

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 is *the fourth in a series of 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 25, 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 1 Corinthians, beginning with chapter 5, verse 1, and continuing to the end of chapter 7.*

**Commentary:** The person joined to a prostitute becomes one flesh with the prostitute, while the person joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him--herein is that separation of flesh from spirit. Sexual union makes two one flesh. Sex is an attribute of the flesh, not of the Spirit. Sexual immorality, though, affects the Spirit in a manner similar to greed, idolatry, and swindling a brother in Christ; hence, Paul says that because of the temptation to immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband. Thus, sexual union is not for mere procreation as some fellowships teach, but serves as a check on the temptation to sexual immorality.

Paul says a disciple should live as the person was called, married or unmarried, circumcised or uncircumcised. Although he doesn't forbid the unmarried to marry, he advises against it because of the shortness of the time. Actually, there has been much more time than Paul anticipated. Although his advice was sound if time had been as short as he thought, his advice was his opinion--and he expresses his opinion as a matter of doctrine concerning the otherwise unanticipated situation of either husband or wife, and not the other, being drawn and called.

Either a husband and wife can be chosen by the Father for spiritual birth as one born out-of-season, or born as part of the early barley harvest as opposed to part of the main crop wheat harvest. Again spiritual circumcision is of the inner, self-aware, self-conscious new man, a son of God born into the tabernacle of the old self, or man. Thus, we again see that physical circumcision and biological gender are only of the flesh, of the tabernacle in which the person dwells. What counts is "keeping the commandments of God" (7:19), which is of the heart; for under the new covenant, the commandments go from what the hand and body do to what the mind thinks and the heart desires.

The law of sin and death continues to dwell in the flesh (Rom 7:25) even though the mind of the disciple has been liberated from sin through receipt of the Holy Spirit. Paul addresses the situation of the hormonal desires of the flesh causing (through temporarily controlling the thoughts of the disciple) the disciple to be tempted to sexual immorality. The newly born-from-above disciple must fight against these hormonal desires of the flesh, and one way to fight against them is to marry, which is honorable. Now the desires of the flesh work to transform two individuals into one. What the unmarried person struggled to control (if that is the case) becomes a tool used for bonding. A butcher knife and a scalping knife appear similar in shape and size. Both are tools used to cut, the first for the lawful needs of the disciple, the second for the mutilation for a slain enemy. The same can be said of the thoughts produced in the disciple's mind by hormones manufactured by the flesh.

That Paul was rendering his opinion in the matter of marrying and not marrying, and as to how much time remained before Jesus returned, is beyond doubt. What Paul writes is of the Holy Spirit, but to make his opinion infallible approaches blasphemy. For Paul's cultural bias is revealed through the amount of words he devotes to the betrothed man as opposed to the amount he uses in addressing the betrothed woman. Paul was of a patriarchal culture, and in turn, wrote as a Spirit-led male in that patriarchal culture. He knew that Jesus would return shortly, but he didn't realize that nearly two millennia was "shortly," was of the same spiritual night that began at Calvary when the world turned away from the light to begin a long period of spiritual darkness. Disciples as lights could not be seen except that the world is in darkness, and disciples as lights will be seen until the Son returns. Thus, the darkness--this long night of watching--continues until the light returns. Paul thought that this would happen in his lifetime. He placed this thought in his epistles, as he did his thoughts about women. These thoughts are in principle correct, for they are of the Holy Spirit, but in detail even in their original language they are not infallible for Paul did not live to see Christ's return. Paul's opinions are right within the limitation that the glorified Jesus had not yet revealed everything to Paul that He had uttered in parables and in figurative language during His earthly ministry.

*The readers shall now read Ezekiel, chapter 16, followed by chapter 23.*

**Commentary:** In both accounts the nations of Israel are compared to women who have married the Lord. These once holy nations of circumcised Israelites (and of Sodom) form the visible shadow of the holy spiritual nation that is the greater Church, and the expectation of the commandment against adultery, with the prescribed penalty [stoning], is God's expectation for His holy nation.

The Woman, Eve, was deceived by the serpent. But the sin or lawlessness of her children was not reckoned against them even though all of them died (*read Rom 5:12-14*). But when the law came, sin was reckoned as sin.

Of all nations, Israel was chosen to be the firstborn son of the Lord (Exod 4:22), and the law was given to Israel in the same way that a man marries a woman. The law of God was already known (*read*

*Exod 18:16, and Gen 26:5*). Moses knew it, and used it to judge Israel. Thus, when Israel entered the wilderness of Sinai, the Lord proposed to the nation in a way somewhat similar to how a man would propose to a woman (*read Exod 19:3-8*). The elders of Israel accepted on behalf of the nation. Therefore, the giving and accepting of the law was as the exchange of marriage vows. All that had gone on before between the Lord and Israel is described in Ezekiel 16:1-8. But the giving of the law or the covenant, Israel's sins were as those of the other nations. They were not reckoned against her until the law came, until marriage vows were exchanged. But once married, faithfulness is the expectation.

The giving of the law forms the visible shadow of the revealing of the Son of Man, when from henceforth sin will be reckoned against spiritual Israel, as sin was reckoned against the physically circumcised holy nation.

*The reader shall now read from the prophet Hosea, chapters 1 through 4.*

**Commentary:** In both the Old and the New Testaments, the holy nation of God is His firstborn son, and His Bride--and a mostly faithless bride. The relationship of marriage becomes the defining metaphor for the relationship of the *Logos* with the Most High (i.e., *Theos* with *Theon*) prior to the birth and baptism of Jesus of Nazareth. The two functioned as one, as seen in the deconstruction of the Tetragrammaton *YHWH*, which becomes the radical */YH/* plus the radical */WH/*. Each radical is *Eloah*, or God [*/El/*] plus Breath [*/ah/*]. Thus, together, they form the plural *Elohim*, usually used in a single sense. The two are one, as in man and woman becoming, when married, one flesh. Marriage is, then, the image of the divine relationship between *Theos* and *Theon* (from John 1:1-2) prior to *Theos* being born as the man Jesus.

*The reader shall now read John, chapter 17.*

**Commentary:** Disciples are to be one with Jesus as Jesus is one with the Father. The relationship will be that of marriage to the Son, and as sons to the Father. Disciples will then be one in marriage with the Son as a man and a woman are to be one when married. And because glorified disciples are one with the Son, they have the same relationship with the Father as the Son has with the Father; they will be literally younger siblings to Christ Jesus, will be younger sons of the Father (Rom 8:29).

The role of a woman is the role of the *Logos*, who created all that is, then interacted with human beings, even to giving His life at Calvary. The woman is, indeed, saved in childbirth, for Jesus was born of the womb of a woman. As the *Logos*, Jesus spoke for *YHWH*; as a human being, Jesus spoke for the Father. The two were one, and when hearing the one speak, the listener heard the words of the other. Therefore, the contention that exists between husband and wife in too many marriages should not be, and will not be when the "chosen" (from Matt 22:14) are glorified. Many are called, but few are chosen because too many are faithless. As biological women, the many speak their own words. As

biological men, the many do not have faith that the woman will speak his words, so they exercise heavy-handed authority over the woman. In both cases, the many have failed.

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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