

The following Scripture passages are offered to aid beginning fellowships. The readings and commentary are offered as openings into dialogue about the subject or concept. And the concept behind the readings for this Sabbath is *Simeon's prophecy*.

## **Sabbath Readings** **For November 3, 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 services should read or assign to be read Luke chapter 2, verses 22 through 35.*

**Commentary:** When Simeon, “waiting for the consolation of Israel” (v. 25) — what does that mean, *waiting for the consolation of Israel*? A consolation prize is awarded to the runner-up, the one who finishes second. To “console” is to cheer in time of grief, defeat, or trouble; hence the awarding of a consolation prize to the one who has been defeated. Obviously, Israel was suffering under Herod’s administration: no longer was there a Hasmonaean king sitting on the throne of Israel. Herod was a pretender, but under Herod Israel had a degree of autonomy. The temple was being rebuilt. Although Herod had initially appointed the brother of his Hasmonaean wife as high priest, he later conspired to drown his brother-in-law ...

Herod’s brother-in-law as high priest was popular, but was this how high priests were to be appointed according to Moses? Was the high priest to be a lackey of the king? Or had Israel been spiritually bankrupt for so long that Moses was merely a picket fence that kept dogs and Samaritans out of the temple?

Simeon was awaiting the salvation of Israel, not a prize for finishing in second place. Yet Simeon’s prophecy about Jesus when he took the child in his arms placed Israel in the second position: “[M]y eyes have seen your salvation / that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, / a light for revelation to the Gentiles, / and for glory to your people Israel” (vv. 30-32).

Jesus was to be *a light for revelation to the Gentiles*, for Israel had Moses. Death reigned in this world from Adam to Moses (Rom 5:14), not from Adam to Jesus. When the lawyer sought to test Jesus and asked what he must do to inherit eternal life, Jesus asked him “What is written in the Law? How do you read it?” (Luke 10:26). The lawyer answered from the Book of Deuteronomy, and Jesus said, “You have answered correctly; do this, and you shall live” (v. 28). So Jesus confirmed what Paul wrote, that Israel had a law that would have lead to righteousness if it had been pursued by faith rather than by the works of hands (Rom 9:31-32). And it is the righteousness that comes from faith that leads to salvation.

But faith comes from belief, and belief from revelation, and revelation from preaching until all of humankind is under the new covenant so that a person shall not

teach neighbor or brother to know the Lord, for all shall *know the Lord* (Heb 8:11) ... this new covenant was not implemented at Calvary, or on the day of Pentecost following Calvary. The covenant that was abolished (Eph 2:15) at Calvary was the marriage covenant made at Sinai (Ex chaps 20-23) with the physically circumcised nation that left Egypt six weeks earlier (Ex 19:1) on the day when God took the fathers of Israel by the hand to bring them out of Egypt (Heb 8:9).

Note: the promised new covenant (Jer 31:31-34) does not replace the Sinai covenant, but the Passover covenant that was made with Israel on the day when God took Israel by the hand to lead this nation out from Egypt. The new covenant is also made with Israel, with Israel now being with circumcised hearts (Rom 2:26-29; Col 2:11), and it is implemented on the day when God leads spiritually circumcised Israel out from spiritual Babylon. It is implemented at a second Passover liberation of Israel from bondage; it is implemented at the beginning of the seven endtime years of tribulation.

If a person believes that he or she is, today, under the new covenant, let the person answer the following question: did you hear of God through your ears by the preaching of another, or learn of God through reading Scripture with your eyes? Or did you know God by having the laws of God written on your heart and placed in your mind without preaching or reading Scripture? If you answer in the affirmative, you are a liar! For you heard of God from another, or learned of God through Scripture. But this will not be the case under the new covenant when a person is liberated from indwelling sin and death [that is correct, liberated from physical death coming from “natural” causes so that the person born in the Millennium will live until Satan is released after the thousand years]. When a person has the law written on his or her heart and placed in his or her mind, the person will know God without need for instruction. The person will have the mind of Christ placed within the person from birth. And this is the reality of the Millennium when Christ Jesus reigns as King of kings and Lord of lords—as the prince of the power of the air.

If Christians today are not under the new covenant, then what covenant are they under? They are still under the Passover covenant made with Israel when this physical nation left Egypt, and they are under the Moab covenant, made with the mixed uncircumcised and circumcised children of Israel and initially mediated by Moses (Deu chaps 29-32). This covenant was not ratified by blood as an earthly copy of a heavenly thing (Heb 9:23), but with a song as an eternal covenant to which better promises were added when Christ Jesus replaced Moses as its mediator. Better promises are not added to abolished covenants, nor are mediators changed.

Since Christians remain under the Passover covenant made when Israel left Egypt, Gentiles need Jesus as “a light for revelation” (Luke 2:32); for Gentiles do not even know to keep the Passover sacraments unless, through Christ, they receive revelation in the things of God that Moses taught Israel.

Note well the preceding sentence. Gentiles dwell spiritually in a far country from where Israel should be dwelling. Under the terms of the Moab covenant, when Israel in a far land (sent there for the nation’s lawlessness) calls on God and returns to God to obey His voice in all that He commands in the book of Deuteronomy with all of its heart and mind [*nephesh*] (Deut 30:1-2) — returning to God while in a far land requires an act of faith — God will give to Israel and its offspring circumcised hearts (v. 6). Therefore, when Gentiles, the natural residents of these far lands, turn to God they do so by faith, what Israel has lacked. What Gentiles now lack isn’t faith, but knowledge that comes

from revelation. And Simeon's prophecy was that Jesus would be *a light for revelation to the Gentiles*. Through Jesus would come the revelation that Gentiles need to grow in grace and knowledge.

Jesus said, "If you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words" (John 5:46-47). ... Christendom has run away from Moses, who is the accuser of every Israelite, physically circumcised or spiritually circumcised (*cf.* John 5:45; Deut 32:25-27).

The Book of Deuteronomy was placed outside the Ark of the Covenant, aside the Ark not inside the Ark as were the two tablets of stone on which God had written the *Decalogue*. This placement does not mean that Israel's accuser can be ignored as some who teach Israel contend. Rather, under the new covenant disciples are each Arks of the Covenant, with the law of God written on two tablets of flesh, the heart and the mind; with the promise of resurrection within the disciple, the reality of Aaron's budded staff; and with the Spirit of Christ Jesus in the disciple, the reality of the jar of manna. But judgment remains outside the disciple, for all judgment has been given to Jesus. Being raised from the dead through being born of Spirit does not assure a disciple of glorification. All that is promised is resurrection, and Jesus said, "Do not marvel at this [that the Son has been given authority to execute judgment], for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection to life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment" (John 5:28-29).

The Mercy Seat was outside of the Ark as it is today. Likewise, the accuser of Israel was outside the Ark. So both mercy and judgment remain outside of every disciple although under the terms of the Moab covenant, Moses placed the choice of life or death in each Israelite's hands (Deut 30:15-20) where it remains today ... each disciple chooses life or death when the disciple tells the Father and Son whether he or she is workable clay, willing to obey the voice of God, which would have the disciple keeping all that is written in Deuteronomy, including keeping the commandments and coming before God three seasons a year: Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles.

If a disciple will not keep all that Moses wrote in Deuteronomy, the disciple allows his or her accuser to condemn the disciple into being formed as a vessel of wrath prepared for destruction (Rom 9:22). The disciple does not pass from death to life without coming under judgment (John 5:24), but rather, comes under judgment with Christ having to decide whether He will or won't give life through the perishable flesh putting on imperishability.

Simeon's prophecy says that Jesus would be *a light for glory to Israel*, with this glory coming through salvation:

- Jesus was to be a light for revelation to the Gentiles;
- He was to be a light for glory to His people Israel;
- But He was appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel,
- And for a sign that is opposed so that thoughts from many hearts might be revealed.

Jesus did not come to bring peace to this world, but a sword; He came to be opposed so that the inner things of humankind would be revealed through the actions of the flesh. The so-called *Prince of Peace* came to expose the thoughts of men [and women] so that what was hidden would be revealed.

What has been hidden is disobedience; is rebellion against God. And this rebellion is seen when a disciple spurns Moses, or when a disciple refuses to come before God on the Sabbath, or when a Sabbatarian disciple refuses to keep the high Sabbaths of God, or when the one who would keep the Feast of Tabernacles goes to Feast to be entertained as if he or she were on a vacation to Disneyland.

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*The reader should now read Matthew chapter 22, verses 1 through 14.*

**Commentary:** Christian teachers usually teach that the invited guests to the wedding feast are physically circumcised Israelites who would not accept salvation when it was offered to them. Although this teaching has merit, Simeon was waiting for the consolation of Israel; his eyes had not seen the salvation of Israel until he held the infant child Jesus. So salvation had not come to Israel prior to the birth of Christ Jesus even though the promise of inheriting eternal life was available through Moses and had been given to a few descendants of the patriarch Abraham and to a few others going back to Noah and Enoch.

If salvation had not been seen in Israel prior to the birth of Jesus, then the invited guests to the wedding supper are not natural Jews but Christians, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. The inheritance of natural Jews was the Promised Land of Judea, a type of the Sabbath rests of God and a type of heaven; the inheritance of spiritual Jews is the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, it is Christians who are off to their farms or businesses when the King has readied the wedding feast for His Son. It is Christians who have little interest in the things of God, but remain focused on the things of this world, such as abortion, or teaching Creation Studies in schools, or in voting into office social conservatives. It is Christians who have treated shamefully those who preach Moses and obedience to the Law. So in the parable, the King was angry and invited in any whom could be gathered—and this will be the case when the Holy Spirit is poured out upon all flesh halfway through the seven endtime years of tribulation. The third part of humankind (Zech 13:7-9, especially *v. 9*) will form the bulk of the endtime harvest of Firstfruits, for the invited guests proved not to be worthy ... when a disciple knows to keep the Sabbath but does not, or when a disciple knows to keep the high Sabbaths but does not, the disciple rejects God and proves unworthy to be invited to the wedding feast, where all who come as guests will marry the Bridegroom once they have on a wedding garment, which is their righteousness through faith.

Yes, natural Israel rejected God and even killed its Husband, born as the man Jesus, but it is Christians who have been too busy with the things of this world—including doing good through health care services or political struggles to insert the precepts of God into the government of the prince of disobedience—to be concerned about the wedding of the Son. Thus, their accuser Moses leaves them condemned before God when to be great in the kingdom of heaven only required of them to keep the commandments and to teach others to do likewise (Matt 5:19).

The person who lives by Moses' writing also hears the words of Jesus, but unfortunately, none of the Pharisees kept the law that Moses gave them (John 7:19). Nor does rabbinical Judaism today keep the covenant of Moses through which Moses stands as its accuser. Instead, in Observant Judaism, emphasis is placed on the flesh, on washing hands and on pots and pans. Emphasis isn't on cleansing hearts through a journey of faith that is the spiritual equivalent to Abraham's physical journey of faith.

But once the seven endtime years of tribulation begin, it will be better for Observant Jews than for lawless Christians—for many disciples are called, but few will be chosen. Few will actually overcome their accuser through accepting revelation to become the glory of Israel.

God told Moses that He intended to make of him a great nation. Although Moses protested and God allowed Israel to live, His intent to make of Moses a great nation did not change: those who will be glorified will walk on the dry land where Moses parts the waters of disobedience.

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