heart,

"I will ascend to heaven;
above the stars of God
I will set my throne on high;
I will sit on the mount of assembly
in the far reaches of the north;
I will ascend above the heights of the clouds;
I will make myself like the Most High." (Isa 14:12–14)

This teaching holds that it is blasphemy for a Christian to say what Paul plainly said: disciples are sons of God, and the Body [σῶμα] of Christ—and if the Body of Christ, each disciple is a scale model of Christ because of the indwelling of Jesus through His breath/spirit [πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ]. This teaching, though, ignores two important points: Lucifer, even though an anointed cherub, was created by the Most High as a servant, not as a son. All angels were created as servants, and it would always be wrong for a servant to usurp authority over the one whom he serves or to claim to be like the one whom he serves. So it would be blasphemy for any angel, even Lucifer, to make himself like the Most High. But a son is not a servant even though a son might well be under the stewardship of a servant until he reaches his majority; so it would not be blasphemy for a son to identify himself and his lineage with his father, or to claim his inheritance from his father.

Disciples are sons of the Father. They were not born with immortal souls, but with only the physical breath of life that the first Adam received when *Elohim* [singular in usage] breathed into the man of mud's nostrils (Gen 2:7). They receive spiritual life when the Father draws them from this world by giving them a second breath/spirit, His breath, the breath that descended as a dove upon the man Jesus [πνεῦμα θεοῦ]. And as the first Adam received life from receiving breath from the Creator of all-that-is physical, the second or last Adam received spiritual life from the Father when the breath of the Father descended as a dove to light and remain with the man Jesus of Nazareth (Matt 3:16). His first disciples, given to Jesus by the Father (John 17:6, 12), were drawn from this world when they were called, and they received the Holy Spirit [πνεῦμα ἅγιον] when the glorified Jesus breathed on ten of them (John 20:22). As Jesus possessed life received from the water of the womb (i.e., life coming from the first Adam) and life coming from the Father through receipt of His divine breath—two breaths or two spirits, one received from being born of water and one received from being born of spirit—Jesus' first disciples also received life via two breaths or spirits, one from their biological mothers and one from the Father coming via the glorified Jesus breathing on them.

It is birth by spirit that Christians, like Nicodemus before them, have failed to understand. As long as a "Christian" wrongly believes that he or she was born with an immortal soul, the person lacks spiritual understanding and cannot appreciate what Paul writes when he says, "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom 6:23). Death is not, prior to spiritual birth, separation from the Father. Rather, death is the absence of spiritual life, and absence permitting all of humankind to be consigned to disobedience (Rom 11:32) without this disobedience being counted against human beings who are not under the Law but under natural grace ... "natural grace" is not a term with which most Christians have familiarity, but when sin is not reckoned as sin, a person is under "grace." So when Paul writes that "sin is not counted where there is no law" (Rom 5:13), the person is under grace, but without having received spiritual life for death still reigns over all of humanity

who have not come to Moses. Paul says that death reigned from Adam to Moses (v. 14), not from Adam to Jesus/Joshua [Ἰησοῦ — Acts 7:45; 4:10–12], who leads Israel into God's rest (from Ps 95:10–11) or into His presence. It was Moses in the Moab covenant who placed life and death before Israel and told the children of Israel to choose life (Deut 30:15–20), but it was “Joshua—Ἰησοῦ” who led Israel across the Jordan and into the Promised Land, a representation of entering into God's presence for His eyes were always on the Promised Land.

Grace is not unmerited pardon, but the covering of sin that causes transgressions of the Law not to be counted against the person. When a sin is “covered” the death penalty for this sin has not been paid but is being borne by another. A servant or a slave is not free to keep the Law so those transgressions of the law such as failure to keep the Sabbath are not counted against the slave but become the responsibility to the slave's master. Since all of humankind is presently consigned to disobedience and given into the hand of the prince of this world, the transgressions of humankind [that portion not under the Law] are not counted against human beings but become the responsibility of the prince of this world. But Israel has been chosen by God and given the Law under Moses—and with receipt of the Law Israel became/becomes responsible for its transgressions of the Law. The flip side is, though, Israel was offered life, with this offer coming first through the promise of “inheriting” eternal life (Luke 10:25; 18:18) following demonstrated obedience by faith (Deut 30:1–2, 6). When better promises were added to the Moab covenant and its mediator was changed from Moses to Christ Jesus, disciples received “life” through receipt of the Father's breath when they received the Holy Spirit. They were born of spirit, or born by life having come down from heaven. But this second “life” was not male or female, Jew or Greek, even though the tent of flesh in which this second life was domiciled remained male or female, Jew or Greek, bond or free. This second life was like the life angels possess, but confined to a tent of flesh until the Son also gives “life” to the mortal flesh by causing the flesh to put on imperishability. This second life was of heaven and would be “immortal” if it dwelt in an immortal house. So the entirety of Christendom's teaching about human beings possessing immortal souls is false.

The spiritual life that has come from heaven as *the Logos* came from heaven to be first born of Mary, then born of the Father as the Son of Man, is a son of the Father, and as such, is a son of God that must, when judgments are revealed, have the mortal flesh put on immortality. All judgment has been given to the glorified Jesus, who will give “life” to whom He will upon His return. It is this second giving of life that the splintered Churches of God have never well understood. They have consistently identified this second giving of spiritual life as the Father's initial giving of spiritual life. Thus, these splinters do not recognize that disciples have real life in the heavenly realm that can commit transgressions of the Law, and that these transgressions must be covered in a similar way that transgression of the law in this world must be covered while human beings are consigned to disobedience ... “grace” is today the covering of the transgressions of these new creatures, born of spirit as sons of God, in the heavenly realm. Jesus' death at Calvary covered the transgressions of all Israel in this world, but that death at Calvary was in this world and was of the flesh. It cannot pay the penalty for transgressions of the law committed in the heavenly realm—and disciples can truly commit transgressions of the law in the heavenly realm. Jesus said, “You have heard that it was said, “You shall not commit adultery.” But I say to you that everyone who

looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Matt 5:27–28). Thus, the person who looks on another with lust or with lustful intent but never acts upon this lust never commits adultery in this world, but rather, transgresses the adultery commandment in the heavenly realm. So it is always false to say that disciples cannot sin in the heavenly realm.

If God did not spare angels when they sinned but cast them into darkness (2 Pet 2:4) where they dwell among men as demons, God will not spare His sons when they likewise sin. However, the glorified Jesus presently bears these sins, covering them with His righteousness so that they are not counted against infant sons of God that share the darkness with demons. The person who walks in darkness is blind, as the Pharisees were blind (Matt chap 23). This person does not know where he or she goes or is going (John 12:35). But the person covered by Jesus’ righteousness shines forth as a beacon set on a hill, for it is His righteousness that is seen in the heavenly realm.

To have life received from the Father is to have light. To be covered by grace is to be cloaked in Christ’s righteousness. But to be cloaked by His righteousness requires that a disciple strive to walk as Jesus walked (1 John 2:6; 1 Cor 11:1; Phil 3:17). This mantle of righteousness covers those who are servants of Christ Jesus, not those sons of God who serve sin (Rom 6:16) by willingly transgressing the commandments of God. Bluntly put, the son of God who defrauds his or her brother has removed him or herself from the garment of grace, and the Church is to deliver this person to Satan for the destruction of the flesh so that, possibly, the spirit or new life might be saved when judgments are revealed (1 Cor 5:5). The son of God who habitually transgresses any commandment, including the Sabbath commandment, makes him or herself into a willing servant of the Adversary and as such is not under grace. Thus, the *Christian* who neglects obedience and willingly transgresses the commandments is not under grace but under the Law and under condemnation.

At the Feast of Dedication, Jesus told the Jews who had gathered to ask Him if He was the Christ that He had plainly answered their question but they wouldn’t believe the answer (John 10:24–25). Jesus said the works He did in the Father’s name bore witness about Him, but those Jews questioning Him did not believe because they were not of Jesus’ flock for their spiritual father was the devil (John 8:44) ... these Jews acknowledged that Jesus’ birth was different from theirs (v. 41). They claimed that they had only one Father, the God [τὸν θεόν], but the One they claimed as their Father had entered His creation as His only Son (John 3:16) and was then, as His only Son, Jesus of Nazareth, standing before them unrecognized.

When Jesus told these Jews that He would give His sheep eternal life and that His sheep would never perish (John 10:28), that the Father who had given Him the sheep was greater than all and that He was one with the Father (vv. 29–30), these Jew picked up stones to kill Him (v. 31), thereby confirming what Jesus had previously told them about their father being a murderer from the beginning. Their father was not the Most High, nor was their father the Creator of all that had been made. Without realizing whom they were worshiping, these Jews, many of whom were spiritual leaders in Judea, were not worshiping God but were worshiping the Adversary even though they were outwardly keeping the commandments and doing what the Law physically prescribed. They failed to understand that to be under the Law was to be under a death sentence, for the power of the Law was its condemnation to death for transgressions of it. The Law

had no authority over the person who was without sin. And it was this concept that the Apostle Paul tried, largely unsuccessfully, to convey to Israel.

Light represents life, and darkness represents death.

Where there is light, there is no death. Where there is light, the Law is without authority; it is without power. Where there is no transgression of the Law, there is no death. There is only light or life; for until there is a transgression of the Law, sin lies dead (Rom 7:8). Where there is no sin, there is no need to address sin. There is no need for the Law. And every new creature born of spirit as a son of God is born free from condemnation (Rom 8:1–2) and free from bondage to sin and death. But freedom is only continued through obedience: the infant son of God is under grace (Rom 6:14), not consignment to disobedience (Rom 11:32), but if this infant son of God voluntarily returns to sin, thereby making himself a willing servant to sin, this son of God becomes the bondservant of the Adversary. This son of God removes himself from grace and comes under the Law and under condemnation.

Is the above understandable? No person is born with an immortal soul. Every person is humanly born consigned to disobedience because of the first Adam's transgression. Between Eve and the Virgin Mary, every person born of the water of the womb was born as a servant of the Adversary. No person had indwelling life or light. And every person except for Jesus of Nazareth has been born consigned to disobedience until the Father draws the person from this world and gives the person a second life, or birth by spirit as He gave the man Jesus a second life through receipt of His divine breath.

Because Jesus, when born from the womb of Mary, was the only Son of *the Logos*, who was *Theos* and was with *the Theon* in the beginning, Jesus was not humanly born consigned to disobedience but was born free to keep the commandments, which He did do. Judaism rejects the idea that the Father would allow a person to be born consigned to disobedience and be without the free will necessary to choose life and thus escape death. This consignment to disobedience because of the transgression of the first Adam (a form of *original sin*), however, is the major construct of Pauline Christendom; for it is this consignment to disobedience that precludes salvation ever being a matter of works. There is nothing anyone can personally do to escape this assignment to disobedience which has servitude to Satan delivering the sins of the person to Satan so that the person has no sin counted to the person (again Rom 5:13). The person will not fry in hell because of his or her lawlessness, but will be resurrected in the great White Throne Judgment to be like one or the other of the two sinners crucified with Jesus at Calvary. It is because the Father will have mercy on every person that every person is humanly born consigned to disobedience and born without the freedom to keep the commandments. Therefore, the pious sinner will appear as the Pharisees appeared: this pious sinner will still be the child of the Adversary, but a child blindly seeking God in darkness.

Under the terms of the Moab covenant, when Israel in a far land turns towards God and begins to love God with heart and mind, keeping His commandments and statutes, God will bring Israel (because Israel is in a sanctified relationship with God) into His rest and give to Israel a circumcised heart (Deut 30:1–6). This is Paul's "righteousness based on faith" (Rom 10:6), for turning to God when in a far land is an act of faith—and it is this act of faith that every Gentile convert does when professing that Jesus is Lord and believing that the Father raised Jesus from the dead. So the Gentile convert only has to keep the precepts of the Law to have his or her uncircumcision counted as

circumcision (Rom 2:26); whereas the natural Israelite who keeps the commandments as a matter of cultural expectations only has to profess that Jesus is Lord and believe that the Father has raised Jesus from the dead to undertake a journey of faith that cleanses hearts (Rom 10:9–13).

There is no distinction between the natural Israelite who professes that Jesus is Lord and the Gentile convert who professes that Jesus is Lord when both keep the precepts of the Law and thus, by faith, cleanse hearts so that their hearts can be circumcised. They both stand on the same theological ground, with the same theological underpinnings. Both have made a journey of faith spiritually equivalent in length to Abraham's physical journey of faith. But until the Father draws both from this world, neither will undertake the journey of faith necessary to cleanse hearts. The natural Israelite will cling to Moses and will remain across the river from God's rest, and the Gentile will remain in spiritual Babylon as a servant to the prince of this world and a bondservant of disobedience even though this Gentile was set free from disobedience when drawn by the Father.

Jesus of Nazareth is the only human being not to have been born of the first Adam; He is the only one who could become the second or last Adam (Rom 5:14; 1 Cor 15:45), the One through whom the Son of Man comes. He is the temple of the Father, rebuilt in three days, and He is a fractal image of the complete temple, its size a multiple of Himself. So it was proper for Him to be in Jerusalem at the Feast of Dedication, for this feast is a celebration of light in the dark of winter. We, as His disciples, are lights in the darkness of a spiritual winter, in the darkness of one long spiritual night that began at Calvary. And the second Passover liberation of Israel will mark the midnight hour of this one long spiritual night. It is at this hour when humankind cannot get farther from God, and this hour is nearly upon *Philadelphia*.

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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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