

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 discipleship.

Weekly Readings For the Sabbath of June 3, 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 John chapters 5, 6, & 7.

Commentary: These three chapters in John's gospel occur at a feast season (John 5:1; 6:4; 7:2). The second two seasons are identified: Unleavened Bread or Passover, and Tabernacles. But the first season is not specifically identified. Instead, the reference is to the Sabbath (John 5:9, 16, 18), the first of the appointed feasts of the Lord (Lev 23:2)—and the issue was not merely Jesus healing on the Sabbath, but Jesus calling God His own Father, thereby making Himself equal with God.

After having initially read all three chapters, the reader should now reread just chapter 5...

The setting of chapter 5 is the temple at Jerusalem, and this setting has importance in relationship to chapters 6 and 7; for when moving from physical to spiritual—from the physical temple in geographical Jerusalem to the spiritual temple in the heavenly city—disciples of Christ Jesus are, as Jesus was, living stones (1 Pet 2:4-5) that are being built up as a spiritual house that is the temple of the Father (1 Co 3:16-17). The cornerstone of this temple is Christ Jesus (Isa 28:16 & 1 Pet 2:6), who was, by the natural nation of Israel, physically rejected (Ps 118:22) as husband and head stone. Jesus came as a stone of offense and a rock of stumbling for both houses of Israel—and he came as a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem (Isa 8:14-15). These inhabitants of Jerusalem, though, are not just the natural Israelites that inhabited the geographical city. They are also the inhabitants of the spiritual city; for in his epistles, the Apostle Paul laid the foundations for the house of God in the 1st-Century (1 Co 3:10-11). No other foundation can be laid. Every work of a minister or teacher of God will be built upon the foundation Paul laid, this foundation incorporating Jesus as the true cornerstone as well as the capstone when this house of God is completed. And the endtime church at Philadelphia forms the pillars that connect the foundation and the roof. Thus, between when Paul laid the foundation and when endtime Philadelphia builds on this foundation, very little work, whether of gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, or straw (*v.* 12), has withstood being tested by fire (*v.* 13) even though those theologians who have built on this foundation will be saved, “but only through fire” (*v.*

14). So for most of two millennia, the foundation Paul laid was covered with charred debris because *Jesus came as a trap and snare to the inhabitants of the heavenly Jerusalem*.

In his epistle to the churches of Galatia, the Apostle Paul was astonished that these disciples had so quickly left what he called the grace of Christ for a different gospel [or *good news* message]. He said that there was not another gospel (Gal 1:7); there was only the one for which he was laying the foundations (again, 1 Co 3:10-11). And here is where wisdom is required: the foundation is not laid on this earth, for Jesus' kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36). His is a heavenly kingdom. His priesthood is in the heavenly realm, for on earth, those who served God were of the sons of Levi. And the temple of God is in the heavenly city of Jerusalem; the pillars of this temple are workers in the heavenly city. So the holy nation of God is not physically circumcised, in that their circumcision is of human hands, but spiritually circumcised. Until the mortal puts on immortality, the spiritually circumcised Israelite, whose citizenship is in the Jerusalem above, dwells in a tent of flesh here on earth even though his reward and his treasure is in the heavenly city.

The accursed gospel to which the Galatians had succumbed placed importance on the tent of flesh, which cannot ever enter the heavenly Jerusalem. For two millennia, not understanding Paul and not continuing to build on the foundation he laid, again a foundation that has Christ Jesus as its cornerstone, the Church has placed importance on the tent of flesh through making sure that this tent did not do those things that are identifiably *Jewish*. Hence, ham is served at Easter; plum pudding at Christmas. And "Christians" attempt to enter God's rest on the 8th-day, instead of on the Sabbath. So through placing importance on the tent, the Church not merely condoned lawlessness but legislated it, thereby transforming and compounding the error of the Circumcision Faction into a doubly accursed gospel.

Again, construction of the house of God (i.e., the Temple) in the heavenly city was never completed—unlike the physical house of God built by Solomon, destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, rebuilt under Ezra, and again under Herod, the heavenly house of God will be constructed only once. It will not be a building of geologically formed stone; rather, it will be constructed from living stones squared off-site, meaning that the shaping of these stones won't be done in the heavenly realm but here on earth. No sound of an iron tool will be heard in the heavenly city. Neither will there be the sound of tears or grief.

When stone is ground fine enough to become a colloid—what clay is—this stone can be worked into earthenware vessels, some of which will form the pillars of the heavenly house of God. And this grinding of stone into powder is hard work, and is the labor of the Adversary, who is bound as head of the ultimate chain gang, consigned not merely breaking boulders into gravel with sledgehammers but to grinding stone into the clay that the Master Potter will spin on His wheel to form vessels for honorable and dishonorable usage. God has consigned humanity to disobedience so that He can have mercy on all (Rom 11:32). This mercy will be birth from above; will be a second birth. And humanity's consignment to Satan, the king of spiritual Babylon, is for the very purpose of being broken and ground fine, ground and reground until humanity hates death and lawlessness enough to choose righteousness in every situation.

Because of the lawlessness and utter lack of righteousness of the Hellenistic Church, the spiritual nation of Israel was first divided as the natural nation of Israel was divided

into a northern and a southern kingdom. But when both of these divisions continued in their lawless ways, God sent both spiritual houses into exile, with the northern school of Ephesus all but disappearing into the flotsam of the historical river forming the story of Western Europe. The southern house was sent into captivity in spiritual Babylon, captivity continued through historical exegesis. And as with the natural house of Israel with its ten lost northern tribes and only the southern house being identified as “Israel,” the northern school of Christianity virtually disappeared after the Vandals sacked Rome (ca 600 CE) and only the southern, Trinitarian school of Christianity is visibly recognized as “Christian.”

The lawlessness of the Hellenistic Church is visible to everyone through its lack of observance of the Sabbaths of God, and lack of discerning the Body and Blood of Christ Jesus. Like Cain, the Hellenistic Church offered to God the fruit of the ground: bread and wine on days other than on the 14th of Nissan are merely bread and wine. Only on the 14th are these processed fruits the Body and Blood of the Passover Lamb of God. On every other day, they are Cain’s offering. And like the natural nation of Israel that never ceased worshiping the idols of Egypt and refused to walk in the ways of God and continually profaned the Sabbaths of God (Ezek chap 20), the Hellenistic nation of Israel kept the beliefs of Egypt (especially that of human beings having immortal souls) and refused to walk as spiritual Judeans and continually profaned the Sabbaths of God, even to worshiping on the 8th-day instead of the 7th. Therefore, as God gave to natural Israel statutes by which the nation could not live, statutes that called for the nation to burn its firstborn (Ezek 20:25-26), God gave to spiritual Israel statutes by which this holy nation cannot live, statutes that will cause this nation to condemn its firstborn hated son to the lake of fire (Rom 9:6-13); for Jesus said not to be surprised when those disciples who have done evil [doing evil is nothing more than taking to oneself the determination of good and evil] are resurrected to condemnation (John 5:29).

Let no one deceive you, God gave and will give statutes by which Israel cannot live. Because of repeated lawlessness with no repentance; because of any lawlessness after being “filled with” or “empowered by” the Holy Spirit, God will cause a delusion to come over the spiritual nation that sends all who do not love and believe the truth—Jesus’ words are *truth*—into the lake of fire (2 Thess 2:11-12). Yes, He will! He will not permit this lawless person to repent by causing the person not to want to repent. That is what a delusion is all about. He will do this in the Tribulation after the hated son, who covers himself with his own righteousness as Esau was covered with visible hair, rebels against God by attempting to enter His rest on the following day. God has done this in the past to the natural nation, and to the teachers of the spiritual nation (Matt 7:21-23) who do mighty works in Jesus’ name but who teach disciples to live as spiritual Gentiles rather than as spiritual Judeans.

The person who *hears* Jesus’ words and *believes* the One who sent Jesus [who only spoke the words of the Father] passes from death to life (John 5:24), but the person who loves unrighteousness [profaning the Sabbaths of God is loving unrighteousness] goes from death to condemnation and the second death. The person who knows to keep the Sabbaths of God, but who refuses to do so is a hypocrite whose righteousness doesn’t exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees (Matt 5:20). Therefore, this person will not **ever** enter the kingdom of heaven—unless the person deeply repents if God permits the person to still repent. At some point, the person will not be able to repent. It will be said of the person that he or she has seared his or her conscience, but just as true is that God

will not permit repentance just as He defiled the natural nation through that nation's gifts.

Rebuilding the house of God [the temple] in the Jerusalem above is not done with shaped stone and cedar timber; nor does the dedication of this rebuilt temple require finding a lowing red heifer. These are physical things that pertain to the present day Jerusalem that the Apostle Paul compared to Hagar (Gal 4:24-25), and to slavery—and every disciple who places importance on the reconstruction of a physical temple in present day Jerusalem is a child of Hagar, and not of promise. This disciple lacks spiritual understanding, and worse, is a snare set by the Adversary to trap infant sons of God and causes them to stumble, fall backwards, and become broken clay vessels.

Jesus didn't come to accuse Israel of wrongdoing. Every Israelite, physical as well as spiritual, has an accuser in Moses (Deu 31:24-27), who said of the uncircumcised children of the nation that left Egypt, "I know how rebellious and stubborn you are." Their rebelliousness didn't end when these uncircumcised Israelites crossed the Jordan. It didn't end when their descendants asked for a king, thereby rejecting the Lord as their sovereign. It didn't end when the nation divided, or when Assyria took the house of Israel captive, or when Nebuchadnezzar took Jerusalem captive, or when a remnant returned from Babylon to rebuild a physical house of God under the command of Cyrus. It hasn't ended to this day, when God has returned a remnant to the Promised Land, penning this remnant of the nation that left Egypt in and around present day Jerusalem where this remnant awaits being destroyed and mostly devoured as a paschal lamb of God...

When Israel sacrificed the first Passover lamb in Egypt, was a physical temple or a sanctified priesthood necessary? No, neither were necessary, were they? And neither will again be necessary when the firstborn physical son of the Lord (Ex 4:22), selected and penned in Judea on the 10th day of the first month (Jos 4:19), is sacrificed when all firstborns not covered by the blood of the Lamb of God are slain by death angels at the midnight hour of this long night of watching and waiting that began at Calvary. Yes, the firstborn physical son of the *Yah* refuses to cover himself with the blood of Christ Jesus, whom this son slew as Oedipus killed his father and married his mother to the destruction of his offspring. Yes, this firstborn physical son of God today has no covering for its sins, and is as a firstborn Egyptian was when Pharaoh refused Moses. Yes, this firstborn son, the modern nation of Israel, is now penned in the Promised Land. But this firstborn son is not without blemish: more Israelis are on the beach on Sabbath than attend synagogue services. Thus, before this firstborn son can serve as a paschal lamb, it must be purified as if it were that heifer, red with its own blood.

The disciple who teaches others that a physical temple must again be built in present day Jerusalem before Christ returns mingles the old and new covenants as did the Circumcision Faction that came from Jerusalem in the 1st-Century CE. The mingled gospel that this disciple teaches is, again, doubly accused (Gal 1:8-9)—it was an accursed gospel in the 1st-Century, and it is an accursed gospel now at the end of this present evil age. The Apostle Paul cursed this mingled gospel long before *The Philadelphia Church* can curse it today: those would-be teachers of spiritual Israel who proclaim a mingled endtime gospel that would have infant sons of God awaiting the construction of a physical temple in present day Jerusalem now mutilate not the flesh of converts, but the minds and hearts of infant sons of God. These would-be teachers are spiritual butchers that wield the *Jerusalem Post* instead of a scalpel and sleeve. And for their lack of love,

they, too, will be sacrificed as the Body of the firstborn Son of the Father after they are spiritually purified with blood.

After declaring the mingled [and mangled] message that the Galatians had accepted an accursed gospel, Paul asked whether the Galatians thought he was seeking the approval of man, or God (Gal 1:10). Paul's question can also here be asked: whom does *Philadelphia* seek to serve? If *Philadelphia* sought to serve humankind, then proclaiming the easy gospel of *all come to Christ just as you are* would make more sense, and would certainly produce more of a following that would give more money so that this "easy" gospel could be more loudly proclaimed to the outermost reaches of the world. But Paul wasn't seeking the approval of men, especially those who were coming from Jerusalem and teaching converts to mutilate their flesh. Paul was, instead, serving Christ Jesus, as is *Philadelphia*, who now proclaims the difficult message that except for the twelve baskets of partially devoured fragments and a remnant that gets into the boat, the firstborn spiritual and physical son of the Most High and of His Christ will be sacrificed before the *light of men* returns to fight on a day of battle. Symbolism laid aside, the number of devout Sabbatarian Christians and Jews slain during the first three and a half years of the seven endtime years of tribulation will be staggering. But none of the faithful will be spiritually lost, not even the smallest fragment of a loaf.

Rebuilding the spiritual house of God in the heavenly Jerusalem above—again, a mental construction made in living stone—is accomplished through the teachings of Jesus, the great Prophet promised by Moses. And this spiritual house is constructed on understanding spiritual birth as actual birth in the heavenly realm, occurring when a person is drawn from the world by the Father and given the Holy Spirit. Before being drawn by the Father, the person has no spiritual life, no immortal soul. After being drawn, the person becomes a *one-off* spiritual creation that is domiciled in a tent of flesh; thus, this new creation is a son of God that must still put on immortality.

*

Hearing Jesus' words includes hearing what He had to say about the Sabbath. Because Jesus healed a man on the Sabbath, thereby giving the man "rest" from being an invalid for thirty-eight years (John 5:5 — Jesus would have likely seen this man when He went to the temple when twelve), and for being accused of *working* on the Sabbath, Jesus answered the Jews, saying, "My Father is working until now, and I am working" (v. 17).

The timeless heavenly realm is the reality foreshadowed by entrance into the geographical Promised Land (Ps 95:10-11), by peace in the Promised Land (1 Chron 22:9-10), and by entrance into the weekly Sabbath (Heb 4:1-4). "Rest" is not about doing nothing, for no crop would be brought forth from the Judean hillsides if work were not done. The temple would not have been built by Solomon if work had not been done during that "rest" given by God. And the spiritual house of God would not be constructed in the heavenly city if work is not done on the weekly Sabbath—but this work is never the labor of hands and body to provide for the belly, but rather, the work of releasing from the grinding process those who are being ground fine by the Adversary. The Sabbath labor of disciples is about giving rest to the spiritually weary, to the spiritually infirm; is about healing the maimed, the paralyzed; is about releasing the bound from the clutches of the Adversary. It is not about measuring footsteps or the size of burdens, or about throwing out dishwater. It will always be about giving rest, and about getting others into the rest of God.

But the Sabbath is never the time when disciples do their weekly shopping. It is never a time for buying and selling that does not give rest to the weary. And there remains the keeping of the "little Sabbath" (i.e., the weekly Sabbath) for the people of God (Heb 4:9)...the disciple who knows to keep the Sabbath and who does not condemns him or herself to the lake of fire. No covenant made with Death that makes lies [falsehoods] this holy nation's refuge and shelter (Isa 28:15) will save the lawless disciple.

*

The person conducting the Sabbath service should close services with two hymns, or psalms, followed by a prayer asking God's dismissal.

* * * * *

"Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version, copyright ©2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved."

[\[Home \]](#) [\[Sabbath Readings \]](#)