

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 to be found so doing.

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

Weekly Readings *For the Sabbath of December 28, 2013*

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.

So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." They answered him, "We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, 'You will become free'?" Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. I know that you are offspring of Abraham; yet you seek to kill me because my word finds no place in you. I speak of what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have heard from your father." They answered him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing the works Abraham did, but now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did. You are doing the works your father did." They said to him, "We were not born of sexual immorality. We have one Father—even God." Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but He sent me. Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. You are of

your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. Which one of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God." (John 8:31–47 emphasis added)

Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word—what is difficult about hearing the word [*o logos*] of Jesus, the word of Him that He left with His disciples, the word that will judge those who do not keep the words [*ta remata*] of Him (John 12:48)? Is it that those who do not hear cannot bear to hear, cannot accept what Jesus said, cannot believe that Jesus said what He allegedly said as recorded in John's Gospel, with perhaps the greatest sticking point being, "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day. It is written in the Prophets, "And they will all be taught by God." Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me" (John 6:44–45).

No one can come to Jesus unless the Father draws the person; *i.e.*, drawing the person from this world, using the blood of Christ to pay the purchase price for this dead soul ... note: the fleshly body of the person isn't purchased from the Adversary by Christ's blood, what the Apostle Paul realized but apparently didn't fully understand:

For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. 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 7:14–25)

The fleshly bodies of *Christians* will be purchased from the Adversary—the present prince of this world and the prince who will exercise dominion over living creatures until the single kingdom of this world is given to the Son of Man halfway through the seven endtime years of tribulation—by the blood [the lives] of uncovered firstborns, legal and biological humans, when death angels pass over the land in the reality that casts as its shadow the first Passover liberation of Israel from slavery in Egypt ...

Narratives constructed in *Hebrew style* are based on chirality, with the left hand enantiomer representing what is physical (as in the hand used to wipe oneself in Semitic cultures) and the right hand enantiomer representing what is of God (what is spiritual). The Passover liberation and exodus of Israel from Egypt under Moses [his name meaning, *son*] is, therefore, the left hand enantiomer of a second Passover liberation and exodus of Israel under the Son of Man, with this Second Passover liberation being from indwelling sin and death, hence a liberation of the flesh from Paul's *law of sin that dwelt in his members*..

Paul wrote,

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—but *God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us*. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by His blood, much more shall we be saved by Him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by His life. (Rom 5:6–10 emphasis added)

Were we weak before we were conceived? No, we didn't exist before we were conceived. Paul's epistles do not support reincarnation, that is immortal souls cycling through many fleshly bodies. What Scripture supports are dead souls; lifeless souls; not immortal souls that need regenerated. What Scripture supports is,

As I live, declares the Lord [*YHWH*], this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. Behold, all souls are mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine: the soul who sins shall die. ... The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor the father suffer for the iniquity of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself. But if a wicked person turns away from all his sins that he has committed and keeps all my statutes and does what is just and right, he shall surely live; he shall not die. None of the transgressions that he has committed shall be remembered against him; for the righteousness that he has done he shall live. (Ezek 18:3–4, 20–22)

If a person is speaking, does the person construct a declaration with the speaker identifying him or herself in the declaration. No, a person does not. Rather, writers construct dialogue such as, “Johnny Football said, ‘I don't know if

I'm coming back next year.” And part of Earnest Hemingway's genius in constructing dialogue was dropping the identifying clause:

And you'll always love me won't you?

Yes.

And the rain won't make any difference?

No. (from *A Farewell to Arms*)

Realistic dialogue has words being spoken, but without identification of the speaker who is known to the person hearing the words spoken. When language was first inscribed, unspoken determinatives were used to identify speakers, what languages were spoken, and the location or occasion of the utterance. When a person who could read for others—most of humanity could not read—the reader would skip the determinatives, and only read aloud the utterance. Thus, a person reading the cited passage from Ezekiel would read aloud, *As I live this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. Behold, all souls are mine. The soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine, and the soul who sins shall die!* (using parataxis).

But I digress: the plot of Nikolai Gogol's novel *Dead Souls* (1842) directly refers to dead serfs, with “soul” being the measure word [census word] then in use for a person, but indirectly the plot features characters with dead interiors, characters personifying aspects of *poshlost*, a Russian word suggesting “commonness” as in a person who eats common meats or has middleclass pretentiousness. And the prophet Ezekiel uses “soul” as a measure word representing a person ... a *soul*—a person—who sins shall die. A *soul* who is a father that sins shall die. A *soul* who is a son that sins shall die. But the *soul* who repents of the *soul's* lawless ways and does what it right shall live.

The soul that dies is not immortal, but is as the fleshly body of a person is—and is the fleshly body of the person, as in Gogol's main character, *Chichikov* [note the doubling in the spelling] purchasing *six souls of serfs*, or *six serfs* ... in Christian symbolism, the Greek letter <X [chī]> has traditionally represented Christ Jesus; so Gogol's original title of his novel—*The Wanderings of Chichikov, or Dead Souls*, Poema—has significance lost in the title's contraction to *Dead Souls*. And the prophet Ezekiel recording the God of Abraham's declaration that *the soul who sins shall die* discloses the left hand enantiomer of a spiritual reality found in Matthew's Gospel, which was according to Bishop Papias written in *Hebrew style*:

When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. Before Him will be gathered all the nations, and He will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And He will place the sheep on His right, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right, “Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you

visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.” Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, “Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?” And the King will answer them, “Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.”

Then He will say to those on His left, “Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.” Then they also will answer, saying, “Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?” Then He will answer them, saying, “Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.” And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life. (Matt 25:31–46)

The soul that feeds the hungry and clothes the naked shall live whereas the soul that prays an hour a day and studies the Bible an hour a day and meditates on the things of God an hour a day and then spends the remainder of this soul’s day working quietly to earn the soul’s own living shall perish. That is correct. The soul that focuses on him or herself focuses on the flesh—and spending an hour a day studying Scripture, an hour a day praying, an hour a day mediating is the epitome of a pious person focusing on the flesh; for God does not need a soul to study for an hour a day for this soul to understand the things of God, to know the things of God. Nor does God need to hear a soul ramble on in prayer for an hour every day, and upon what will the soul mediate when the one who would be saved is busy doing things for others, such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, giving shelter to the homeless—all things that require the soul to focus on others, not on the self or on personal salvation?

The *Parakletos*, the spirit of truth, will teach the soul everything (John 14:26) through giving to the *soul* born of spirit the mind of Christ, which isn’t to say that the soul doesn’t read Scripture but is to say that without the mind of Christ, the soul can read Scripture all day long and come away with no understanding of the things of God. And with the mind of Christ, the soul will not bother reading Scripture to do more than confirm what the soul already knows ...

I spent thirty years faithfully listening to a sermon every Sabbath, seldom missing a Sabbath (when I did miss a Sabbath, I listened to that week’s sermon on cassette tape), checking every Scripture reference in the ninety minute long sermon, and I never, not once, heard it said that in Matthew’s Gospel, the robe Roman soldiers put on Jesus when they mocked Him was scarlet colored whereas in Mark’s Gospel, the cloak—same occasion—was purple. I never once heard it said that the voice from heaven who spoke when Jesus rose from baptism spoke to John the Baptist in Matthew’s Gospel, but spoke to Jesus in Mark’s Gospel. I

never once heard it mentioned that one woman, Mary Magdalene, went to the tomb on the day after the Sabbath in John's Gospel; two women went in Matthew's Gospel; three women went in Mark's Gospel; and a troupe of women went in Luke's Gospel. I never once heard it discussed that the resurrected Jesus telling the Eleven that all authority in heaven and earth had been given Him (Matt 28:18) couldn't possibly take place until the single kingdom of this world is given to Christ Jesus [the Son of Man] halfway through seven endtime years of tribulation (*cf.* Dan 7:9–14; Rev 11:15–18). Why? Why were these and many other subjects avoided? Why was it not realized that the kings of Persia that withstood an angel for twenty-one days were not and could not be human kings, but were demonic kings? Why was it that prophecy pundits continually found Rome, the Roman Empire, the Roman Church, and the Roman see in Daniel's prophecies when Rome isn't anywhere mentioned?

But the question that sits unanswered is, where's justice in the person who has been diligent in showing him or herself able to rightly divide the Word of God perishing when the person who doesn't even know the name of Christ or the Gospel (good news) of His coming will live simply because this latter person took care to provide for the poor and for those not able to provide themselves?

Compare what the author of Hebrews says about faith with your faith?

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For *by it* [faith] *the people of old received their commendation*. By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible. *By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts*. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks. By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now *before he was taken he was commended as having pleased God*. And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who seek Him. *By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world* and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith. (Heb 11:1–7 emphasis added)

Note, because Noah, being warned, constructed an Ark for saving his family, Noah condemned the world that had not prepared a means to save themselves because they did not believe God, or believe that God would do what God had declared to Noah. Today, knowing that the Second Passover will soon occur, the Elect prepare for the tribulation as best they can and thereby condemn the unprepared world that doesn't believe God ... it wasn't God that Noah's neighbors heard deliver a warning about what was soon to happen; it was Noah delivering this warning that his neighbors heard and mocked and thus condemned themselves.

By faith that led to the man Job being perfect in all his ways, Job was commended—his righteousness recorded—and Job thereby received the reward due him for his faith as did righteous Abel ... when there is no living inner self, no living soul, commendation for righteousness by faith doesn't come in the form of indwelling eternal life—giving to the soul an *immortal soul*—but inscription in Holy Writ; for eternal life is a gift from God in Christ Jesus (Rom 6:23). The Father's words are eternal life (John 12:50), with His words delivered through modulations of His breath as human words are delivered by modulations of physical breath, with Jesus receiving the Father's words that He delivered to His disciples. However, it must be remembered, the Father's words are *too large* to be conveyed by modulations of human breath: their excess *size* form the miracles that Jesus worked.

Without similar miracles—or even greater works than the miracles Jesus did—Jesus' disciples cannot speak the words of God the Father, but can only mumble their own pious words.

Remember, the sheep feed the hungry as Jesus fed the five thousand. The sheep are not focusing on themselves, on their salvation, on their righteousness, on their Bible study, prayer, and mediation. Rather the sheep are out doing, getting about their business of figuratively building their own Arks and thereby condemning the world for its unbelief.

For far too long, Sabbatarian Christians have quibbled about how to pronounce the name of Jesus rather than focusing on doing miracles, doing greater works than Jesus did. How sad. But I suspect that is the way it has to be.

Sabbatarians tend to treat the fossilized shadow of God's utterances as the utterances themselves, not realizing that their salvation is not dependent upon whether they keep the Sabbath (what all who have the mind of Christ will do) or on how they utter Jesus' name in their bastardized Hebrew, but is entirely dependent on them doing the work of God in remembering the poor, feeding the hungry, giving shelter to the homeless. Their salvation is dependant upon them being found working—doing work that typifies having love for neighbor and brother—when Christ returns.

In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus warned His disciples about the leavening [sinful teachings] of the Pharisees and Sadducees ... how many hours a day did Pharisees pray? How many times a week did they fast? How large were their offerings? Was not their focus on themselves and their salvation? Is that not the focus of the Sabbatarian Christian who faithfully studies the Bible for one hour every day? It is, really it is. So keep your Bible close at hand—I have worn out many—but set your hand at serving the needy; for the Bible cannot and does not fully convey the words of Christ Jesus, let alone the words of God the Father, your Father and my Father.

Get up off your knees, turn on the lights, and get to work preparing for what is certain to occur; for it will be your responsibility to feed and shelter those who didn't believe God ... you will not be sealed in an Ark so that you cannot hear the screams of neighbors when the Second Passover liberation of Israel occurs. You

will not only hear their pleas, you will comfort them in the hour of their distress, or you simply aren't worthy of the name of Christ.

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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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