

The following Scripture passages are offered to aid beginning fellowships. The readings and commentary are offered as openings into dialogue about the subject or concept. And the concept behind this Sabbath's selection is *the second covenant*.

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## Weekly Readings

For the Sabbath of August 20, 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 person conducting the services should read or assign to be read Deuteronomy chapters 29 through 31.*

**Commentary:** A second covenant was made at Moab with the uncircumcised children of the nation that left Egypt. These children had shoes or sandals that hadn't worn out for forty years; they wore clothes that hadn't worn out. They hadn't eaten bread, nor drunk wine that they may know that the Lord is God (Deu 29:6). They were sustained miraculously. But apparently, they hadn't noticed the miracles of God, for they were largely born in the tents of their parents, who, because of their unbelief, were condemned to die in the wilderness and were never to physically enter God's rest.

*The reader should now read Psalm 95.*

**Commentary:** The psalmist identifies the promised landscape of Judea as God's rest, thereby creating the juxtaposition of Judea representing the seventh day Sabbath, Christ's millennial reign, and the heavenly realm. All three—the weekly Sabbath as the little or diminutive rest (Heb 4:9); the Millennium as the spiritual seventh day, and glorification as the ultimate rest—are foreshadowed by the uncircumcised children of the nation that left bondage crossing the Jordan and immediately becoming circumcised.

*The reader should now read Joshua chapters 3, 4, and 5.*

**Commentary:** God's rest is holy ground, both geographically and spiritually. And when physically uncircumcised Israelites entered, the first order of business was to become circumcised and to keep the Passover.

Circumcision under the second covenant is of the heart and mind, promised to Israel under Moses upon the particular act of faith that was returning to keeping the laws of God when exiled in a far land

(Deu 30:1-6 — the word usually translated as “soul” is *naphesh*, which can be equally well translated as “mind,” thereby maintaining linguistic continuity with Jer 31:33 & Heb 8:10). Physical circumcision foreshadows spiritual circumcision, just as the law of God written on two stone tablets foreshadows the laws of God written on two tablets of flesh. A physically circumcised Israelite dwelling in a house in Egypt while in bondage to Pharaoh forms the lively shadow of a spiritually circumcised son of God dwelling in a tabernacle of flesh while still in bondage to the law of sin and death that resides in the flesh. Therefore, disciples today are, who as the Apostle Paul was, the reality of physically circumcised Israel in Egypt. More precisely, disciples are living through the long night of watching between when the Passover lamb was slaughtered and the death angel passed through Egypt. Jesus is the Passover Lamb of God—He was penned in Jerusalem on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the first month and sacrificed between the evenings on the 14<sup>th</sup> day. Thus, a long spiritual night began at Calvary and has not yet ended. One night, not many, for Christ is light, and He has not yet returned. Dawn has not come, and will not come until the middle of seven endtime years of tribulation, when the Lord fights as on a day of battle. The [second Passover](#), or the Passover liberation of disciples from bondage to the law of sin and death remains ahead of the spiritual nation of Israel.

As Judea represents God’s rest, which is foreshadowed in the weekly Sabbath and in the spiritual seventh day, the story of the circumcised nation in Egypt, then leaving Egypt, crossing the Red Sea, and entering Judea forms the lively shadow of each disciple’s conversion, with “the old man” that left sin dying on the cross and the new creature born from above into the same tabernacle of flesh crossing the Jordan where he will live as a spiritual Judean. This is the level of representation that equates to the weekly Sabbath being God’s rest. The story of Israel that represents or corresponds to Judea being Christ’s millennial rest has the Church living through the long night of watching, the night on which Israel roasted the paschal lamb with fire and ate its flesh. Disciples figuratively roast the Lamb of God with fire when He bears their sins in the heavenly realm, and disciples eat the body and blood of the Lamb of God when they take the sacraments on the night Jesus was taken. Again, at this level of representation, the death angel has not yet passed through the land. Israel has not yet been liberated. And the nation that leaves Egypt/sin has not yet died in the wilderness without entering God’s rest because of this nation’s unbelief.

The above is correct! When the Church (i.e., all who have the Spirit of God) is empowered by the Holy Spirit so that the law of sin and death no longer resides in the flesh, but is outside of disciples, the Church—with exceptions represented by Joshua and Caleb—will rebel against God. The Church, today, forms the lively shadow of the physically circumcised nation in Egypt. The Church begs God for liberation, but it likes the leeks, garlic, and melons of bondage. It likes its houses, cars, pension plans. It likes to complain, but it doesn’t want to overcome sin—Jesus kept the laws of God so the Church doesn’t have to, or so the many teachers of lawlessness assure a spiritually enslaved nation.

But once liberation occurs, once the lives of men are again given as ransom (Isa 43:3-4) for the firstborn son of the last Eve, the spiritually holy nation will be revealed, or disrobed (Luke 17:26-30).

The garment of Christ Jesus' righteousness will be removed, for it will no longer be needed because of the Church's empowerment. So to transgress the law after being empowered by the Holy Spirit will be to commit blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Thus, the Church's only covering for sin will then be its obedience to God, who told the firstborn son of the first Eve that he [Cain] would be accepted if he did well (Gen 4:7). The firstborn spiritual sons of the last Eve will be accepted if they do well, which means keeping the laws of God as Moses commanded the uncircumcised children of Israel on the plains of Moab.

*The reader (or readers, for this will be a long reading) should now read Deuteronomy chapters 1 through 11.*

**Commentary:** Moses addresses the remnant of Israel that left Egypt, and the uncircumcised children born in the wilderness. But this remnant includes none of the men of war who left Egypt, except Caleb. None are still alive. None of the men of war lived to see Israel's victories on the plains of Moab before the nation crosses the Jordan, these victories forming the lively shadow of Israel's triumphs before glorification in the third level of representation (the level at which entering God's rest equates to glorification). These victories on the plains of Moab are achieved as the lively shadow of disciples who have died, and will die in faith before the holy nation of God is fully empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Again, the adult circumcised Israelite dwelling in a house in Egypt forms the lively shadow of a spiritually circumcised son of God dwelling today in a tabernacle of flesh in spiritual Babylon. For the individual, baptism equates to crossing the Red Sea—and the adult (the old man) who is baptized will not enter God's rest. The child of God born from above into the same tabernacle of flesh is now directly analogous to the uncircumcised child born into the tent of the adult who left Egypt.

Moses gave rest to the tribe of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, but their men of war had to cross the Jordan (where they, too, were circumcised) and fight with their brothers until God gave rest to all. Spiritually circumcised Israelites who, today, have been given rest as a people born out of season, are to still figuratively cross the Jordan and live as Judeans.

Under the second covenant mediated by Moses, circumcision of the heart and mind followed obedience and faith. The subject for next Sabbath will be the second covenant with Christ Jesus as mediator. Circumcision of the heart and mind now precedes obedience. Thus, grace or the covering of Christ's righteousness is necessary as the spiritually circumcised Israelite practices walking uprightly before 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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