

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 will you die for your brother?

Weekly Readings *For the Sabbath of November 27, 2010*

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.

And Joshua the son of Nun sent two men secretly from Shittim as spies, saying, "Go, view the land, especially Jericho." And they went and came into the house of a prostitute whose name was Rahab and lodged there. And *it was told to the king of Jericho, "Behold, men of Israel have come here tonight to search out the land."* Then the king of Jericho sent to Rahab, saying, "Bring out the men who have come to you, who entered your house, for they have come to search out all the land." But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them. And she said, "True, the men came to me, but I did not know where they were from. And when the gate was about to be closed at dark, the men went out. I do not know where the men went. Pursue them quickly, for you will overtake them." But she had brought them up to the roof and hid them with the stalks of flax that she had laid in order on the roof. So the men pursued after them on the way to the Jordan as far as the fords. And the gate was shut as soon as the pursuers had gone out.

Before the men lay down, she came up to them on the roof and said to the men, "I know that the Lord has given you the land, and that the fear of you has fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land melt away before you. For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two

kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you devoted to destruction. And as soon as we heard it, our hearts melted, and there was no spirit left in any man because of you, for the Lord your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath. Now then, *please swear to me by the Lord that, as I have dealt kindly with you, you also will deal kindly with my father's house, and give me a sure sign that you will save alive my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them, and deliver our lives from death.*" And the men said to her, "Our life for yours even to death! If you do not tell this business of ours, then when the Lord gives us the land we will deal kindly and faithfully with you."

Then she let them down by a rope through the window, for her house was built into the city wall, so that she lived in the wall. And she said to them, "Go into the hills, or the pursuers will encounter you, and hide there three days until the pursuers have returned. Then afterward you may go your way." The men said to her, "We will be guiltless with respect to this oath of yours that you have made us swear. Behold, when we come into the land, you shall tie this scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and you shall gather into your house your father and mother, your brothers, and all your father's household. Then if anyone goes out of the doors of your house into the street, his blood shall be on his own head, and we shall be guiltless. But if a hand is laid on anyone who is with you in the house, his blood shall be on our head. But if you tell this business of ours, then we shall be guiltless with respect to your oath that you have made us swear." And she said, "According to your words, so be it." Then she sent them away, and they departed. And she tied the scarlet cord in the window. (Josh 2:1–21 emphasis added)

In the story of Rahab is also the story of Anne Frank, whose diary has become one of the most widely read books in the world; for good Dutch citizens lied to Nazi authorities about the Jewish families hiding in the *Achterhuis* of the Amsterdam branch of Opekta. Good Dutch citizens told lies that subjected them to possible death sentences if found out, lies that did send Victor Kugler into prison with

Jews and political prisoners and then on to a forced labor camp. ... Miep Gies, one of those who lied to Nazi officials and who saved Anne Frank's journals and papers—and who only this year died [January 11, 2010]—wrote in her autobiography, “I stand at the end of the long, long line of good Dutch people who did what I did or more—much more—during those dark and terrible times years ago.”

During those dark and terrible times—those dark and terrible times of Nazi occupation were merely the prerequisite to what lies before all Sabbatarians in the Affliction, the first 1260 days of seven endtime years of tribulation. Persecution won't be race or ethic based, but based on ideology, with Sabbath observance rather than Israelite ancestry marking those who are to be hunted and exterminated. For Sabbath observance in the Affliction will mark those who are of God just as the tattoo of the cross [χξς'] will mark those who are of Antichrist in the Endurance, the last 1260 days of the seven endtime years.

Knowing that dark and terrible times are coming, a period different but far worse from anything humanity has previously seen, the question must be asked, When is it all right to lie? Or is it never all right? Should Rahab have told the king of Jericho where the two Israelite men were hiding? Should good Dutch citizens have told Nazi officials where Jews were hiding? Someone certainly did, for the Frank family was found via a tip given to the Nazis.

This question of what should a Christian do when confronted with a situation like what Rahab faced is routinely asked by antagonists to hinder the simplistic faith of immature Sabbatarians: is telling a lie to achieve a greater good a transgression of the commandments, if the commandments can be summed up in *Love God* and *Love neighbor as you love yourself*?

Does not loving neighbor place an obligation upon the person to do for neighbor what Victor Kugler, Johannes Kleiman, Bep Voskuijl, and Miep Gies did for the Frank family in hiding them from Nazis? Yet this love will require that lies be told, that deceit exists as a force of greater good.

Today, most of Christendom have their sins covered through not being under the law for most of Christendom has not yet been born of God. However, that will change with the Second Passover liberation of Israel from indwelling sin and death. Every Christian in every sect and creed will be born filled-with and empowered by the breath of God at the Second Passover, the beginning of the seven endtime years of tribulation. The Son of Man will then be revealed, or disrobed: grace will end, for no longer will Christians born of spirit need the covering [garment] of Christ Jesus' righteousness. Every Christian will then have the power to keep the commandments, if that is the will of the Christian. As ancient Israel in Egypt was liberated from physical slavery to a physical king in a physical land at the first Passover, circumcised-of-heart Israel will be liberated from consignment to sin and death as the slaves of the spiritual king of Babylon who rules over the mental topography of living creatures at the Second Passover. However—and this is a huge caveat—the Christian who returns to sin will voluntary become the slave of sin, with this servitude leading to death (Rom 6:16) in this world and in the lake of fire. So lying in the Affliction carries a price tag

that it doesn't presently carry for Christians who are either under grace or who have not yet been born of God.

It is easy to judge from a distance: *No, I would never lie to protect anyone for a lie is not of God*, or *Yes, I would do whatever I could to protect a person in danger*. Pacifist Quakers in pre Civil War border states sheltered runaway slaves rather than return the slaves to slave catchers and eventually to their owners. To shelter a runaway slave transgressed civil and criminal law, as well as a literal reading of the Ten Commandments.

There is a tendency among anteliberation Sabbatarian Christians to avoid directly confronting Rahab lying to the king of Jericho through various apologies that have her lying really not being lying but some technical form of the truth ... she lied! That is the long and the short of the matter. To excuse her lying without really addressing the issue of whether these Sabbatarian Christians would lie to protect a fellow Sabbatarian in the soon-coming Affliction is to now duck an issue that cannot be ducked in the future; for to lie when the Sabbatarian has no covering for a transgression of the law except his or her obedience will cost the Sabbatarian his or her salvation—

Many are the Sabbatharians who presently believe that God would not require them to make the decision of whether they would lie to protect another. Many are the Sabbatharians who believe they are so precious to God that He will protect them from the Tribulation by bodily taking them to a place of final training, a place of physical safety ... how many Sabbatharians are willing to die physically for their brother? Jesus said, "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lays down his life for his friends"(John 15:13). Jesus laid down His life for His friends—and the servant isn't greater than his master nor is the disciple greater than his teacher. Christians are to walk as Jesus walked (1 John 2:6); Christians are to follow Paul, who laid down his life, as Paul followed Jesus (1 Cor 11:1 *et al*). So what makes a Sabbatarian Christian believe that he or she will not face martyrdom; will not be asked to lay down his or her life for the Christian's brother in the faith?

If Sabbatarian Christians are to go to a place of final training, would not that training test the Sabbatarian to see if he or she would lay down the Christian's life for his or her friend? It certainly would. As Abraham was tested to see if he would sacrifice Isaac, Sabbatharians will be tested to see if they will sacrifice the son of promise dwelling within each of them. Sabbatharians will be tested to see if they are willing to die spiritually for their brother and friend.

Yes, the above is correctly stated: Sabbatharians in the Affliction will be put into situations where they will be faced with betraying a fellow Christian, which would cost the Sabbatarian his salvation, or lying to save the fellow Christian, which would also cost the Sabbatarian his salvation. And this is the importance of the wild ram entangled in brush as Abraham was ready to kill Isaac ... Abraham was willing to kill Isaac, but Abraham didn't actually cut Isaac's throat. He would have if the Lord hadn't stopped him. And that is where Sabbatharians will have to be: willing to sacrifice their own salvation to protect their brothers.

Consider the gravity of sacrificing *your* salvation for another person: do you love anyone that much? The Logos who was God and who was with the God in the beginning (John 1:1) loved humankind enough that He gave up eternal life [life in the heavenly realm] to be born in the likeness of men (Phil 2:5–8) ... which Sabbatarian disciple loves God enough to give up his or her salvation for the disciple's brother or friend?

It's one thing to lay down a person's physical life for his or her friends: soldiers routinely do this. But the question is, will a person lay down salvation for his or her friend? Or will the person value his or her own salvation more than the person values the life of a friend?

Exactly how important is salvation to you?

For most Christians, salvation is addressed in a field of lies, with the greatest of these lies being that humans are born with immortal souls ... no, they are not. Eternal life [indwelling immortality] is the gift of God in Christ Jesus (Rom 6:23); for the indwelling fire that sustains life in the supra-dimensional heavenly realm will consume flesh and blood and must be “contained” in a vessel that has also come from heaven. Christ Jesus is this vessel. Without the indwelling of Christ [precisely, the breath of Christ — πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ], no human being can have or receive indwelling immortality. Thus, when the person who has received Christ and indwelling eternal life after the Son of Man is revealed (Luke 17:30) and the garment of grace stripped away through the person being filled-with and empowered by the spirit of God [πνεῦμα θεοῦ]—when this Christian takes sin back inside him or herself, no sacrifice will remain for this Christian. And because this Christian did not love the truth enough to keep the commandments when the Christian had the power to keep them, God will send over the Christian a strong delusion so that the person will believe what is false (2 Thess 2:10–12) in order that the Christian is condemned and unable to repent.

Now, when you are this Christian—filled with and empowered by the breath of God—will you lay down your eternal life for your brother? Or will you come up with some excuse that justifies [in your eyes] betraying your brother so that your salvation remains assured [again, in your eyes]?

In an oral culture, talking about hypothetical situations requires assigning the hypothetical action to a named referent; for only in inscribed cultures can actions be assigned to an indeterminate *they*. Ancient Hebrews formed an oral culture; thus, to talk about lying [transgressing the Commandment] to accomplish a greater good required an example of someone actually telling a lie to protect someone else—and Rahab was this someone. Her story, therefore, has been over-analyzed for three and a half millennia. But as Sabbatarian Christians return to the narrative literalism of an oral culture—as a subculture, Sabbatarian Christendom is poorly schooled and intentionally undereducated—Rahab returns to importance. Without the majority of Sabbatarians having read the centuries of debate about *just war* or the concept's equivalent (with few exceptions, Sabbatarian Christians are pacifist Anabaptists so there has been no need for Sabbatarians to engage the concept of a *just war*), these Sabbatarians bring to stale debates fresh eyes and great innocence, but also no love for their brothers,

an assertion supported by a commonly heard linguistic icon, *Churchianity*, used by Sabbatarians a few decades ago ... Sabbatarians tend to deny that greater Christendom is of God when, in reality, Sabbatarians are to greater Christianity as Moses was to Israel. No one would deny that Moses was of Israel, but Moses herding sheep in Midian certainly didn't represent Israel in slavery in Egypt. Moses was, when herding sheep, of so little importance that he was temporarily forgotten—and so it is with Sabbatarian Christendom.

It is the *no love for brother* fault of Sabbatarians that will make the Affliction, the first 1260 days of the seven endtime years, a genuine trial for disciples who have for decades kept the commandments of the Lord. Therefore, asking the question of what a Sabbatarian would do if confronted in the Affliction with a situation analogous to what good Dutch Christians faced in WW2 when many sheltered some 5,000 Jews from prying Nazi eyes is a needful exercise. Would the Sabbatarian be willing to even die physically for his or her brother by not answering a question when asked, knowing that not answering would cost the Sabbatarian his or her life, but also knowing that by not answering, the person being sheltered will also be found and killed? Would the Sabbatarian knowingly allow the person he or she was sheltering to be found and killed when a little lie, a little misdirection would permit both of them to live physically for a while longer? Just how important to the Sabbatarian is obedience to the Lord? Is obedience important enough for the Sabbatarian to condemn father or mother, wife or husband, son or daughter? Or will the Sabbatarian spiritually condemn him or herself to temporarily save the physical lives of brother and neighbor?

What will it feel like to be caught on the horns of a dilemma?

Rahab told the two spies that “the Lord your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath. Now then, please swear to me by the Lord that, as I have dealt kindly with you, you also will deal kindly with my father's house” (Josh 2:11–12) ... Rahab heard about how the waters of the Sea of Reeds had dried up before Israel when the nation left Egypt forty years earlier, and she knew about Israel slaying the two Amorite kings, Sihon and Og, and she felt the melting of heart that all of the peoples in Canaan experienced, and she wanted to join the winning side, even if that meant betraying her own people. She didn't want to die, and she knew that the land of Canaan had been given to Israel; she could feel Israel's victory via the weakness in her heart, in the hearts of the men who visited her, in the hearts of her father's household. So every discussion of what Rahab did must begin with acknowledgement that Rahab was seeking to save her physical life when she knew that Jericho's fall to Israel was certain. In this, she differed from Caleb who voluntarily left his people [Edom] to join himself with Israel when the nation was still in slavery in Egypt.

In seeking to join the winners of the soon-to-occur battle for Jericho, Rahab is not significantly different from women who cohabitated with invading Nazis during WW2; for the Nazis seemed like sure winners in 1939, 1940, 1942. Rahab didn't significantly differ from Japanese brides that American GIs brought home from the Korean War, or from the occupation of Japan following WW2. In each case, the winner or likely winner seemed more “attractive” than boys of the

bride's own people, an attraction rooted in *power* and the acquisition of power. So from a strictly carnal perspective, what Rahab did is explainable: she was a good judge of men, and she gambled that the two Israelite spies, swearing by the Lord, would honor their word and honor what she did for them. The reward she sought was tangible: her life, and her family's lives.

But what reward were Dutch Christians seeking in WW2 when they concealed Jews from Nazis, or what reward were Quaker activists seeking when they participated in the Underground Railroad that shuttled escaped slaves from the Ohio River to the Canadian border? Neither were seeking to save their own physical lives. Rather, in both cases, the lives they were seeking to save often belonged to strangers. So at actual risk to themselves, they did what they did because it was the right thing to do at the time.

Is deceit and telling lies to accomplish a greater good the right thing to do? Does the end justify the means as Marxists contend? Or is it *the means* that justifies *the self* before God?

With all solemnity, let it be here again declared that in the Affliction, Sabbatarian disciples will face the question of whether to lie to protect a brother, or to speak forthrightly and betray the brother. The life they seek to save will be their own: to lie will cost them their spiritual life. To betray their brother will also cost them their spiritual life. So the tightrope they will walk will have them not lying and not betraying their brother, with the only end to this tightrope being the loss of their own physical lives. ... In the Affliction, the Christian who will be saved will have to be willing to sacrifice his or her own salvation for another.

Abraham didn't have to sacrifice Isaac even though he was willing to do so—

What would have happened if Abraham hadn't been willing to sacrifice Isaac? Would we be here to ask the question?

When the Second Passover occurs, all of humankind will be delivered into the hand of Sin to be bought and sold as merchandise, except for the oil and the wine, the processed fruits of the Promised Land. And how are these fruits: they are crushed and pressed today, before the Second Passover liberation of Israel. They are figuratively placed between a rock and a hard place [a trite but appropriate expression] and squeezed until the goodness within them comes out. They will, most likely, face situations analogous to what good Dutch citizens faced in dark and dreadful years.

Today, when born of God disciples are covered by grace; when it's easy to do what is right; when a disciple can decide that a greater good will come from doing what Rahab did—today, when the disciple's decision to do what the disciple believes is correct is the wrong decision but not counted against the disciple—today, Sabbatarians betray their brothers, swindle their brothers, bilk their brothers, yet somehow think that God will not require their lives because of His great love for them.

Every *Philadelphian* needs to ask him or herself if he or she would be willing to give up personal salvation for another. If the honest answer is, No, a reasonable answer, then the *Philadelphian* needs to be prepared for a situation like what Rahab faced, knowing that a lie will cost the disciple his salvation and

betraying his brother will cost the disciple his salvation. If, however, the honest answer is, Yes, that love for neighbor and brother requires that the disciple be willing to die for them, even if that death was permanent, then the disciple will most likely never face the particular situation but will be faced with a different situation that equally tests the disciple. And where now mentally addressing the question comes into importance is with the oil and the wine that Sin cannot harm ... if Sin cannot harm a disciple, then protecting another becomes easier; for Sin cannot buy or sell the disciple who refuses to betray his brother or friend. But the amount of faith required for someone without hubris to identify him or herself as oil or wine is exceedingly great. A misidentification will cost the disciple his salvation.

For the Sabbatarian who now mentally addresses what he or she would do in Rahab's situation, the answer is in the ram, which wasn't in evidence when Abraham bound Isaac, and still wasn't in evidence when Abraham raised the knife to plunge it into Isaac. ... Abraham was willing to kill Isaac, and because of that willingness, he didn't have to. Likewise, the Sabbatarian must be willing to give up personal salvation to not have-to.

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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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