

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. The concept behind this Sabbath's selection, and behind this fifth selection 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 July 2, 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 Genesis, chapter 38.

Commentary: Except for an Israelite's named wife—Sarah in the case of Abraham—a woman in patriarchal Israel was identified by her genitalia. She was in Hebrew literally a gully. The now customary respect Anglo-European men have for woman did not exist within the patriarchy. Nor does it today exist in Islamic cultures that remain radically monotheistic. And a curious juxtaposition emerges: how women are treated within a culture discloses important details about the culture's relationship with its deity. As the role of women escalated in importance, so has the role of the Son. Prayers within a large segment of Evangelical Christianity are today directed to Christ Jesus. Instead of asking God the Father in His Son's name, much of Evangelical Christianity asks the Son for its daily bread and other necessities. Within these fellowships, women have strong roles—much stronger than they have in what is often considered primitive churches. But all of this is from the perspective of culture, which remains under the rule of the prince of the power of the air. Thus, this disguised angel of light and his disguised ministers of righteousness (2 Cor 11:14-15) directly effect more than Christian fellowships in subtle ways, thereby making what seems right to humankind rebellion against God.

In the Roman Church prayers are directed to Mary, thereby effectively making a four-person godhead that has prophetic significance that will be discussed in the near future.

Judah says that Tamar was more righteous than he was, but his reason for saying this didn't pertain to him obtaining sexual release from whom he believed was a cult prostitute, but pertained to him not giving Tamar to his youngest son.

Solomon sinned against the Lord in the matter of his foreign wives (*read 1 Kings 11:6-8*). The remnant that had returned from Babylon sinned because of their foreign wives.

The reader should now read Ezra, chapters 9 and 10, followed by Nehemiah chapter 13, verses 23 through 27.

Commentary: God gave Israel rest all the days of Solomon (*read 1 Chronicles 22:9, 17-19*), thereby making his reign a type of Christ's millennial reign. Israel was to enter God's rest when the nation entered Judea—the nation that left Egypt was not allowed to enter God's rest (Psalm 95:10-11 & Hebrews 3:19). The weekly Sabbath is a diminutive form of God's rest (Hebrews 4:9), with Christ's millennial reign being a type of heaven on earth. Thus, the sin of Solomon directly pertains to the Church. How it pertains becomes a question the Christian Church has yet to resolve; for in marriage, two become one flesh.

Again, a physically circumcised Israelite forms the visible shadow of the spiritually circumcised son of God born from above—of the Apostle Paul's new man or new creature. The house or tent in which this circumcised Israelite dwells represents or forms the visible shadow of the tabernacle of flesh in which the spiritually circumcised son of God dwells. The flesh isn't the person; the brain and heart aren't the person. Under the new covenant, the laws of God are put into the mind and written on the heart; thus, mind and heart have the same relationship to the Apostle Paul's new man or creature as the two tablets of stone had to the circumcised Israelite. Hence, the desires of the heart and the thoughts of the mind now embody this new creature. So for a circumcised Israelite to marry a foreign wife becomes the equivalent of a disciple's desires and thoughts to wed and become one with blasphemy, idolatry, abominations against God. This does, indeed, occur. Disciples mentally wrestle with the failings of the flesh, but the spiritual "wedding" of a foreign wife isn't a hormonal driven failing of the flesh. It isn't a lust of the eye, or a pride of possession. It is, rather, an identification of self, as in sexual orientation (most obvious when the orientation differs from the biology) as one example. And the disciple must put away this foreign "wife" that will otherwise keep this son of God out of the kingdom.

The problem now comes when there are "children" from this spiritual wedding of a foreign wife. The low barre established for entering Christian fellowship by the Jerusalem conference doesn't allow for an unmarried couple, living together, to attend services.

The reader should now read Acts, chapter 15.

Commentary: The question before the Jerusalem conference was physical circumcision, not the role of marriage or of women, but the question of circumcision directly relates to the role of women. The argument made by the circumcision faction was that a Gentile had to first become a physical Israelite before becoming a spiritual Israelite. This would effectively preclude women from becoming spiritual

Israelites, for physical circumcision is not possible. What poses as female circumcision is genital mutilation that does not leave the woman naked before God, covered only by her own obedience; rather, the woman is always covered by the male. Sin didn't enter the world by Eve, but by Adam, who covered Eve's sin as Christ Jesus presently covers the sins of disciples. Thus, the circumcision faction lacked understanding of what physical circumcision represented.

Before God, there is neither male nor female. The wedding of glorified disciples to the Son will make those disciples one with the Son, who is one with the Father. A person cannot be one with the Father and with the Son and still be a foreigner.

The reader should now read the book of Ruth, chapters 1 through 4.

Commentary: When Ruth tells Naomi that *your people shall be my people, and your God my God* (1:16), Ruth ceases to think of herself as a foreigner. Her marriage to Boaz fully incorporates her into Israel, and she stands in opposition to the foreign wives that Solomon married.

Returning to Tamar, Judah became one with his daughter-in-law and through her produced two sons. But he thought he was involved with a cult prostitute that could be paid and forgotten...that with which a disciple becomes one cannot be paid and forgotten.

The reader should now read 1 Corinthians, chapter 6, verses 12 through 20.

Commentary: For disciples, sexual immorality isn't merely a matter of succumbing to the weakness of the flesh. Born anew sons of God, whether dwelling in a tabernacle that is biologically male or female, are as physically circumcised Israelites were—they can become one with, or can use "women" as objects. But they must pay for the object, spiritually pay, with the wages for sin being death.

By the same standard, born anew sons of God are to become one with those things that are of God.

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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