

The following Scripture passages are offered to aid beginning fellowships. The readings and commentary are offered as openings into dialogue about the subject or concept. And the concept behind the readings for this Sabbath is *typology basics-the poetic conceit*.

Sabbath Readings **For the weekly Sabbath of February 18, 2006**

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 Isaiah chapter 43.

Commentary: As has been discussed the past two Sabbaths, the basics of typology are visible in the creation accounts, and are also visible in the structural repetition of Hebraic poetry.

Previous Sabbath readings have begun to address the concept of poetry foregrounding “words,” not those things that the words describe or seek to represent. Poetry foregrounds the territory of the mind rather than the geography of the earth. And the repetition of Hebraic poetry doubly supports this foregrounding in case someone through ignorance missed it. (Modern biblical instruction isn't known for its quality of thought, but rather, for the duplicity of its instructors.)

Within a Hebraic poetic conceit is a natural element followed by its spiritual equivalent, but also within the conceit are paired thought couplets that move from natural to spiritual. And the prophet Isaiah wrote much of what *YHWH* commanded him to say in poetry. So the assumption can be made that God produced these conceits and couplets (which, by their construction, are mostly immune from translation errors), that God used poetic discourse to both reveal and conceal information.

Chapter 43 begins with the couplet, “[H]e who created you, O Jacob, / he who formed you, O Israel” (v. 1).

The traditional understanding—within the splintered churches of God—of who *Jacob* is, when *Jacob* and *Israel* are mentioned in the same context, has *Jacob* being an alternative naming phrase for the southern kingdom of Jerusalem and of the house of Judah, with *Israel* representing the northern kingdom of Samaria and of the house of Israel. But this identification has never been true even though it has been near universally accepted. For *Jacob* is the natural name of the third born son of promise (i.e., Isaac is the firstborn son of promise; Esau was Isaac's firstborn son, and the second born son of promise; Jacob was Isaac's second born son, making him the third born son of promise).

By birth, Jacob was a deceiver, but after he wrestled with God, he became one who prevailed with God. Hence, Jacob's natural name was supplanted by the descriptive name: *Israel*. So the relationship between *Jacob* and *Israel*, two names for the same person, is the relationship between darkness and light, between death and life, between the natural world and the heavenly realm, and between the physically circumcised nation of Israel and the spiritually circumcised nation. Thus, when encountered in a poetic passage, *Jacob* can represent both the nation that left Egypt, and the children of that nation. Those children formed an uncircumcised nation [until in the Promised Land], with whom God made a second covenant (Deu 29:1), a covenant that was in addition to the covenant made at Sinai. And *Israel* can represent the spiritually circumcised nation that begins the seven endtime years of tribulation as the greater Christian Church, as well as the spiritually uncircumcised [until the Holy Spirit is poured out on all flesh] third part of humanity (Zech 13:9) that represents the largest portion of the firstfruits that will be harvested when Jesus returns.

Although some few will quibble about each *Jacob* and *Israel* representing a circumcised nation and its children, there should be no quibbling about *Jacob* being the natural nation that descended from his loins, and about *Israel* being the spiritual nation that descends from God. Therefore, as we proceed to "read" this poetic passage, we can expect to find the same pairing of natural/spiritual couplets, and we do.

Using /N/ to identify the natural portion of each couplet, and /S/ to identify the spiritual portion, we see:

- /N/ *Fear not, for I have redeemed you* — circumcised Israel was redeemed while still in bondage to Pharaoh.
- /S/ *I have called you by name, you are mine* — each spiritual Israelite is individually drawn and called (John 6:44 & 15:16); salvation is individual, not national.
- /N/ *When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you* — circumcised Israel passed through the "Sea of Reeds, and the river Jordan, and still must "die" in water baptism.
- /S/ *when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you* — spiritual Israelites, already born of Spirit, must still be baptized with fire.
- /N/ *For I am the LORD [YHWH] your God [Elohim]* — earlier readings have addressed the nature of the Tetragrammaton as circumcised Israel's deity.
- /S/ *the Holy One of Israel, your Savior* — this is the glorified Christ Jesus.
- /N/ *I give Egypt as your ransom, Cush and Seba in exchange for you* — when the circumcised nation was liberated from bondage to Pharaoh, the lives of the firstborn of Egypt were given for Israel's liberation.

- /S/ *Because you are precious in my eyes, and honored, and I love you, I give men [future tense] in return for you, peoples in exchange for your life (v. 4) — this verse, like others, will break into a spiritually circumcised, and spiritually uncircumcised component, but the greater significance of this verse is that another Passover liberation like when Israel left Egypt is prophesied by Isaiah.*

The above four verses serve together as the “natural” (as in physically and spiritually circumcised Israelites in bodies of flesh) portion of this poetic conceit, with the following verses moving from fleshly bodies to glorified bodies. Again, movement within the conceit and within each thought couplet is from natural [physical] to spiritual.

- /N/ *Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west; I will gather you. I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Do not withhold — east and west are the directions from which the false prophet [the first king of Daniel 7, as well as the first horseman] and Abaddon come. North and south represent death and sin [Assyria and Egypt] respectively, and are the two kings that fight for control of endtime Jerusalem.*
- /S/ *bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth, everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made (vv. 5-7)*

Verse 8 begins a new conceit; so for the sake of brevity, let us jump to verse 14:

- /N/ *Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: “For your sake I send to Babylon and bring them all down as fugitives, even the Chaldeans, in the ships in which they rejoice.*
- /S/ *I am the LORD, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King.” Thus says the LORD, who makes a way in the sea, a path in the mighty waters,*
- /N/ *who brings forth chariot and horse, army and warrior; they lie down, they cannot rise, they are extinguished, quenched like a wick*
- /S/ *Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?*

The above two couplets complete the natural portion of this conceit. The following couplets compose the spiritual portion:

- /N/ *I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.*
- /S/ *The wild beasts will honor me, the jackals and the ostriches,*
- /N/ *for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people,*
- /S/ *the people whom I formed for myself that they might declare my praise.*

Another conceit begins with verse 22:

- /N/ *Yet you did not call upon me, O Jacob*
- /S/ *but you have been weary of me, O Israel!*

- /N/ *You have not brought me your sheep for burnt offerings, or honored me with your sacrifices* — natural Israel brought YHWH, its Elohim animal sacrifices
- /S/ *I have not burdened you with offerings, or wearied you with frankincense* — spiritual Israel does not bring animals to the Father and Son, but themselves.
- /N/ *You have not bought me sweet cane with money, or satisfied me with the fat of your sacrifices*
- /S/ *But you have burdened me with your sins; you have wearied me with your iniquities.*

This conceit pivots, or spins from natural to spiritual on the above couplet. So the following couplets (again, each with a natural and a spiritual component within the spiritual portion of the conceit) are about life as opposed to death:

- /N/ *I, I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins*
- /S/ *Put me in remembrance; let us argue together; set forth your case, that you may be proved right*
- /N/ *Your first father sinned, and your mediators transgressed against me.*
- /S/ *Therefore I will profane the princes of the sanctuary*
- /N/ *and deliver Jacob to utter destruction*
- /S/ *and [deliver] Israel to reviling*

The reader should now read Isaiah chapter 44, verses 1 through 8.

Commentary: A person should never force a reading upon a text, and to read one chapter of the poetry of Isaiah as has been done isn't sufficient to demonstrate that this is how every poetic passage should be read. So the following chapter should also hold up to this poetic patterning:

- /N/ *But now hear, O Jacob my servant*
- /S/ *Israel whom I have chosen!*
- /N/ *Thus says the LORD who made you,*
- /S/ *who formed you from the womb and will help you*
- /N/ *Fear not, O Jacob my servant...For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground*
- /S/ *Jeshurun whom I have chosen...I will pour my Spirit upon your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants*
- /N/ *They shall spring up among the grass like willows by flowing streams*
- /S/ *This one will say, 'I am the LORD's*
- /N/ *another will call on the name of Jacob*
- /S/ *and another will write on his hand, 'The LORD's, and name himself by the name of Israel*

Let's try another conceit:

- /N/ *Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel*
- /S/ *and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts*

- /N/ *I am the first* — the “natural” prefigures or foreshadows the spiritual
- /S/ *and I am the last* — the reality that casts the shadow that is the “natural”
- /N/ *besides me there is no god*
- /S/ *Who is like me?*
- /N/ *Let him proclaim it. Let him declare and set it before me, since I appointed an ancient.*
- /S/ *Let them declare what is to come, and what will happen to people.*

- /N/ *Fear not, nor be afraid*
- /S/ *have I not told you from of old and declared it?*
- /N/ *And you are my witnesses! Is there a God besides me?*
- /S/ *There is no Rock; I know not any*

For a very long time, Israelites, natural and spiritual, have been blind even though every Israelite had eyes. The natural nation was spiritually blind and deaf prior to, and when Jesus came (Matt 13:15), and the spiritual nation, because of its lawlessness, for two millennia remained just as blind and deaf as the natural nation was.

But beginning now nearly five centuries ago, a remnant of spiritual Israel left spiritual Babylon to rebuild the house of the Lord in the Jerusalem above. This remnant journeyed for decades before its scouts crossed into God’s rest and returned to keeping the Sabbath. But even after this remnant crossed into God’s rest, it was far from Jerusalem, and even farther from completing the rebuilding of the charred and demolished house of God.

Understanding that Hebraic poetry can be, and should be read as natural/spiritual paired couplets opens up a gold mine of previously untouched knowledge about God, and about His plans. Jesus, in parables, uttered things that had been kept secret from the foundations of the world (Matt 13:35). As the *Logos*, Jesus delivered to human beings the secret things for which kings searched lifetimes—the secret things which angels have desired to know. And the time for those things to become known to all faithful disciples has arrived.

Yet, most disciples will not read what they haven’t previously understood, and that which their false teachers cannot explain to them. Therefore, it remains for those disciples who are of Philadelphia to reread all of Scripture, a large task for so few. And one of the first prophetic nuggets from this mother lode is the certainty that the lives of human being firstborns will be given for the ransom from sin of the Church.

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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