

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 the Feast of Trumpets is the plan of God

High Sabbath Readings **For services on Trumpets, October 1, 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 services should read or assign to be read Leviticus chapter 23, verses 23 through 25, followed by Numbers chapter 29, verses 1 through 6, and Hebrews chapter 8, verses 1 through 7.

Commentary: Employing the same logic used by the visible Christian Church to support its neglect of the weekly Sabbath, Christendom tends to label the High Sabbaths as “Jewish” days that Christians do not need to observe. What is of Moses, according to popular Christian teachers, no longer pertains to born anew disciples of Christ Jesus. But the writer of Hebrews labels those things of Moses a copy and shadow (Heb 8:5) of invisible spiritual realities, thereby making the things of Moses the dark glass through which disciples view the things of God.

The Apostle Paul writes that the invisible things of God are known by the visible things that have been made (Rom 1:20), and that the physical things of this world precede the spiritual things of God (1 Cor 15:46). Elsewhere Paul writes that festivals, new moons, and Sabbaths of God are, collectively, “a shadow of the things to come,” with the substance belonging to Christ (Col 2:17) ... disciples form the Body of Christ and are individually members of this one Body (1 Cor 12:27) that is also the temple of God (1 Cor 3:16–17; 2 Cor 6:16), the temple that will be built in three days (John 2:20). These disciples will become the Bride of Christ, the New Jerusalem that will come down from heaven after the thousand years (Rev 21:2, 9–11).

Solomon dedicated the first temple in the seventh month: “At that time Solomon held the feast for seven days, and all Israel with him, a very great assembly, from Lebo-hamath to the Brook of Egypt. And on the eight days they held a solemn assembly, for they kept the dedication of the altar seven days and the feast seven days. On the twenty-third day of the seventh month he sent the people away to their homes, joyful and glad of heart for the prosperity that the

Lord had granted to David and to Solomon and to Israel his people” (2 Chron 7:8–10).

The dedication of the first temple forms the shadow and copy of the dedication of disciples as the temple of God when the glorified Jesus returns as the Messiah: it is the visible representation of the invisible dedication of the temple of God, which now moves the Feast of Trumpets and *Yom Kipporim* into the period immediately preceding the dedication of the temple—for Solomon and all of the people of Israel celebrated the dedication of the temple for the full seven days of Tabernacles, the 15th through the 21st, with the 22nd being the Last Great Day, the solemn assembly of the eighth day.

As addressed in the spring readings for this year, *Yom Kipporim* forms a compression of the Passover season, that period when Israel is to afflict itself through eating the bread of affliction [unleavened bread] (Deut 16:3). *Yom Kipporim* represents the entire period from when Jesus entered Jerusalem on the 10th day of the first month as the selected Lamb of God through when He is raised from the dead, breathes on His disciples and tells them to *Receive the Holy Spirit* (John 20:22), and on to when disciples have their judgments revealed. Thus, *Yom Kipporim* forms the shadow of the entirety of the Christian or Church era, beginning with Jesus entering Jerusalem through the last year of the seven endtime years of tribulation. The revealing of judgments, with some disciples resurrected to glory and some to condemnation (John 5:28–29), followed by the Wedding Supper and here on earth, the millennial reign of Christ, followed then by the great White Throne Judgment after the Thousand Years—all of what happens after the glorified Jesus returns as the Messiah is represented by Solomon’s dedication of the temple, with those individuals who are resurrected to condemnation at the beginning equating to the livestock Solomon sacrificed at the dedication, a subject to which this reading will return.

The narrative break represented by the four days between *Yom Kipporim* and the beginning of Tabernacles equates to the last of the Tribulation. For today’s Israel, physically and spiritually circumcised, the last of the Tribulation—especially the last 1260 days—will be compressed into that period between death and resurrection, a period of figurative sleep when the person knows nothing. Those of Israel who have been born of spirit will have judgments revealed when awakened, whereas those who have not been born of spirit will be resurrected to enter into judgment in the great White Throne Judgment.

Every person born of the first Adam will also be born of the last Adam once—and when so born, judgment will be upon the person. For those who have been called as firstfruits and born as fruit before its season [the meaning of the parable of the fig tree] are today under judgment: we are either as Jesus’ disciples were who followed Him or as that fig tree was, which when Jesus was hungry he went to see if he could find any fruit on it (Mark 11:13), but found none because it was not yet the season for figs. Jesus then cursed the tree, a physically irrational act that has symbolic value.

Pause for a moment and consider what Jesus did when He cursed the tree and what He said when He and His disciples passed the tree the following day:

As they passed by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered away to its roots. And Peter remembered and said to him, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree that you cursed has withered.” And Jesus answered them, “Have faith in God. Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and thrown into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.” (Mark 11:20–25)

Why would anyone curse a tree because it doesn’t bear fruit before its time, unless it should have borne fruit when Jesus sought fruit on it before its time for fruit? When the Father draws a person from this world before this world is baptized into life through having the Holy Spirit being poured out on all flesh [poured out in a manner similar to how the waters of Noah’s Flood covered the earth], the person is like one of Jesus first disciples. This person is to bear fruit for God. So when Jesus calls for fruit and no fruit is forthcoming, the person is of no value or use to Jesus: the person doesn’t bear fruit before the season for fruit. Thus, the person is cursed, withers and dies spiritually; for the person who is called to bear fruit before the season for fruit needs forgiveness of sin. This person needs faith, needs to believe that whatever is asked will be received. The person is like a fig tree that either does or doesn’t bear fruit before its season; i.e., before the Holy Spirit is poured out on all flesh. The tree that doesn’t give forth fruit upon demand is not being unreasonable, or acting in any way but the way of nature. And therein is the key to understanding the lesson of the withered fig tree: when a person is drawn by the Father from this world, the person is to immediately bring forth fruit worthy of this high calling. This fruit might lack size or flavor, but fruit was produced when Jesus asked for fruit. The person who is all leafy vegetation, who professes to be a Christian but who brings forth no fruit will be cursed and will wither and die spiritually.

Disciples will be resurrected to life or to condemnation when judgments are revealed. Both the disciples who are resurrected to life and those who are resurrected to condemnation have been born of spirit, but the former disciples will have brought forth fruit out of season whereas the latter disciples will have produced no fruit for it was not the season for fruit to borne naturally.

- Being one of the firstfruits, with Christ Jesus being the First of these firstfruits, requires the person to bear fruit before the season for fruit—requires the person to bear fruit when Jesus looks to find fruit.
- There will be a time or a season for all of humankind to bear fruit for Christ: this season is the Millennium, the Thousand Years when the glorified Jesus will reign over humankind as King of kings and Lord of lords.

If *Yom Kipporim* represents compression of that period which includes all of the Church era, the period immediately preceding the dedication of the temple, and if Sukkot represents the dedication of the temple and the millennial reign of Christ, what does Trumpets represent? Why is there a high Sabbath that

represents a shadow of Christ before the Passover narrative begins? And answers for this question will today be sought, but answers that might not come as this reading becomes an exploration of the question.

Disciples do not today see Christ Jesus with their eyes. He is not a high priest that can be seen by making a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. That Jesus is Israel's high priest must be accepted by faith. That He sits at the right hand of the Father interceding on behalf of disciples must be accepted on faith. The only way disciples have of "observing" what Jesus does for them is through comprehending His shadow, circumcised Israel's high priest (Heb 8:4–5). Likewise, the only way disciples have of seeing themselves as the holy nation of God, a royal priesthood called for service (1 Pet 2:9-10), is through comprehending the responsibilities of the Levitical priesthood, which had no inheritance in Israel but relied upon the Lord. Levites had no root in Judean soils, for their root was the Lord.

The above seems unusually difficult for endtime Christians to perceive: born of spirit Christians form the reality foreshadowed by the Levitical priesthood. Jesus was not a Levite and as such could not serve as a priest in this world. But prophets were called from any peoples. Jesus identified Himself as a prophet, and Moses told Israel that,

The Lord [*YHWH*] your God [*Elohim*] will raise up a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen—just as you desired of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, "Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God or see this great fire any more, lest I die."
(Deut 18:15–16)

Having heard the Lord speak the ten living words or Ten Commandments at Horeb or Sinai, Israel did not want to again hear the voice of the Lord. The nation wanted a man to intercede on its behalf. That man was initially Moses, but became Jesus of Nazareth, who came as a prophet. His calling was that of a prophet. His vocation was that of a prophet. But His ancestry was that of *the Logos* entering His creation as His only Son.

Jesus was born into the tribe of Judah as a descendant of ancient king David. In this world, Jesus could not serve in the temple, nor serve anywhere as a priest of Israel. He could only serve the Most High as *the prophet that was like Moses, the prophet that would speak directly with God face to face, the prophet to whom Israel was to listen, the prophet whose voice would not frighten Israel or cause Israel to believe the nation would die when hearing the words of the Most High*. And as it turned out, Jesus spoke in so soft a voice that He was not recognized by Israel as the promised prophet.

The descendants of the tribe of Levi were "in their world, but not of their world" in the same way that disciples are separate from this world (John 17:11, 16). Again, the Levitical priesthood had no inheritance in their world; Levites did not fight with swords against the enemies of Israel. They did not rule with might over the lands of Israel. They were not kings. Rather, they were given to God as the ransom price for the firstborns of Israel; they were given to God to serve Him in the land of Israel and to serve in first the tabernacle then in the

temple. And they were to blow the trumpets announcing the beginning of the seventh month.

A prophet today, if Christ were to call a prophet, would follow in Jesus' footsteps, walking as Jesus walked (1 John 2:3–6), imitating Jesus as Paul imitated Jesus (1 Cor 11:1; Phil 3:17); he or she would speak the words of Jesus as He spoke the words of the Father. This prophet would be in this world, but not of this world. He or she would speak in *public space*. This speech would be "political," but without a political agenda and without imposition of any political action. This prophet would be like a Levite blowing the *shofar*, the horn blown on Trumpets [*Rosh Hashanah*] and *Yom Kipporim*, the horn or trumpet that sounded at Sinai when the mountain was wrapped in smoke and the Lord descended on it in fire (Ex 19:19; 20:18).

The blowing of the *shofar* preceded Israel hearing with ears the law of God that was to have entered this nation's hearts and minds. Likewise, the blowing of the *shofar* on *Rosh Hashanah* announced the jubilee year, with the blowing of the *shofar* on *Yom Kipporim* of this jubilee year proclaiming the actual release of debt.

- Again, *Yom Kipporim* represents the compressed Church era beginning with Christ's selection as the Passover Lamb of God.
- Salvation represents Israel's release from debt—

Paul writes,

And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, *by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands*. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. (Col 2:13–14 emphasis added)

Because Christ Jesus cancelled the debt all of Israel owed to God for the nation's collective and individual transgression of the law, the year in which the reality of *Yom Kipporim* now exists is the jubilee year, with this seen when Jesus entered the temple in the first year of His ministry:

The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there. And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and oxen. And he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. And he told those who sold the pigeons, "Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade." His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me."

So the Jews said to him, "What sign do you show us for doing these things?" Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?" But he was speaking about the temple of his body. When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken. (John 2:13–22)

Jesus would not be crucified for three more years: add these three years to the 46 years it took to build Herod's temple, and 49+ years will have passed. From the perspective of the temple, Israel had entered into the jubilee year, the year when slaves would be freed and debts cancelled. So using Christ as the reality foreshadowed by the festivals, new moons, and Sabbath—and remembering that disciples form the Body of Christ, with Jesus being the now glorified Head—the release from debt foreshadowed by both Passover (the entire period when unleavened bread is eaten) and Pentecost (moved into the Passover Sabbath period in the compression of this period) is represented by the blowing of the *shofar* on *Yom Kipporim*, with Sukkot to represent the dedication of the temple and Christ's millennial reign. Glorified disciples will now be the kings and lords over whom the glorified Jesus reigns as King of kings and Lord of lords.

Time [i.e., days] is not spiritually reckoned by the setting of the sun, but by those occasions when the Lord enters into His creation. The one long spiritual night as well as one long jubilee year began at Calvary. The midnight hour of this long spiritual night will see the death angel Passover over the world, slaying firstborns not covered by the Lamb of God, the event that will begin the seven endtime years of tribulation. "Day" or the hot portion of this spiritual day doesn't begin until the single kingdom of this world becomes the kingdom of the Most High and His Christ (Rev 11:15; Dan 7:9–14), thereby beginning Christ's millennial reign. And the one long spiritual year of jubilee will not end until Christ's millennial reign begins.

Shofars can be made from the horn of any member of the *Bovidae* family except cattle ... in nature, horns and antlers have similar display and defense purposes, but antlers are mostly solid and are shed every year whereas horns are hollow with an antler-like core. Horns are made from keratin, the same material as human fingernails. But it is the role of horns in defense of the animal that carries spiritual significance, for Israel's watchman was to blow the *shofar* when this watchman saw the sword coming against the land or the nation (Ezek 33:2–6).

Blowing the *shofar* or trumpet was the primary responsibility of the watchman and the defense strategy of the nation. The prophet called by the Lord to speak in *public spaces* warns Israel of the sword about to come upon the nation ... it is neither the prophet's nor the watchman's responsibility to organize the defense of the nation or to swing the sword in defense of the nation. Rather, the prophet's or watchman's responsibility ends when the warning has been delivered.

Trumpets or *Yom Teru'ah* is about warning Israel that a sword will come upon the nation for its rebellion against God. Trumpets is about the prophet delivering his or her message of repentance.

Christ's disciples are not male or female, Jew or Greek (Gal 3:28); yet the person born of the water of the womb is born male or female and will throughout his or her life remain male or female, regardless of even sexual reassignment. The flesh is biologically male or female. The person is culturally Jew or Gentile. The person is socially bond or free. No person in the flesh can escape these designations: the person who was a slave can become free as the

uncircumcised Greek can be outwardly circumcised. Even the biological plumbing of a person can be changed. But these changes will still leave the person male or female, Jew or Gentile, bond or free. Thus, the son of God (v. 26) that is not male or female, Jew or Greek, bond or free cannot be of the flesh or of this world, but rather, must be of spirit; i.e., born of spirit that has come from God.

The born-of-spirit son of God has come from God to dwell in a tent of flesh and to serve God from within this tent of flesh as a Levite came from the dust of the ground to serve God from within the tabernacle of fabric in the wilderness.

The principle responsibility of the Levitical priesthood was temple service, but as previously stated, today disciples are the temple of God, and their principal responsibility is to serve God. The new creature, born of spirit as a son of God, born as *a firstborn son* dwelling within the fleshly tabernacle of a *Christian* is analogous to a Levitical priest serving in the tabernacle in the wilderness ... the tabernacle was replaced by the temple: collectively, the fleshly tabernacles in which the spiritually circumcised new creatures dwell will become the heavenly temple, new Jerusalem, the Bride of Christ. Today, these fleshly tabernacles (i.e., the collective bodies of disciples) form the stones and timbers that are analogous to the off-site shaped stones and timbers from which Solomon's temple was constructed. The yet unassembled temple of the Most High in heavenly Jerusalem will not be put together until judgments are revealed; so disciples are now as the stones were that formed the physical house of God, the first temple, in that disciples are being shaped and sculpted with hard tools here on earth in anticipation of glorification. When these disciples are glorified, they will be assembled without the equivalent of the sound of iron on stone being heard. Those disciples who are of Philadelphia will be pillars (Rev 3:12). The forming of them into pillars will be accomplished prior to their resurrection or change.

The two stone tablets upon which the commandments of God were written by the finger of *YHWH* [singular in usage] were not first sheltered in a stone temple. Rather, they were, along with Aaron's budded staff and the jar of manna placed in the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of the holies in a perishable tent of fabric ... this perishable tent is analogous to the physical bodies of disciples, with the two tablets of stone analogous to the hearts and minds of the disciples, making the Ark of the Covenant a spiritual "shell" within the person. This spiritual shell is constructed from the unbreakable promises of the Most High, not from wood or the perishable things of this world.

When the Ark of the Covenant is constructed from promises and not from wood as was Noah's Ark that brought the Eight from the first world into the land of death—or from wood as was the Ark of the Covenant Moses built according to the instructions given him—then when these promises are fulfilled they are no longer within the Ark but form the structure of the Ark. Aaron's budded staff forms the shadow and type of the promise of resurrection from the dead; therefore, when a person is raised from "the dead" by the Father giving the person life (John 5:21) the promise made by the buds on Aaron's staff has been fulfilled within the person.

- This person who was once dead spiritually has been made alive so that this new creature can be grafted onto the Root of Righteousness.
- This new creature dwells within the same tent of flesh as the old *self* or *old man*, but dwells as a firstborn son, the firstborn son of God.
- The lawlessness of this firstborn son will now be *passed over* when the Passover sacraments are taken on the night that Jesus was betrayed; for it is by the cup representing Christ's blood being poured out that forgiveness of sins comes to this tent of flesh (Matt 26:28).

The Ark transported Noah, a preacher of righteousness, through the many days of the world's baptism into death when water covered the surface of this planet. Most of humankind does not today believe the Flood narrative, but believes instead that the flood described in Genesis is a myth addressing a local phenomenon. This same *most of humankind* also disbelieves the great life spans of the pre-Flood patriarchs, believing instead that the present life span of human beings (approximately 120 years) is a defining characteristic of the species while knowing that truly long life is biologically possible if the body did not kill itself. Thus, the "evidence" of death itself being the constant companion of every person is not, for this same *most of humankind*, sufficient evidence that at some previous time all living creatures were baptized into death, or evidence that the universe is a glorious death chamber.

Disciples in North America are either in or approaching the time of year when leaves turn yellow, red, orange, brown leaving vistas of color—and death—along highways and byways. Grains are gone to seed; corn (maize) is being harvested. Fruit has been borne. The growing season is over. Winter will soon settle over hillsides, filling valleys with drifted snow. The evidence of death will be everywhere. But if this evidence of *death* being the traveling companion of every person is not enough evidence to persuade reluctant human beings that the world has been baptized into death, then another baptism becomes necessary: a baptism into "life" so that a distinction is made between those who have *life* and those who are still subject to *death*.

Does that make sense? If a person cannot now see that this world has been baptized into death, with every living thing that has life subject to dying and *knowing* for certain that it will die, what will convince a person that the world was baptized into death in the days of Noah? Certainly not more death, for death is the expectation of every person. More death will increase sorrow, but will not cause anyone to believe in God or to even repent of his or her rebellion against God. If anything, more death will only increase the rebels' determination to continue in their rebellion. Only baptism into life will break this expectation of death that actually promotes rebellion.

And halfway through seven endtime years of tribulation, the world will be baptized into *life*; i.e., into the divine breath of God [πνεῦμα θεοῦ]. The spirit of God will be poured out on all flesh (Joel 2:28), thereby changing even the natures of the great predators (Isa 11:6–9) as these natures were changed when the world was baptized into death. Human nature will be changed.

However, before the world is baptized into life Israel will be baptized into life through being filled with or empowered by the Holy Spirit, with this liberation from indwelling sin and death coming at the beginning of the seven endtime

years of tribulation ... Israel will become a nation of watchmen, a nation of prophets, and most of this nation will rebel against God at a time when no sacrifice remains for the nation.

The reality of *Yom Teru'ah* begins with the Lord calling watchmen or prophets to warn Israel to repent of its lawlessness.

Because human beings intuitively suspect that true *life* exists, humankind has been quick to believe that men and women are born with immortal souls, received from the first Adam whom they claim received an immortal soul when *Elohim* [singular in usage] breathed into the nostrils of the lifeless man of mud. Unfortunately, those who teach any form of this are poor readers of Scripture, for the man and the woman were driven from the Garden of God before either ate of the Tree of Life. They had no “life” when they were driven from God’s presence to work the dust of the earth from which they were taken. They were “dead” even though they were still air-breathing human beings.

The presence of *breath* is not evidence of *life*, an apparently contradictory statement that demands an explanation:

- The presence of physical breath is not evidence of an immortal soul, but rather, evidence of on-going cellular oxidation of sugars that permits electrical activity within the brain that permits conscious awareness of thoughts.
- The presence of the Holy Spirit [πνευμα ἅγιον] dwelling within the flesh is not evidence that the flesh has put on immortality, but rather, evidence that *life* now dwells within a perishable house.
- The presence of the Holy Spirit is evidence that the Father has raised the person from the dead, but the Son now must also give this person life: both the Father and the Son must give life to a person before the person will truly have *life* (John 5:21).
- The Son will or will not give *life* to a person who has been made *alive* by the Father when judgments are revealed, for the Father has given all judgment to the Son.
- The Father gives life to a person so that the person can come under judgment.
- Until the person is made spiritually alive by the Father, the person is as Adam and Eve were when they were driven from the Garden. The person is a *nephesh* as air-breathing beasts are *nephesh*.
- Once the Father has given life to a person, the person is as Jesus was when the Holy Spirit [πνευμα θεου] descended upon Him as a dove.
- The old self must die as a human being would literally die if going forty (40) days without food or water.
- Then the new self must overcome the Adversary as Jesus overcame Satan, for Christ now dwells within the disciple through the presence of His spirit [πνευμα Χριστου].

When a disciple has experienced the death of the old self and has struggled against the Adversary, overcoming him through living “by every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Matt 4:4), by not putting “the Lord your God to the test” (v. 7), by not worshipping or serving any god but the Lord (v. 10),

then the disciple will be one with Jesus as Jesus was when He began His ministry ... Sabbatarian disciples know to live by every word that comes from the mouth of God. They are not ignorant. They know to keep the commandments by faith even when they fail to do so perfectly. They know to keep the Sabbaths of God, both the weekly Sabbath and the annual Sabbaths. They know to be bodily present before the Lord on this day. But far too many Sabbatarian disciples are quick to “test” God —

Moses was given instructions by the Lord on how to build the Ark of the Covenant, and how to build the tabernacle in which the Ark would dwell. But the essential point Moses made that there would arise from Israel a prophet like him cannot be forgotten: it is this later prophet who will place the two tablets of flesh upon which are written the laws of God inside spiritual arks of the covenant made from *promise*. It is this latter prophet who transformed Moses saying, “You shall not put the Lord [YHWH] your God [Elohim] to the test, as you tested him at Massah” (Deut 6:16) into the simple citation, “*You shall not put the Lord your God to the test*” (Matt 4:7).

The name Massah [מסה] means testing ... any testing of God is a challenge to God. Demanding a sign is an act not of faith and as such is an affront to God. There is no exception made for what the prophet Malachi records when he writes,

For I the Lord do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed. From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from my statutes and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you, says the Lord of hosts. But you say, “How shall we return?” Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, “How have we robbed you?” In your tithes and contributions. You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me, the whole nation of you. *Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need.* I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of your soil, and your vine in the field shall not fail to bear, says the Lord of hosts. Then all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a land of delight, says the Lord of hosts. (3:6–12 emphasis added)

Your words have been hard against me, says the Lord. But you say, “How have we spoken against you?” You have said, “It is vain to serve God. What is the profit of our keeping his charge or of walking as in mourning before the Lord of hosts? And now we call the arrogant blessed. *Evildoers not only prosper but they put God to the test and they escape.*” (3:13–15 emphasis added)

Evildoers have been putting God to the test and seeming to escape His wrath when doing so. These evildoers are like Israel was after Massah: nothing seemed to have changed. Water flowed from the rock. Thirsts were quenched. Everything was going along fairly well considering the size of the nation crossing desert lands.

But all was not well! A tally of testing was being kept: when Israel rebelled in the wilderness, the nation was condemned to death.

And the Lord said to Moses, “How long will this people despise me? And how long will they not believe in me, in spite of all the signs that I have done among them? I will strike them with the pestilence and disinherit them, and I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they.” (Numbers 14:11–12)

But Moses said to the Lord, “Then the Egyptians will hear of it, for you brought up this people in your might from among them, and they will tell the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that you, O Lord, are in the midst of this people. For you, O Lord, are seen face to face, and your cloud stands over them and you go before them, in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night. Now if you kill this people as one man, then the nations who have heard your fame will say, ‘It is because the Lord was not able to bring this people into the land that he swore to give to them that he has killed them in the wilderness.’ And now, please let the power of the Lord be great as you have promised, saying, ‘The Lord is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, forgiving iniquity and transgression, but he will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, to the third and the fourth generation.’ Please pardon the iniquity of this people, according to the greatness of your steadfast love, just as you have forgiven this people, from Egypt until now.” (vv. 13–19)

Then the Lord said, “I have pardoned, according to your word. But truly, as I live, and as all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord, *none of the men who have seen my glory and my signs that I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and yet have put me to the test these ten times and have not obeyed my voice, shall see the land that I swore to give to their fathers.* And none of those who despised me shall see it. But my servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit and has followed me fully, I will bring into the land into which he went, and his descendants shall possess it. (vv. 20–24 emphasis added)

Ten tests or challenges to God and then death: how many times have Sabbatarian Christians individually or collectively tested God? Ten times? At what point will God reject this holy people? Or has He already rejected this holy nation, with that rejection coming long ago when He delivered the Church into the hand of the Adversary for the destruction of the flesh?

The Lord told the prophet Malachi:

Then those who feared the Lord spoke with one another. The Lord paid attention and heard them, and a book of remembrance was written before him of those who feared the Lord and esteemed his name. “They shall be mine, says the Lord of hosts, in the day when I make up my treasured possession, and I will spare them as a man spares his son who serves him. Then once more you shall see

the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve him.” (3:16–18)

It is evildoers who test God, asking for a blessing for doing what should be done by faith [e.g., tithing]. The problem is the asking for a tit-for-tat exchange: obedience on the part of the disciple for physical things in this world. **Obedience is the reasonable expectation of all who are sons of God.** If a person faithfully practices obedience, the person has no need to bargain with God—the bargaining is a manifestation of a weakness of faith, a failure of faith. And it will be overlooked (but remembered) for a while. For how many times, ten—this is the number stated in the shadow or type.

It should never be said of any disciple that the person tested God, but such testing or challenging of God will occur. When it does, understand that it is from a weakness of faith within the person, a weakness that will be ignored or overlooked for a while but not forever.

When Solomon brought the Ark of the Covenant to the newly constructed temple in Jerusalem, there was nothing in the Ark except the two tablets of stone (2 Chron 5:10). The promise of resurrection in the form of Aaron’s budded staff and the bread that had come down from heaven were missing, a significant point that too often gets overlooked in theological discussions; for the first temple was a shadow and type of the spiritual second temple, constructed from the firstfruits of Israel being resurrected to glory, with Christ Jesus as the First of these firstfruits. Thus, Solomon’s construction of and dedication of the first temple serve as physical equivalents to the birth, maturation, and resurrection of the firstfruits to either condemnation or glorification, with those who are resurrected to condemnation being analogous to the livestock Solomon sacrificed: “Then the king and all the people offered sacrifice before the Lord. King Solomon offered as a sacrifice 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep. So the king and all the people dedicated the house of God” (2 Chron 7:4–5).

The first temple was not built from raw stone and logs, but built from worked stone and shaped timbers. The birth by spirit of a son of God—this son one of the firstfruits, or firstborns, with Jesus of Nazareth as the First of these firstfruits—is analogous to the selection of a raw block of stone, with this raw stone being part of one lump, or one quarry. The Apostle Paul writes, “Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honored use and another for dishonorable use” (Rom 9:21). His question can be extended: has the master stone mason no right to make from the same granite outcropping one block to be part of the temple and one block to be broken when the temple is dedicated? Has God no right to draw from humanity one person to be a first born son and to draw from humanity another person to be a sacrifice, a vessel of wrath prepared for destruction?

Democracy says, *NO, God does not have that right! Every person must be treated equally.* But the thoughts of humankind, the thoughts of the spiritual king of Greece are not the thoughts of the Most High, who has reserved to Himself the right to do as He pleases.

Christ, however, is not a respecter of persons: when a person is placed on that master potter’s wheel and is being “centered,” the person has free will. The person “tells” the potter what can be made of the person, and the potter believes

the person ... by how “workable” the clay is, the clay tells the potter whether a vessel for honored usage or a vessel of wrath can be made from that portion of the single lump of humanity then being worked. Once the shaping begins, once rotational symmetry is obtained by the potter, the person’s exercise of free will ends: the potter shapes the person into a vessel for honorable usage, or into a vessel of wrath prepared for destruction, both categories of vessels needful to fulfill Scripture (John 17:12).

- When centered on that Master Potter’s wheel, a person tests the Lord’s resolve to make from the person a vessel for honored usage—
- If the person cannot be “worked” or is too stiff or too soft to be shaped into a vessel for honored use, the person is made into a vessel of wrath.
- Could the Potter make from the clay any vessel He chooses? Yes, but no, not if He allows the person to exercise his or her own free will.

When first born of spirit—when a spiritual infant too young to deceive or to be filled with guile—the new creature has free will and can, by faith, choose to keep the commandments and thereby circumcise the heart. Or the new creature can maintain that the commandments have been fulfilled by Jesus and as such do not have to be obeyed. This new creature will now practice lawlessness and thereby demonstrate that this new creature is really a son of the devil (1 John 3:8–10), patterned after the fallen angels.

Either choice or option—obedience or disobedience—is available to the newly born son of God. One option has to be selected, for to not select obedience is to select disobedience. But this new creature, an infant in Christ, loses its free will after a selection is made. This new creature doesn’t get the option of changing its mind once obedience has been chosen, for this new creature is shaped by Christ into a vessel for honored usage (because the new creature spurns those things that are dishonorable). This doesn’t mean, however, that the person doesn’t sin or isn’t disobedient. Rather, this means that the person will be brought into obedience by Christ regardless of how far this son of God seems to stray from the expectations of the household of God.

The new creature that is shaped by Christ into a vessel of wrath, endured for a season but slated for destruction when judgments are revealed and the temple dedicated, didn’t love righteousness enough to desire to do what is *right* when first born of spirit. Paul suggests in his epistle to Timothy that if this person will turn from doing what is dishonorable that this new creature can still be shaped into a vessel intended for honored usage. However, such turning from disobedience is extremely rare: the reality of Christendom is that once a person commits to disobedience, the person rarely leaves disobedience, with transgression of the Sabbath being the foremost example.

- Christendom is not about a person choosing Christ to be the person’s personal savior, but about the Father choosing the person to be a firstborn son of God, one of the firstfruits, one with Christ Jesus, the First of the firstfruits.
- Christendom is not about democracy, but about a theocracy in which a person [i.e., the tent of flesh] is as an “impressed” seaman made to serve *obedience* or allowed to continue in *disobedience*.

Once the Father has drawn the person from this world and given to the person spiritual life through receipt of His divine breath [πνεῦμα θεοῦ], the person has for a short while free will: the person will outwardly choose to live by the commandments, thereby making a journey of faith equivalent in length to Abraham's physical journey of faith from Ur of the Chaldeans to the Promised Land of Canaan. Or the person will choose to continue living as a Gentile. And whichever choice the person makes, the person will live with that choice, for Christ Jesus as the Master Potter will sculpt the person into what the person chose.

Is this simple enough to understand? The controversy between grace and free will can always be reduced to what does the lump of clay tell the Potter when the clay is first centered on the wheel. If the new creature tells the Potter that this son of God wants to be obedient, then this new creature will eventually be obedient even if some detours from that path are taken prior to when judgments are revealed. But if the new creature insists upon its democratic right to determine good and evil for itself, then this new creature is crafted into a sheep or a goat to be sacrificed when judgments are revealed.

Christ doesn't argue with the new creature, doesn't beat this new creature into submission. He doesn't take free will from this spiritual infant. Rather, He honors the decision made even if He regrets that decision; for neither the Father nor the Son is in the business of creating more Adversaries. If the new creature doesn't want to be one with Christ as Christ is one with the Father, no one will compel this new creature to keep the commandments or to become spiritually circumcised or to bear fruit out of season. Instead, the Father and the Son will allow this new creature to continue in its lawlessness until death takes life from the flesh. This new creature will then be resurrected to condemnation when judgments are revealed, and will be resurrected to condemnation before faithful disciples are resurrected to glory. Thus, the spiritual life of the lawless disciple will be lost in the dedication of the glorified temple—lost as the reality foreshadowed by 22,000 bulls and 120,000 sheep being sacrificed when the first temple was dedicated.

Christendom should not be deceived: no *Christian* who teaches disciples to transgress or ignore the commandments will be glorified. All such *Christians* will be denied when judgments are revealed (Matt 7:21–23); for there will be no arguing with Christ, no trying to explain what was really meant, no justifying teaching disciples that they did not have to keep the law because Jesus kept the law. Such *Christians* will be as tares gathered and burned before the wheat is harvested (Matt 13:40–43). And today, such *Christians* seem everywhere; seem to be the entirety of the Church. They seem to define Christendom, but about them, Jesus said that *many are called but few shall be chosen* (Matt 22:14).

The *Christian* who will not bear fruit when Jesus asks for fruit from this person will be cursed by Jesus, will wither, and will die, no exceptions made.

Many self-identified *Christians* are truly born of spirit, having real life in the heavenly realm. And of these “many,” only a few will be glorified. These many will not, by faith, keep the commandments even though Jesus through His spirit [πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ] dwells within them (Rom 8:9). These many are not in services today, and in their prayers they will today appear before God empty,

without an offering, that offering being bringing the tabernacle of flesh into God's presence.

- They will again test the Lord.
- They will not live by every word that has proceeded from the mouth of the Lord.
- They worship another god other than the Lord; they worship the prince of this world.

Most of Christendom has transformed the forty days when Jesus fasted without food and water into their personal death sentences for they have tried to live without eating of Jesus, the bread of life, or drinking of Jesus, the cup poured out for many for the forgiveness of sin. They have not gone without food or drink, but have eaten at another table and drank from another cup ... they drink from the cup of demons (1 Cor 10:21–22).

Test the Lord; demand of Him a sign. See if He will not give you that sign as the men of Israel demanded meat and were given quail—and were slain by the Lord while the meat was yet between their teeth (Num 11:33). This is what testing God is all about.

Again, demand a sign of the Lord. Demand that Christ gives you a sign as to whether you should be in services today. See what happens. What do you think Korah thought when he was sentenced to death in the wilderness of Paran, when he heard that he would not enter the Promised Land? Did he blame Moses? Is this what led him to challenging Moses and Aaron?

No person who practices sin is of God. No person who routinely breaks the Sabbath is of God. No “Christian” is truly a *Christian* if he or she routinely practices disobedience ... can this “Christian” repent of his or her disobedience and leave off doing those things that are dishonorable? Paul says, yes, the person can. Yes, a “Christian” can cease his or her most obvious form of law-breaking and begin to keep the Sabbaths of God, weekly and annual.

But our “Christian” won't!

The evidence that Christ sculpts newly born sons of God into vessels of wrath or vessels for honored usage is the excuses used by most “Christians” for why they do not have to keep the commandments, especially the Sabbaths of God. The common excuses are without rhetorical merit when the law of God moves from being inscribed on two stone tablets under the old written code to being inscribed on two tablets of flesh under the new covenant (*cf.* Heb 8:8–12; Jer 31:31–34) ... the commandments are not “abolished” under the new covenant, but written within the person, thereby transforming murder into anger and adultery into lust. The commandments are, under the new covenant, magnified rather than abolished; for when the commandments are written on hearts and placed within minds, no wiggle room exists. No gray areas exist. The person knows what his or her intentions were for every act committed by the person, and it is these intentions that will defile or justify the “Christian,” not what the hand or body actually does or doesn't do. Therefore, evidence that most “Christians” are vessels of wrath endured for a season becomes the justifications made by these “Christians” for their continued transgressions of God's law, with the Sabbath commandment being the most obvious commandment transgressed, when these “Christians” are rebuked for their continued

lawlessness. The vitriol spewed forth by these “Christians” when corrected leaves no doubt that they serve the Adversary.

Paul writes to the Galatians,

Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor. For each will have to bear his own load. (6:1–5)

And James writes,

My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins. (5:19–20)

When a *Christian* sees another wander from the truth, regardless of whether that wandering began in the 2nd-Century or in 4th-Century, the *Christian* is to attempt to bring the wayward son of God back into the sheep fold in a spirit of gentleness ... this is, however, a little like trying to subdue a boar grizzly with kind words; for those gentle words must be backed up by a force that the boar fears before they are heard, the reason why few “Christians” will leave Sunday observance and begin to keep the Sabbath prior to the second Passover liberation of Israel.

- The “Christian” who worships on Sunday doesn’t fear God and is unwilling to worship a deity that should be feared.
- God is love, and there is no fear in love.
- And there is no love in disobedience.
- There is no disobedience in obedience.
- There is no obedience in the “Christian” who neglects to come before God on the three seasons each year: Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles (Deut 16:16).

These three seasons are interrelated. About the weekly Sabbath, Moses told the children of Israel:

Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the Lord your God commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work *You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm.* Therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day. (Deut 5:12–15 emphasis added)

About the Passover, Moses said,

Observe the month of Abib and keep the Passover to the Lord your God, *for in the month of Abib the Lord your God brought you out of Egypt by night.* And you shall offer the Passover sacrifice to the Lord your God, from the flock or the herd, at the place that the

Lord will choose, to make his name dwell there. *You shall eat no leavened bread with it. Seven days you shall eat it with unleavened bread, the bread of affliction—for you came out of the land of Egypt in haste—that all the days of your life you may remember the day when you came out of the land of Egypt.* No leaven shall be seen with you in all your territory for seven days, nor shall any of the flesh that you sacrifice on the evening of the first day remain all night until morning. (Deut 16:1–4 emphasis added)

About Pentecost, Moses said,

You shall count seven weeks. Begin to count the seven weeks from the time the sickle is first put to the standing grain. ... *You shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt;* and you shall be careful to observe these statutes. (Deut 16:9, 12 emphasis added)

About Tabernacles, Moses tells Israel,

You shall dwell in booths for seven days. *All native Israelites shall dwell in booths, that your generations may know that I made the people of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.* (Lev 23:42–43 emphasis added)

The Sabbaths of God under the old written code were ultimately about remembering Israel's exodus from Egypt, or remembering the liberation of the physical nation from physical bondage to Pharaoh. These Sabbaths form remembrance of the shadow and type of the spiritually circumcised nation's liberation from sin and death—it is this latter liberation that will cause Israel's exodus from Egypt to no longer be remembered:

Therefore, behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when it shall no longer be said, 'As the Lord lives who brought up the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt,' but 'As the Lord lives who brought up the people of Israel out of the north country and out of all the countries where he had driven them.' For I will bring them back to their own land that I gave to their fathers. (Jer 16:14–15)

Therefore, behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when they shall no longer say, 'As the Lord lives who brought up the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt,' but 'As the Lord lives who brought up and led the offspring of the house of Israel out of the north country and out of all the countries where he had driven them.' Then they shall dwell in their own land." (Jer 23:7–8)

In that day the Lord will extend his hand yet a second time to recover the remnant that remains of his people, from Assyria, from Egypt, from Pathros, from Cush, from Elam, from Shinar, from Hamath, and from the coastlands of the sea. (Isa 11:11)

Recovery of Israel from the North Country is recovery of Israel from the jaws of Death and is a euphemistic expression for salvation, of resurrection from death unto judgment, with the righteous to inherit or receive everlasting life,

this resurrection represented in the Ark of the Covenant by Aaron's budded staff and by the jar of manna that served as a type of the true bread of life.

Under the Moab Covenant, the Sabbaths of God are about remembering the physical recovery of Israel from physical bondage, with this Moab Covenant being a heavenly thing, an everlasting covenant to which better promises were added when its mediator went from being Moses and became Christ Jesus and when the recovery of Israel went from being the exodus out of Egypt to being the recovery led by Christ out from sin and death, with Assyria representing death as Egypt represents sin.

An Israelite leaves sin when this Israelite follows Moses as he followed the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. A disciple cannot follow Christ without treading the same trail Moses trod from Egypt to the plains of Moab where God sets before every person life and death, with instructions to choose life. Only when the Israelite follows the Ark of the Covenant across the River Jordan and into the Promised Land of God's rest, represented by Sabbath observance, can this Israelite receive the promise represented by Aaron's budded staff.

The Most High places His divine breath, the Holy Spirit, the reality of Aaron's budded staff, within every person drawn from this world. He has, for this person, raised the person from the dead and has given the person "life," with this heavenly life (or life that has come from heaven) dwelling in a tent of flesh. It remains for the Son to give life to the person by causing the perishable flesh to put on immortality; for after the Father has raised the person from the dead, the new self or new creature comes under judgment, with all judgment being given to the Son (John 5:21-22) ... it will be the Son who selects His Bride from among all who have been raised from the dead by the Father. So the spiritual reality of the promised resurrection from the dead, represented by Aaron's budded staff, comes when a person receives "life" through receipt of the Holy Spirit, not when a person has the person's judgment revealed, with this most easily seen in the great White Throne Judge that occurs after the Thousand Years ... in the great White Throne Judgment, the dead are resurrected from *death* before they are judged:

Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. *And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. (Rev 20:11-15)*

Resurrection from death precedes judgment in every case. Never will judgment precede receipt of spiritual life, which is not to say that a person gets a

pass for evil done in this life, but is to say that the evildoer who has not yet been born of spirit has not yet been judged or condemned. Paul writes that “all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law” (Rom 2:12); so no one should think that simply because a person not yet been born of spirit is not yet under judgment that the person will somehow escape judgment and being held to account for harm the person has caused to others. Nothing could be farther from the gospel Paul taught.

Peter writes,

But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. *For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God;* and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? And

“If the righteous is scarcely saved,
what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?”

Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good. (4:15–19 emphasis added)

Although some Sabbatarian Christians deny receipt of the Holy Spirit gives the person actual life in the heavenly realm as a son of God, Peter's claim that the household of God is today under judgment refutes this contention: if disciples are not sons of God in possession of spiritual life the Christian would not today be under judgment, but would appear before God in the great White Throne Judgment. ... What changes when a person receives the Holy Spirit? Does the person suddenly cease being a male or a female? No! Yet Paul says that for those baptized into Christ there is neither male nor female. Is the person suddenly without sin? Again no! John says that if “we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” (1 John 1:8). Paul cites the Psalmist to say that none are righteous (Rom 3:10). So what does happen if a person remains biologically and spiritually as he or she was before the Holy Spirit was received?

What happens is receipt of a second life in the same tent of flesh, a life that has come from heaven as a son of God to dwell in this tent of flesh, a life that will come under judgment as soon as it is spiritually circumcised, a life that will receive an imperishable body or tent if judged worthy of Christ (Matt 10:37–38), if the person hears Jesus' words and believes the one who sent Him (John 5:24). This second life is analogous to a child born in the wilderness in the tents of ancient Israelite.

What happens is there is now a firstborn son dwelling within the tent of flesh, a son that must be annually covered by taking the Passover sacraments on the night that Jesus was betrayed, a son that will eventually leave this tent of flesh to dwell in another tabernacle, one that is eternal in the heavens (2 Cor 5:1). This firstborn son is analogous to the children of Israel that followed Joshua across the Jordan and were circumcised with flint knives once across the river (Josh 5:2–7).

What happens is that most of these firstborns sons will never be spiritually circumcised but will become youthful gang members that prowl the *hood* in open rebellion to the Father, intimidating spiritual infants into joining this gang or that gang, all with names remembering the gang's ancestry, names like the *United Church of Christ* or *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* or more simply, *The Brethren, Methodist, Baptist*. The names belie the spiritual terrorism used by these gangs to control their splotched turfs. They are, collectively, the synagogue of Satan—and few will escape from their membership roles, but the promise of Scripture is that “a few” will be chosen by God (Mat 22:14). These rebellious *Christians* do not figuratively cross the River Jordan and enter into God's rest, which is entering into God's presence, with this *entering in* represented by Sabbath observance.

The reality of Scripture is that salvation will be offered to everyone and will be rejected by most everyone. What non-Jew wants to live as a Jew, and what Jew wants to believe that *Yah* entered His creation as His only Son to be born as the man Jesus of Nazareth? Yet the person who will be saved is the person who makes a journey of faith from Babylon to Jerusalem, from the single kingdom of this world to the city of the soon-to-be resurrected King David, and at the same time professes that Jesus is Lord and believes that the Father raised Jesus from the dead. So the mental or spiritual journey that must be made is equally long for both Jew and Gentile.

The tabernacle in the wilderness moved when the cloud by day and pillar of fire by night moved. And it was in this tabernacle where the Ark of the Covenant rested ... because Paul identifies disciples as the temple of God, the tendency of Christians is to think in terms of disciples being like a fixed building, firmly placed on large stone blocks, with the Wailing Wall as an example of these foundational stones. To some extent, this image has validity. But the better mental image is that of the tabernacle slowly traversing the Wilderness of Sin, pausing on the Plains of Moab then crossing the River Jordan where all of Israel born in the wilderness as well as the children of the mixed multitude are circumcised. The journey of faith of every disciple is from sin to entering into God's presence, or from Egypt/Babylon to Judea, with one mandatory stop along the way: the plains of Moab where the disciple will choose life or death, with the choice of life dictating that the person goes beyond where Moses went and crosses the Jordan with Joshua/Jesus [Ἰησοῦ].

The typology cannot be construed differently: Moses did not lead Israel into God's rest (Ps 95:10–11) even though he personally entered into this rest (Ex 33:14). He does not today lead Israel into God's rest. Moses only gets a person to the plains of Moab where the person must choose life or death, with the choice of life requiring that the person follow Joshua/Jesus across the Jordan and into God's presence. So the Jew who follows Moses as far as Moses went remains in Moab, and no Moabite will enter the kingdom of God. Even Ruth crossed the river with her mother-in-law and left Moab to dwell in the Promised Land.

Crossing the river equates to Sabbath observance—for a person to mentally cross the River Jordan will see the person enter into Sabbath observance. But a Sabbath keeper journeys no farther than Gilgal on the east border of Jericho until the person is spiritually circumcised and keeps the Passover. For the

natural Jew, spiritual circumcision requires professing with the mouth that Jesus is Lord and believing that the Father raised Jesus from the dead (Rom 10:9).

Geography represents the mental landscape of Israel. Where the person mentally dwells [i.e., the mindset of the person] can be plotted on a geographical map of the Middle East. The person who will not leave this world remains in Egypt/Babylon. The Jew who follows Moses but will not follow Jesus remains on the plains of Moab or just across the river. The Gentile who will not be lead by Moses remains in Sin and Death: Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, or even in Greece. This Gentile might have heard the name of Jesus, but until this person gets him or herself to Israel's camp in the plains of Moab, this person will follow a wrong Joshua/Jesus.

King David set up a tabernacle or tent for the Ark of God in Jerusalem (1 Chron 15:1; 16:1; 17:1), and the Ark of the Covenant came to represent God ... the Lord was wherever the Ark was. In one sense, Israel was like its neighboring nations when it asked for a king: the nation no longer (if it ever had) thought of God as an invisible deity, an invisible sky God, but rather, perceived that God was somehow inside the Ark of the Covenant: Israel placed God in a box where the nation thought to keep Him regardless of what the nation did. Instead of worshiping statuary of bulls or beasts, Israel worshiped the contents of a wood box.

Why is this important? Because when the glory of the Lord left the temple at Jerusalem (Ezek chap 10), it did not return in the form of the Ark of the Covenant when Zerubbabel started construction of the second temple. When the glory of the Lord lifted up from the temple, Ezekiel prophesied, delivering to Israel the words of the Lord: “I will judge you at the border of Israel, and you shall know that I am the Lord. For *you have not walked in my statutes, nor obeyed my rules, but have acted according to the rules of the nations that are around you*” (11:11–12 emphasis added). Israel asked for a king so the nation could be like its neighbors, and it acted according to the rules of its neighbors. God had ceased being “real” for Israel long before the nation went into captivity. Therefore, the loss of the Ark of the Covenant had significance that could not have escaped the elders of Israel. God was no longer in a box, no longer in an earthly temple that was little more than an enlarged box. Nevertheless, what was Israel to do when Cyrus commanded Israel to build for God a house in Jerusalem other than to build such a house?

Cyrus decreed:

Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever is among you of all his people, may his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and rebuild the house of the Lord, the God of Israel—*he is the God who is in Jerusalem*. And let each survivor, in whatever place he sojourns, be assisted by the men of his place with silver and gold, with goods and with beasts, besides freewill offerings for the house of God that is in Jerusalem. (Ezra 1:2–4 emphasis added)

To Cyrus and to most of Israel—the portion of the nation that bowed down and worshiped Nebuchadnezzar’s golden image—the Lord was the God who was in Jerusalem, not the God who was everywhere. And this limitation to how the Lord was perceived has typological significance, for when geography represents mindsets then not every mindset is of God ... only the mindset represented by a person living as a Judean will bring the person into God’s presence. The born of spirit Israelite who mentally dwells in Babylon or in any city of this world other than heavenly Jerusalem serves the prince of this world as Israel in Babylon served the human king of Babylon: “Therefore, as soon as all the peoples heard the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, *all the peoples, nations, and languages fell down and worshiped the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up*” (Dan 3:7 emphasis added). Only the son of God who mentally dwells in Jerusalem worships the Most High.

When Jesus approaches a fig tree—obviously His first disciples were not then fig trees—and asks for fruit, with Paul saying that the fruit of the Holy Spirit is “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law” (Gal 5:22–23), will the person immediately bring forth this desired fruit? Or will the person say something about the law being abolished: the law is the parameter [i.e., fence line] in which the fruit of the Spirit grows.

Paul adds, “And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires” (v. 24). Yes, they have. They will neither test Christ, nor mock Christ, but will bring forth fruit on demand.

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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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