

The following suggested or possible grouping of Scripture passages are offered to aid beginning fellowships. The readings and limited commentary are, hopefully, obviously thematically related. And the concept behind this Sabbath's selection, and behind the first series of selection is *the role of women in the new covenant, considering their absence in patriarchal Israel*.

[Printable/viewable PDF format](#)

Weekly Readings

For the Sabbath of June 4, 2005

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 first passage read should be Ezra chapters one (1) and two (2), with the person reading noting that males, or sons were numbered. Except for the numbering of male and female servants and singers (chapter 2, verse 64), with no separation as to how many were of either sex, the number of women who returned from the Babylonian captivity to rebuild the house of God in Jerusalem is unknown.

Commentary: Israel went into captivity because the nation did not keep the laws of God, but rather, transgressed the laws and profaned the Sabbaths of God. This is seen in the following passage:

The next passage to be read should be Ezekiel chapter twenty (20), with the person reading noting that in verses 27 and 30 "fathers" are mentioned.

Commentary: when Israel returned from Babylon, did God enter into judgment with the nation in a wilderness of people as He entered into judgment with their fathers in the land of Egypt (vv. 34-36)? He did not. He did not bring Israel out of Babylon as He brought Israel out of Egypt. Thus, there remains a future fulfillment of these verses that pertain to bringing Israel "[into the bond of the covenant](#)" (v. 37).

The person reading should now go to Exodus and read chapters eleven (11) and twelve (12), noting how God had entered into judgment with Israel in Egypt, and noting that in chapter 12, verse 37, the men were numbered.

The person reading should now go to Numbers chapter one (1) and read verses 1 through 19, then go to Numbers chapter twenty-six (26) and read verses 1 through 4.

Commentary: the Israelites who are numbered are those able to go to war, males over age twenty. They are first physically circumcised--because they are males--and second, they are physically mature.

The nation with which God entered into judgment in the land of Egypt did not enter His rest because of unbelief that became disobedience.

The person reading should now read Psalm ninety-five (95), followed by reading Hebrews chapter three (3) and chapter four (4), through verse 11.

Commentary: The writer of Hebrews addresses the narrative to [chap 3:1] the plural *adelphoi*, translated literally as "brothers," but often mistranslated as the politically correct "brothers and sisters." The addressed audience is disciples, those individually who have the Spirit of God.

The person reading should now read Galatians chapter three (3), verses 23 through 29.

Commentary: Every person--regardless of whether biologically male or female, or genetically a birth descendant of the patriarch Israel or not, or socially a slave or free--if baptized into Christ is a son of God. And herein is the reality of **typology**: the baptized person, born of Spirit, has been spiritually circumcised, a euphemistic expression for the equally euphemistic expression of having the laws of God written on the person's heart and mind. Spiritual circumcision is the spiritual equivalent of physical circumcision; hence, the baptized disciple is the reality foreshadowed by the circumcised Israelite male.

The person reading should now read Jeremiah chapter twenty-three (23), verses 1 through 8, followed by Jeremiah chapter sixteen (16).

Commentary: In order for an exodus of 600,000 men along with uncounted women and children to be forgotten, especially when this exodus from Egypt is the remembered event that presently shapes Israel's national sense of self-identification, the recovery of Israel from the north country and from all the lands where Israel has been scattered has to be of **much greater significance** than the formation of the modern nation of Israel. This recovery will not be of the physical nation only. This recovery will be of sons of God, born of Spirit, baptized, and biologically neither male or female; this recovery will be from sin and death. This recovery will be of the spiritual nation, holy to God (1 Pet 2:9), and this recovery will bring this nation, the greater Church of God, into the bond of the covenant.

Therefore, in conclusion, a physically circumcised Israelite from the exodus out of Egypt to the return of the nation from Babylon is the shadow of the spiritually circumcised disciple, a son of God who is neither male nor female, Jew nor Greek, free nor slave. This son of God thus differs from the physical

tabernacle or body of flesh in which this son of God dwells. This son of God is the inner, self-aware, self-conscience entity of the born anew mind and heart. This son of God is not physical, but spiritual.

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."