

The following Scripture passages are offered to aid beginning fellowships. The readings and commentary are more extensive for this week and next than will be usual; for the following will most likely be new and unfamiliar observations. The concept behind this Sabbath's selection is *the sacraments*.

## **Weekly Readings For the Sabbath of March 25, 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 service should read or assign to be read the following passages: Luke chapter 22, verses 7 through 23, followed by Mark chapter 14, verses 12 through 25, followed by Matthew chapter 26, verses 17 through 29, and John chapter 19, verses 31 through 42.*

**Commentary:** Two important concepts must be realized and remembered: first, the meal Jesus was eating with His disciples was the Passover meal, which was being eaten early, for the Passover lambs would not be slaughtered until the following afternoon between the evenings. Overly legalistic Sabbatarian Christians have quibbled over the use of "Unleavened Bread" being applied to the afternoon of the 13<sup>th</sup> day and/or early evening of the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the first month; for technically, the Days of Unleavened Bread begin with the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month when the slaughtered [on the 14<sup>th</sup> between the evenings] Passover lamb was actually eaten. John specifically states that Jesus was crucified on the Preparation Day for the High Sabbath, the 15<sup>th</sup> of the first month, the first day of Unleavened Bread. Jesus died when the Pharisees would have slaughtered Passover lambs; He was the Passover Lamb sacrificed for the household of God, a Lamb appropriate to the size of the household, and He fulfilled every qualification for being the Passover Lamb, including Him being "selected" and "penned" on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of that first month when He entered Jerusalem as the high priest would (John 12:1, 12-15).

Thus, in practical application, in the 1<sup>st</sup>-Century CE the festival of Unleavened Bread was reckoned to begin when Jews came to Jerusalem to observe the Passover (John 11:55). The Preparation Day was considered part of Unleavened Bread even though technically it wasn't one of the seven days when no leavened goods could be eaten or found among Israelites. And a Jew from a far land arriving in Jerusalem the day before the day when lambs were to be slaughtered [i.e., the 14<sup>th</sup>] would have used or treated the 13<sup>th</sup> as the preparation day for when his lamb would be slaughtered, and would have treated that day as part of Unleavened Bread. Hence, scribes and Pharisees and common Israelites did not use the identifying phrases */Unleavened Bread/* and */Passover/* with the same precision that Sabbatarian Christians now use these identifying phrases. Additionally, Israelites coming from all over Judea and from various nations in the region foreshadowed spiritually circumcised Israelites entering the *Jerusalem above*: leavening represents sin, and the Jerusalem above is to be a sinless city, meaning that as the lively shadow of the Church, physically circumcised

Israelites should not have brought leavened bread with them when they came to Jerusalem for the Passover—and certainly would have disposed of all leavened goods before the High Day began. Unfortunately, the leavening of the Pharisees contaminated 1<sup>st</sup>-Century Jerusalem, just as the lawlessness of “Christian” teachers of iniquity contaminated the *Jerusalem above* until God sent the Church into spiritual captivity in spiritual Babylon, ruled by the fallen day star (Isa 14:4-21).

Here is what the Church has not understood: one long spiritual night began at Calvary. This night is foreshadowed on the sacred calendar by the dark portion (the twisting or turning away from the light portion) of the 15<sup>th</sup> of the first month. This is the spiritual night foreshadowed by that long night of watching the natural nation of Israel experienced in Egypt when the physical Passover was first instituted—and at the midnight hour of this long spiritual night of watching, the death angels will again pass over all of the land, slaying firstborns not covered by the blood of the Lamb of God. Therefore, since the Church has been living through the first six hours of this single long night of watching that begins the actual Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Church must necessarily be sin-free; i.e., no sin [leavening] is to be found in any of its dwellings, each dwelling a tent of flesh presently under Grace, which causes no lawlessness to be reckoned to sons of God. Grace is the garment of Christ Jesus’ righteousness that “cloaks” the disciple in both the word’s denotative and connotative meaning.

However, the Church must stay sin-free for seven spiritual days, with Jesus as the Lamb of God lying in the heart of the earth for three of these days, which will be the first three years of seven endtime years of tribulation. The saints will be delivered into the hand of the man of perdition for these spiritual days that equate to when Jesus was in the grave (Dan 7:25 & Zech 13:7-8). Saints will be slain because of who they are: the Body of the revealed Son of Man. They will not be bodily raptured to heaven; nor will they go to a place of physical safety. For it is enough for a servant to be like his master, or a disciple like his teacher (Matt 10:24-25), and during these three days of Unleavened Bread, Jesus was in the grave. Disciples loyal to Christ Jesus and faithful to live by the laws of God will be martyred...the place of safety will be the grave.

The Church must remain sin-free (i.e., without eating leavened bread or having leavening in its dwellings) even when “revealed” (Luke 17:30), or made naked before God by having the garment of Grace stripped away following its “liberation” from the law of sin and death that has been dwelling in its fleshy members (Rom 7:25). This is the gaping hole awaiting Christians: Grace is not unmerited pardon, but the garment of Christ Jesus’ righteousness that disciples have put on daily as natural Israel offered its *daily*, the morning and evening sacrifice of a lamb. And when the Son of Man is revealed—directly analogous to circumcised Israel being given the law of God from atop Sinai—all lawlessness committed by disciples will be reckoned against disciples as sin was reckoned against natural Israel (Rom 5:12-14) following the giving of the Law. The disciple who then ingests lawlessness or with whom lawlessness is found will be like the natural Israelite who ate leavened bread between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> of the first month—the disciple will be condemned to the second death, the lake of fire. Thus, the *great falling away* occurs when the garment of Christ’s righteousness is stripped from the body of the Son of Man, and when the majority of the Christian Church continues its present transgressions of the laws of God.

In the 4<sup>th</sup>-Century CE, the Church was expelled from the *Jerusalem above* for refusing to walk in the ways of God and for profaning His Sabbaths as natural Israel had

been expelled from the *Jerusalem below* (Ezek chap 20). Thus, for most of Christianity, Unleavened Bread is a curious carryover from the Old Covenant, and not a festival of “the Church.” Nevertheless, as recognized by many Sabbatarian Christians, Unleavened Bread remains as binding on the remnant of the Church that returned to the *Jerusalem above* to rebuild the house of God as it was/is for natural Israel, even though only a few of these Sabbatarian disciples understand that they are living through the first night of the spiritual festival, which began at Calvary with the crucifixion of the Lamb of God.

*The reader should now read Exodus chapter 12, verses 1 through 6.*

**Commentary:** As the spiritual paschal Lamb of God, Jesus must be blemish free. And He was; He was without sin. However, being blemish free also meant that not one of His bones was to be broken (John 19:36). This would then mean that when His body was marred beyond recognition, no bones were broken in the beating He took. He would have shed His blood where He was marred, but no one “drank” that blood—as the spiritually living sacrificial Lamb, His blood would ratify the New Covenant in a similar manner to how the former covenant was ratified by blood (Exod 24:3-8), with half of the blood being thrown on the altar representing God, and half on the people.

Humanity is of the dust of the earth (Eccl 3:18-20); the first Adam was of red mud. To throw half of the Lamb of God’s blood on humanity, this half of His blood need only to be poured out onto the earth, where it formed red mud as a spatter scattered upon the whole of the landscape. So as Jesus fulfilled part of the sanctification of humanity with His blood being “thrown” onto the ground when He was beaten, He then poured out the other half of His blood at the base of the Cross after he was “raised up” through being crucified (John 19:34). Hence, as Moses threw the blood of oxen on the altar he built at the base of Mount Sinai, then on the people, Christ Jesus threw His blood on the dust of the earth and on the base of the Cross. Therefore, the correspondence between the natural nation of Israel with Mount Sinai is analogous to the correspondence between humanity and the Cross. And the Apostle Paul says that the letter kills (2 Cor 3:6), that “if the ministry of death, carved in letter on stone, came with such glory that the Israelites could not gaze at Moses’ face because of its glory” (v. 7)...the Cross doesn’t represent life; rather, it kills. It represents death. It is an instrument of death. And Jesus’ blood poured out at the base of the Cross reconciled humanity with death, thereby defeating Death, the cross-shaped beast that devours and breaks to pieces everything living in this world.

Jesus’ blood soaked into the ground, and was not saved or retained to be smeared on the entrances of His disciples’ tabernacles, or tents of flesh.

The “movement” that occurred at Calvary was from physical to spiritual: Daniel’s seventy weeks prophecy worked exactly with a day for a year until the middle of the seventieth week [i.e., 451 BCE to 31 CE], when *the day* in the day-for-a-year principle ceased being a physical day, and became spiritual days. And the body and blood of the Lord went from being flesh and blood when *the day* ceased being a physical year, and went to being spiritual, symbolized by unleavened bread and wine representing the crushed fruits of Judean hillsides, from where the entirety of the harvest of God will come.

Two harvests: Judean hill country produced an early barley harvest, which began when the Wave Sheaf Offering was presented on the Sabbath following the eating of Passover lamb, and the hill country produced a latter wheat harvest, the main crop harvest that ripened in the late summer and fall of the year. Since Calvary, all of

humanity that has been drawn by the Father (John 6:44, 65) and made spiritually alive through receipt of the divine Breath of God [*Pneuma 'Agion*] has been born anew, or born of Spirit; they have received their second birth, promised to everyone. If they were baptized, they came under judgment while still physically living, and became members of the household of God. They form the early barley harvest, the harvest of firstfruits, of which Christ Jesus was first when He was accepted on the morrow after the Sabbath during Unleavened Bread in the Roman year of 31 CE. Christ Jesus was the accepted Wave Sheaf Offering, a ceremony observed by *The Philadelphia Church* on the first day of the calendar week within the festival of Unleavened Bread. Thus, observance of a so-called *Resurrection Sunday* was commanded by God through Moses (Lev 23:9-14), which is what makes Easter observance as practiced by the greater Christian Church such a travesty before God.

But within the fields of barley also grew weeds—tares grow among the grain stalks. Tares grow faster than grain, produce a better looking field, and produce worthless seed. And these tares will not be separated from genuine grain until the harvest. So disciples are not to be surprised when some of their fellow disciples are resurrected to glory, and some to condemnation (John 5:28-29); for many are called, but few are chosen (Matt 22:14). Many are the tares.

The remainder of humanity—that portion not drawn by the Father to become part of the early barley harvest—has not yet been born of Spirit; hence, the remainder of humanity awaits their second birth, which they will receive when they are resurrected from death to live again in the great White Throne Judgment...God is not a respecter of persons, offering salvation to this one and not to that one. Rather, every person who has drawn breath will receive a second birth. That portion of humanity called to be special vessels will receive their second birth before Satan has fire come out from his belly, utterly destroying him. The remainder of humanity as “ordinary” or common vessels will await their second birth in the timelessness of their graves. This remainder will not be forgotten; nor is this remainder now in hell or in purgatory. So the basic message that Christianity teaches about accepting Jesus today or fry forever in hellfire is false. Today is “a” day of salvation, and only “the” day for the person who has been spiritually drawn or made alive by the Father. But the main harvest of humanity occurs on the sixth day of the seven day spiritual creation week, not midweek, when Jesus’ 1000 year reign, Satan being loosed for a short while, and the great White Throne Judgment remain to occur before “all is accomplished” (Matt 5:18).

*The reader should now read Genesis chapter 4, verses 1 through 16.*

**Commentary:** Two sons are born to the first Adam and the first Eve. Likewise, two sons will be born to the last Adam and the last Eve (Isa 66:7-9), with the first son to be born before the last Eve enters hard labor pains, these pains being the endtime years of tribulation. This first son is the greater Christian Church, born from the single kernel of grain planted at Calvary—and sin lurks at the door of this son. Sin is lawlessness (1 John 3:4), and the foremost manifestation of this sin is the greater Church’s transgression of the Sabbath commandment.

When the Son of Man is revealed, saints will be delivered into the hand of the man of perdition who will attempt to change times and the law—who will attempt to legislate observance of the 8<sup>th</sup>-day, about which God said nothing concerning resting on this day...as the nation that left physical bondage in Egypt attempted, because of its unbelief,

to enter God's rest on the following day (Num 14:40-41), so too will the liberated endtime Church attempt to enter God's rest on the following day, the 8<sup>th</sup>-day.

And the greater Church offers to God sacraments that are the fruit of the ground—bread and wine—as the first Cain offered God. Unleavened bread and wine are only the body and blood of the Lamb of God on the night that Jesus was betrayed (1 Cor 11:23-26). On every other night, they are bread and wine, the crushed fruit of Babylonian hillsides; they are Cain's rejected offering. They are the offering of the rebellious Church.

*The reader should now read John chapter 13, verses 1 through 35.*

**Commentary:** When born anew disciples are liberated from bondage to the law of sin and death that has been dwelling in their flesh, every disciple will be without sin, and without further need for the mantle of Christ Jesus' righteousness. Disciples will love one another—

Actually, most disciples will not love one another, but will persecute and slay their righteous brothers who keep the commandments of God, especially the Sabbath commandment.

When the lawless one is revealed (2 Thess 2:3-4), the man of perdition, a human being possessed by Satan himself, most of Christianity will rebel against God, and will follow a man who believes the angel inside him is Jesus. And this majority of the greater Church will slay those Israelites who keep the 7<sup>th</sup>-day Sabbath, and will (with bloody hands) sincerely believe they have done God a favor—they will have no love for those Israelites, natural and spiritual, who live by the commandments of God.

Cain would have been accepted if he had overcome the sin that lurked at his door. Likewise, disciples who were so poorly taught that they didn't know that they needed to take the sacraments on the night that Jesus was betrayed—the 14<sup>th</sup> of the first month—will themselves be accepted by God if they do what is right, which means living by the commandments of God. They are not under an outside-of-them written code engraved on tablets of stone. Rather, they are under an inner law of God (the same commandments) written on the fleshy tablets of their heart and their mind.

Again, the sacraments of bread and wine only represent the body and blood of the Lamb of God on the night that Jesus was betrayed. They never represent anything but Cain's offering when taken weekly, or quarterly. So the entirety of the debate about *transubstantiation* is a debate of ignorance. Jesus is present when two or three are gathered together in His name—and unleavened bread and wine represent His body and blood only when disciples eat the early Passover.

*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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