

The following Scripture passages are offered to aid beginning fellowships. The readings and commentary for this week are more in line with what has become usual; for the following will most likely be familiar observations. The concept behind this Sabbath's selection is *the vision of Obadiah*.

Weekly Readings For the Sabbath of April 29, 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 Romans chapter 9, verses 1 through 13; followed by all of Obadiah.

Commentary: Continuing the prophetic thread introduced in the reading for the Wave Sheaf Offering, the son of promise [Isaac] also had two sons of promise, twins, with Esau being the elder, Jacob the younger. And as Isaac was the second son of Abraham, Jacob is the second son of Isaac—the promises descend through Isaac and through Jacob, with relationship established of the first son to receive physical blessings (Gen 21:13, 18), but through the second son should Abraham's offspring be named. And typologically, the importance of being second in the dark/light, physical/spiritual metaphor that governs Hebraic poetics gives to the second son acceptance before God; for the faithful [Abraham is the father of the faithful] will be the children of the Most High Lord God.

All firstborns belong to God (Ex 13:1), including the firstborn son of God (Israel in Egypt — Ex 4:22) as well as the firstborn son of the last Adam and last Eve. But it is through the second son that Abraham's offspring will be named. The firstborn son of the first Adam was Cain, who murdered his brother and was marked by God. The second born son was righteous Abel, and Abraham's named offspring will be righteous through faith. Thus, while God's firstborn son received physical promises and a geographical land, the second born son [i.e., the Church] receives, by faith, the name of God and adoption as sons of God. The Church corresponds to Isaac as well as to Eve, for gender is of this world. In the heavenly realm, there is neither male nor female, which is why Paul prohibits women from speaking—biological gender is of this world, and has been subjected to disobedience (Rom 11:32). The person who speaks as a woman speaks of the things of this world. Therefore, she is to remain silent and learn from her husband, Christ Jesus. But the son of God that is neither male or female, Jew or Greek, free or slave (Gal 3:27) speaks of God and about the things of the heavenly realm, and this son of God is free to speak regardless of the plumbing or the color or the social status of the tent of flesh in which this son temporarily dwells. Hence, no son of God speaks as either a man or a woman. Rather, as Jesus did when He was on earth, every son of God mature enough to speak will utter the words of the Father. All other words come from the flesh.

In his epistle to the Galatians, the Apostle Paul introduced the allegory of physically circumcised Israel, descended from Abraham's second son, spiritually corresponding to Ishmael, Abraham's eldest son, whereas the Church corresponds to Isaac. Thus, typologically, the physical generations of Abraham form the shadow of the spiritual generations of the household of God—and not understanding this correspondence has kept Scripture sealed; has kept spiritually circumcised Israel as blind as physical Israel was; and has precluded understanding Holy Writ even though Jesus fulfilled the prophecy about speaking in parables to utter what has been hidden since the foundation of the world (Matt 13:35 & Ps 78:2-4).

Jesus revealed everything to His friends, but He did so through a linguistic structure that prevented inspired meaning from being assigned to His words until the end of the age.

When Jews were throwing Christians out of Asia Minor synagogues in the 2nd-Century CE, early Church fathers would not have believed that natural Israel's history formed the shadow and copy of what would be the Church's spiritual history, or history in the heavenly realm. But as natural Israel didn't know what had happened to Moses when he didn't return from the mountain for forty days (Ex 32:1), the Church didn't know what happened to Jesus that He was delaying His returning for so long. Natural Israel had Aaron, for whom Moses was to be like God (Ex 4:16), make another god for the nation. Aaron did, and the natural nation worshiped the gold calf; then rose up to play in a sexual orgy. Likewise, the Church, not knowing why Jesus delayed His return, had Church fathers make other gods, Greek in origin, neo-Platonic in philosophy, for the spiritually circumcised holy nation—and these are the gods still worshipped by most of Christendom as the Church physically fronts on earth for the spiritual king of Greece in a heavenly war the king of Greece will win as surely as Alexander conquered the Persians.

The war between angelic princes of Greece and Persia began when the prince or *sar* of Persia, increased with riches, pushed against the prince or king of Greece, with this pushing manifest in the physical realm late in the 20th and early in the 21st centuries. Thus, the Church, as part of the powers fronting for the king of Greece, now extends this heavenly war into a fifth earth year of a 3rd millennium crusade, an orgy in weaponry and technology. Alexander took a decade to defeat the Persians. How long it will take for the spiritual king of Greece to defeat the *sar* of Persia in the heavenly realm remains unknown, but humanity won't see this demonic war drag on for decades. By the time Iran is pacified, the war will be mostly over. The crusade will be won by Christendom, and when it appears that peace has sprung like spring flowers from the frozen tundra of turmoil, the Passover liberation of spiritual Israel will occur: the world will be plunged into the seven endtime years of tribulation.

Sermons about prophecy will fill pews, but it is typology that opens formerly sealed Scriptural passages and prophecies. Today, war against Islamic fundamentalism holds disciples captive as they, unfortunately, anxiously fret about rising energy prices, a united Europe, and war in the Middle East. They pour through Scriptures about ancient nations as they search for time markers that suggest the prophecy has an endtime fulfillment. When they find such a marker, they then speculate about which modern nation has descended from the ancient peoples—and by distilling this mishmash of history and prophecy, the many false prophets within the splintered Churches of God would have disciples believe that endtime Edom is the modern nation of Turkey, as

Germany is endtime Assyria, from whom endtime Israel [the United State and Britain] will be recovered at Christ's return. All of this is physically-minded swill, which when swallowed sours the stomach and spoils the constitution.

Typological exegesis holds that Paul's allegory about natural Israel corresponding to Ishmael, the son of the slave woman Hagar, has Rebecca as one with Isaac, representing the Church today: in Rebecca's womb are two sons that will be born before Zion goes into labor (Isa 66:7). Who has heard of such a thing, the Church being both mother and son? But the Church is the nation brought forth in one long spiritual day, as well as the *Zion* that gives birth to children as soon as she enters labor (v. 8).

First, the Church as the last Eve was created when the last Adam breathed on ten of His disciples and said, *Receive the Holy Spirit* (John 20:22), and she will bring forth two sons as the first Eve brought forth Cain and Abel. But those two sons will not be born nine or more months apart; rather, they will be born as Rebecca's twins were born, with the younger having hold of the heel of the elder. The younger is a remnant of the elder, the remnant that left spiritual Babylon to rebuild the house of God in the Jerusalem above, just as a physical remnant of the natural nation left Babylonia by command of Cyrus to rebuild a physical house of God in physical Jerusalem.

What the vast majority of Christendom has failed to understand is that at Calvary spiritual darkness settled over the earth when the light of men entered the darkness of the grave. One long spiritual day began, the single day of salvation for the firstfruits, the day in which the holy nation of God will be brought forth, the first day of Unleavened Bread, when all firstfruits will live without sin. And this one long spiritual day of watching extends until the coming of the Messiah, when every eye will see the coming of the Son of Man.

The vision of Obadiah occurs when ***the day of the Lord is near upon all the nations*** (v. 15). The vision of Obadiah was not for when physical Elijah slew Baal's physical priests (1 Kings chap 18), but for when the Lord sends another Elijah *before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes* (Mal 4:5). Thus, the vision of Obadiah is for endtime Esau, the hated son that is today still in the womb of the Church.

- The vision of Obadiah is about the firstborn son of the Church, the spiritual Cain who will be born when the disciples are liberated from bondage to the law of sin and death that presently dwells in their fleshly members.
- This vision is of a spiritual Esau, who sells his birthright as the firstborn son of God for food and drink (Gen 25:29-34), thereby seeking to save physical life (Matt 10:28, 39).
- This vision is about the portion of the Church that rebels against God in the great falling away (2 Thess 2:3); that portion that attempts to enter God's rest on the following day as the natural nation of Israel did in the wilderness of Paran, Ishmael's homeland.

The vision of Obadiah isn't about the modern nation of Turkey or about physical descendants of Esau wherever they might presently reside. Physical Edom was stubble burned by both Seleucid and Ptolemaic Empires. But Obadiah's Edom, burned as stubble, will die in the lake of fire, with no survivors.

Who will bring the firstborn son of the Church down from among the stars? The Lord will (Ob 4).

The firstborn son, while now still in the womb, broadcasts its gospel of easy grace to a spiritually starved world, and Sabbatarian Christians follow on the heels of where the

firstborn son goes as if actually having hold of a heel. It wasn't Sabbatarian Christianity that first took Christ to the world. No, Sabbatarians as the younger brother have, with few exceptions, remained with their mother, tending home fires, while their elder brother roamed the fields of humanity, hunting for opportunities to take philosophies captive. A person would think that for their great work, those disciples comprising the firstborn son should receive a great blessing—and such a blessing was intended for them. But that blessing will go to the second son, who will wrestle with God because of its deceitfulness.

By Sabbatarian Christians' sniping at each other, while each does what is right in his or her eyes, they deceive the firstborn son, who cannot possibly believe that God would work through such a loveless body of people. And who can blame the firstborn son for this skepticism. Sabbatarians will pay for their lack of love with their physical lives; they will be delivered into the hand of the man of perdition for cause (Dan 7:25). And except for a remnant, they will go to their graves as the sacrifice given for the third part of humanity, born from above when the Holy Spirit is poured out upon all flesh. They will not be accepted unless they demonstrate that their love for God exceeds their love for themselves and their pet theologies.

The teachers of iniquity [or lawlessness] that Jesus will deny in their judgments (Matt 7:21-23) are of the firstborn son. They will have done mighty works in the name of Jesus, but because they taught disciples to relax the least of the commandments [the Sabbath commandment], they will never enter God's rest. Instead, they will die in a wilderness of sin as did the natural nation that left Egypt. It will be their spiritual children [the third part of humanity — from Zech 13:9] that enter the kingdom of God.

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The reader should now read Psalm 78.

Commentary: The false prophets of the splintered Churches of God would have the modern descendants of Joseph being the chosen people of Israel, but that is not the case (*vv.* 67-72). David shepherds in the heavenly realm. Until then—for David remains in the grave—the shepherds come from spiritual Judah, not a geographical land, but a mental typography that has disciples living as spiritual Judeans in the Jerusalem above, a heavenly city peopled by those who live by the laws of God written on hearts and minds.

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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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