

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 *Salvation*.

Weekly Readings For the Sabbath of August 12, 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 subject of salvation is truly central to Christianity, for the claim of Christianity is absolute exclusivity: by no other name than that of Christ Jesus can a person be saved. But Christians cannot agree concerning even how this name should be said, or pronounced, or replicated, let alone over larger issues such as Law and Grace. If anything, Christianity is a divided house that, using the authority invested in the Disciples, has condemned most of the house to hell. Thus, the principles underlying salvation through the name Christ Jesus have somehow been overlooked in the marketing of a theologically *lite faith that is long on praise music and short on Bible study*.

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The person conducting the service should read or assign to be read Luke chapter 10, verses 25 through 37.

Commentary: The lawyer is and represents the Israelite who knows the law, has access to the Scriptures, and has devoted his life to religious study—or at least this is who the lawyer should be, for the lawyer was testing Jesus in a manner mentally analogous to how Israel physically tested the Lord ten times (Num 14:22). The lawyer sought to make Jesus prove Himself. Thus, the lawyer asked what he must do to inherit eternal life, or put into the language of Christianity, what he must do to be saved.

Jesus didn't tell the lawyer that salvation was not yet possible because He, Jesus, had not yet died ... one of the worst theological mistakes a Christian can make is to not believe what Paul writes: "Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses" (Rom 5:14). The promise of life comes with the Moab covenant (Deu 29:1) mediated by Moses, not from the sacrifice of the Passover Lamb of God at Calvary. It is in this Moab covenant where spiritual circumcision is first offered (Deu 30:6), with the implementation of this covenant coming from an act of faith (*vv.* 1-2).

Paul also writes that his fellow countrymen had a law that would have lead to righteousness if pursued by faith (Rom 9:31-32), this law being the Moab covenant (*cf.* Rom 10:6-8; Deu 30:11-14). The problem of salvation wasn't with the law, but with the people who tested God with their unbelief (*cf.* Heb 8:8; 3:19; Ps 95:10-11). It was the

holy nation that needed to be repaired through spiritual circumcision and the cleansing of hearts by faith.

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The reader should now read Deuteronomy chapter 10, verses 12 through 22.

Commentary: The lawyer accurately summarizes the above passage—and Jesus told the lawyer, “You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live” (Luke 10:28). So indeed, there is a law that will lead to righteousness and salvation, not something Evangelical Christianity is quick to admit. But this law must be pursued by faith, not as if it were a work of the hands. This law will have the holy nation of Israel return to God by faith ... one of the better promises added when the mediator changed from Moses to Christ Jesus is that the covenant went from being made with the natural nation of Israel to being made with individuals that comprise a spiritual nation of Israel that wasn't before a nation (1 Pet 2:9-10). And as Paul writes concerning his fellow countrymen, not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel (Rom 9:6).

As an aside, there are Bible teachers who object to the term *spiritual Israel*, saying that they cannot find this term anywhere in the Bible. They are correct. The term is not in Scripture. Instead, what is in Scripture is *not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel*, and *no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical* (Rom 2:28).

Enough confusion exists between ancient Israel of Scripture and the modern nation of Israel created by U.N. mandate. Even more confusion results from the ancient nation dividing in half, with the northern nation being identified by the phrase, the house of Israel. But the *Israel* of God isn't the northern nation, or the southern house of Judah, but the *polis* of Jerusalem when Ezekiel delivers his prophecies (see Ezek chap 12). So scripturally, the name *Israel* transfers from the patriarch Jacob to Jerusalem to the temple of God, which is not a physical building, but a living house constructed from living stones, the corner and cap stones being Christ Jesus (1 Cor 3:10-11, 16-17). Therefore, neither the lost ten tribes nor the visible circumcised peoples nor the modern nation has Scriptural authority to use the name, which properly applies only to the Christian Church—and then, only to that portion of the Church born of Spirit. So as the identifying name *Christian* is applied to many entities that do not recognize each other as “Christian,” the name *Israel* is used by and for entities that are not scripturally Israel. Thus, only with the use of an additional modifier can the nation born of Spirit and properly called *Israel* be reasonably accurately identified. The reasonable modifier to add is */spiritual/*, making the name of endtime Israel appear in discussions as *spiritual Israel*.

Of course, no additional modifier technically needs to be added. Confusion can be tolerated, with meaning taken entirely from the context. But the Bible teacher who denies that the modern nation occupying Jerusalem and the surrounding area has the right to call itself *Israel* inevitably does something as foolish as calling the United States and Great Britain *Israel*, when neither of these nations have been fully born of Spirit. The question now surfaces of whether this Bible teacher lacks spiritual understanding because he or she cannot scripturally identify *Israel*, or whether his or her lack of spiritual understanding come from misidentifying *Israel*. Hence, to eliminate vagueness from the referent for the identifying icon */Israel/*, the use of the phrase *spiritual Israel* will be continued even though it is not found in the Bible.

When the lawyer—whose business was to eliminate vagueness—asks who is his neighbor, Jesus tells the parable of the Good Samaritan, perhaps the best known of all of the parables He told. And this parable actually produces the vagueness the lawyer, who was short on love, sought to eliminate.

Remember, Jesus said that the lawyer had answered correctly the question of what shall he do to inherit eternal life—at this point, prior to Calvary, eternal life was to be inherited; it had not been given, a difference that makes the difference and underlies the logic for the false teaching of a *dispensation of Grace* as opposed to a *dispensation of Law*. So inheriting eternal life could be obtained through rightly judging matters under the Law of Moses (*cf.* John 7:19, 23-34; Ps 51), with physical circumcision the ratifying seal of nakedness before God, cleansed of sin through obedience to the precepts of God ... cleansed of sins through repentance and obedience, what John the Baptist taught. And once cleansed of sins through repentance and the baptism of John, obedience would keep the Observant Israelite clean. And this remains the condition for all of natural Israel who would *inherit* everlasting life under the terms of the Moab covenant.

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The reader should now read Hebrews chapter 9, verses 11 through 28.

Commentary: A principle that has been overlooked in Scripture is that covenants [i.e., what passes between the flesh, or between the cuttings as in *cutting to cutting*] that are copies of heavenly compacts are ratified with blood [resulting from a cutting of flesh], whereas covenants that are themselves heavenly things are ratified by better sacrifices. Literally, a covenant made to be abolished is made with the flesh, and ratified by blood, the life of the flesh. Thus, the Bible student can identify covenants that were made to be abolished by how these covenants are ratified, for the flesh is temporary—covenants made from their inception to be abolished are ratified by blood, including Christ Jesus entering heaven as the high priest of disciples, entering by the sacrifice of Himself, His flesh. When Christ Jesus reigns as King of kings and Lord of lords, he will not be the high priest of Israel, for the office of high priest will return to being here on earth, filled by a descendant of Zadok (Ezek 44:15-27). Christ Jesus will, then, no longer bear the sins of Israel as He does today. There will be no garment of Grace, but every man [and woman] will be covered before God by his [or her] own obedience, made possible by empowerment through being filled with the Holy Spirit.

The Moab covenant was ratified by a song (Deu chap 32). It is a heavenly compact, for by it comes life.

Likewise, the compact God made with Noah about never again destroying the earth with a flood was ratified by God setting a bow in the sky, so it is a heavenly compact.

But the covenant made at Sinai [Horeb] was ratified by blood (Exod 24:5-8); thus, from its inception, this Sinai covenant was made to be abolished. Likewise, physical circumcision was made to be abolished, but contrary to what Evangelical Christianity teaches, physical circumcision—being made naked before God—returns when the mantle of Grace is lifted, only to permanently disappear when humankind passes through the fire that separates dimensions.

So the law that the lawyer summarizes for Jesus—which Jesus said he read correctly—is not a law of *do's* and *don'ts*, but a law of love implemented by faith, the faith necessary to return to God and to keep His commandments, judgments, statutes, and precepts to which the lawyer had access and knowledge. Unfortunately, the lawyer

didn't love his neighbor, and was convicted of this lack of love by the parable of the Good Samaritan.

The details given in the parable are simple:

- A man leaving Jerusalem was robbed, stripped of his clothing, beaten and left for dead.
- A priest saw this naked, injured man—and when the priest saw him, passed by on the far side of the road.
- A Levite did likewise.
- A Samaritan, when he saw the naked man, had compassion, dressed the wounds, cared for the man, and agreed to pay future expenses for caring for the man.

Why would the priest and the Levite cross to the far side of the road? Was it because they saw that the man was not circumcised? Most likely. But the Samaritan was probably not circumcised, so when the Samaritan saw the man and recognized him as one of his own, he had compassion on the man, and cared for the man. And the lawyer would have realized that Jesus had convicted him, the lawyer, of not loving Samaritans, those who were spiritually unclean and defiled by birth—that in loving one's neighbor, the neighbor was all of the world, for all are of Adam through Noah.

Is there any logical leap here?

When Jesus asked the lawyer, “Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers” (Luke 10:36), the lawyer could not say *the Samaritan because he was one of his own*. The lawyer obviously could not answer *the priest or the Levite*. So the lawyer was forced to answer, or trapped into answering, “The one who showed him mercy” (v. 37). Thus, showing mercy to those who do not warrant even having wounds dressed satisfies that portion of the law which cannot be transmitted in languages added to thought at Babel. Only by getting behind the uttered word and doing by faith those things that show mercy can any person keep the Law of Moses ... the lawyer got behind the uttered words, but he didn't seem to want to be there.

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The reader should now read Matthew chapter 10, verses 40 through 42.

Commentary: Giving a cup of cold water doesn't seem like much when compared to what the Good Samaritan did, but showing mercy doesn't come in degrees even if it seems so. Showing mercy is an absolute. It either is present, or it isn't. There can be no “almost” showing mercy, or “close to” showing mercy. Either one shows mercy, or one doesn't.

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The reader should now read Jonah chapter 4.

Commentary: None of us consigned humankind to disobedience (Rom 11:32). God did so that He could show mercy on all. So are we like Jonah? Are we angry because lawless human beings, uncircumcised in spirit and in flesh, are to receive mercy by our hands as well as by God's hand?

A person can want another to fry in hell—a person can cross to the other side of the road because the injured man is a sinner, uncircumcised of heart and flesh—but what if you are the one injured through merely being consigned to disobedience? Who then is your neighbor? Who then will you not reach out to?

You are that person who has been injured, and you will remain injured until you, by faith, show mercy to your neighbor, the one whom you would not want to pass you by on his or her way into the resurrection of Firstfruits.

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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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