

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 this third in a series, is *the role of women in the new covenant, considering their absence in patriarchal Israel*.

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## Weekly Readings

For the Sabbath of June 18, 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 Ephesians, chapters 1 through 6.*

**Commentary:** The Apostle Paul wrote to the saints at Ephesus to reveal the scope or magnitude of God's plan for humanity. The separation of human beings through physical circumcision was abolished. No longer was hostility to exist between those who identified themselves as Circumcised and those who were called the Uncircumcised. The law that had separated them was abolished (2:15).

The ultimate hostility between circumcised and uncircumcised is between males, who were born in the flesh with the necessary appendage to be circumcised, and females. The covenant of circumcision was made in the flesh.

*The reader should now read Genesis, chapter 17.*

**Commentary:** The terms of the covenant the Lord made with Abram called for Abram to walk before the Lord and to be blameless [in his walk] (v. 1). This was Abram's obligation. And for walking blameless before Him, the Lord would multiply Abram greatly (v. 2), and Abram would be the father of a multitude of nations (v. 5). In addition, the linguistic radical for aspirated, or vocalized breath was added to Abram's name--Abram, at this time, received the Breath of God, the Holy Spirit [*Pneuma 'Agion*]. And as a sign that now Abraham and his offspring "throughout their generations," so not one offspring is referenced but generations of offspring, will receive the promises made to Abraham, he and every male of his household and of the generations to come shall be circumcised in the flesh of their foreskins. The covenant was sealed through the cutting away of flesh.

The promises of this covenant gave to Abraham and his offspring the land on which he had sojourned as an everlasting possession, but the land, the world is not without end. There will come new heavens

and a new earth, which is not physical and on which flesh will not dwell. So the land promised to Abraham lasts until the end of an age still to come, but an age that is sure to end.

Everything that is physical will die, will end, including a covenant made in the flesh. This is what the Apostle Paul understood, and said happened at Calvary. Unless that which is flesh, that which is physical puts on immortality, it will die, will end.

The abiding controversy in the 1<sup>st</sup>-Century Church was that of circumcision. Was clipping the foreskins of Gentile converts necessary? The powerful circumcision faction said that it was, for the Lord had said to Abraham (when he received the Holy Spirit) that His covenant shall be an everlasting covenant, that any uncircumcised male shall be cut off from his people, that this male has broken covenant with the Lord (vv. 13-14). Strong language! But also language that excludes from the covenant those who do not have foreskins to be circumcised.

After addressing circumcision, God said to Abraham that concerning his wife, he should no more call her Sarai, but Sarah...the /ah/ radical for aspirated, or vocalized breath was also added to her name. She, too, received the Breath of God. And to her was promised a son. God said to Abraham that with this promised son, whom God named Isaac, God would establish His everlasting covenant. The covenant went to Isaac, not to Ishmael, who received a different promise, one entirely physical.

*The reader should now read Galatians, chapters 1 through 5.*

**Commentary:** The doubly accused gospel isn't one that would have disciples living by the laws of God written on their hearts and mind, but by the law carved into the flesh, the law that separates the Circumcised from the Uncircumcised. As chapter 5 reveals, these Galatians--Gentile converts--had begun to circumcise themselves because of the teaching of someone who had come from Jerusalem. But physical circumcision of disciples causes the person to walk naked before God, covered by only his own obedience. To become physically circumcised caused the born anew disciple to be "revealed" before being empowered by, or filled by the Holy Spirit as happened on that day of Pentecost following Calvary. Physical circumcision causes the disciple to be spiritually disrobed. The disciple no longer wears the garment of Christ Jesus' righteousness. The disciple has rejected Grace, and has taken on full accountability for his sins. Thus, the disciple has made himself into a physical Judean; literally, a Jew who must by faith keep the laws and commandments of God if this person is to keep the life he has been given in the heavenly realm. Abraham practiced walking with God, and walking by faith for ninety-nine years (his age) before being given the Holy Spirit.

Under the second covenant mediated by Moses (Deu 29-31), if a circumcised Israelite returned to keeping the laws of God when in a far country, returned to keeping the laws by faith (for there would have been no cultural necessity to keep the laws in a far country), God would bring this circumcised Israelite back to Judea and would give to this Israelite a circumcised heart and mind/soul after this

demonstration of obedience by faith. But there is no necessity for a Gentile in a far country to keep the laws of God; the Gentile is at home in the far country. Thus, to get the Gentile to leave that far country and to spiritually journey to Judea, the Father gives to the chosen Gentile the Holy Spirit prior to demonstrated obedience. Under the second covenant mediated by Christ Jesus, the Holy Spirit is received while still far from God, and while the Gentile still lives as a son of disobedience. Grace is necessary to cover the lawlessness of this newly born son of God while this son learns to walk blamelessly before God. So the Gentile who has been born anew and who becomes circumcised, which is making the person naked before God, without having first practiced walking blamelessly before God effectively commits spiritual suicide. This person declares that he has no need for a sin offering, or covering for sin. This person denies Jesus, even if pretending to worship the Son. Thus, this person bears his sins himself, and the wage for sin is death.

The Apostle Paul's doubly cursed gospel manifests itself in the 21<sup>st</sup>-Century much as it did in Galatia and Ephesus: a spiritual son of God must be a son in the flesh before this spiritual son can speak. Whereas the hostility of circumcision is abolished in Christ Jesus, with every disciple now being a part of one body, with this body speaking the words uttered by the head, who spoke the words of the Father, certain members of this body, using the words of Paul, prohibit other members of the same body from speaking. This ought not to be. The epistles of Paul are being misused, for spiritual sons are neither Jew nor Greek, male nor female. They are neither circumcised nor uncircumcised in the flesh, for circumcision of the flesh is an alteration to the tabernacle in which the son of God dwells and not an alteration of the son himself, who is spiritually circumcised when the laws of God are written on the heart and put into the mind. The hostility of circumcision really ended at Calvary, but has been retained by today's circumcision faction.

Again, the only words the body can utter are those spoken by the Head, for a body speaks through the lips of the mouth. The body cannot decide to enter God's rest on another day, or sanction what God has clearly prohibited. For the body to do so equates to the Woman, the greater Church, as deceived as the first Eve, speaking and not learning from her Husband. The Woman **cannot** speak. Only sons of God, speaking the words of the Father, have a voice. The Woman, that is the Church, though, has spoken her own words in the male voice of Church Fathers, who swallowed that old serpent's lie that the Woman would not die, but has an immortal soul. The Woman did what Paul clearly prohibited, all the while excluding biological women from speaking, from teaching, or having authority over a man. The body of Christ would have benefited if the Woman had applied to herself what she taught in her male voice; the Church Fathers were as Mel Gibson's Satan is in his movie, *The Passion of the Christ*.

Disciples are the spiritual descendants of Abraham, but not all of Abraham's offspring are of promise. The promise was of one, Jesus, who said that those who hear His voice and believe the words of the One who sent Him will receive everlasting life (John 5:24). Hearing His voice, though, requires that the disciple be silent and listen. Thus, all disciples are as the Woman is until they learn from their Husband, Christ Jesus.

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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