

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 this Sabbath's selection begins *a series about spiritual birth and everlasting life*.

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Weekly Readings

For the Sabbath of September 3, 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 John, chapter 5.

Commentary: *Passing from death to life* (v. 24): Jesus has death preceding life, not following life. Scripture has light coming from darkness (Gen 1:3 & 2 Cor 4:6). Death and darkness become spiritual synonyms, as do life and light. Therefore, darkness in a physical sense allows disciples to perceive death in a spiritual sense—a calendar day begins with the setting of the sun at even. A “day” doesn't begin at midnight; it doesn't begin at daybreak. It begins with the “turning away” [the denotative meaning of the Hebrew] or “twisting away” from the light or hot portion of the day. The serpent is, thus, a valid, visual representation of this twisting away...the invisible spiritual realm (a dimension which human beings cannot physically enter to make measurements or observations) is made visible through the things that are (Rom 1:20). And in this heavenly realm, the twisting away from light occurred when iniquity was discovered in an anointed cherub (Ezek 28:15), this cherub becoming the Adversary, that old dragon or serpent Satan the devil (Rev 12:9). Darkness, then, entered the heavenly realm, and it was in this darkness that the earth was created (Gen 1:2). Thus, the physical creation became the repository of darkness. Literally, the creation is a death chamber that through the passage of time allows, or better, requires all “life” confined within the creation to die. (The presence of life within any moment precludes the absence of life within the same moment. The passing of the moment must occur before the presence of life can become the absence—and since time can be written as a function of gravity, time or space-time has been created. The heavenly realm is timeless, or without the passing of the moment. Having life in the heavenly realm is to have everlasting life, for the moment remains regardless of activity that occurs.)

Rebelling angels were cast into outer darkness—they were cast into time, or space-time. They will experience death if they are not allowed back into the heavenly realm. Hence, they will be judged by glorified saints who were consigned to disobedience (Rom 11:32), but who overcame the prince of the power of the air through mercy being extended to them while they learned to walk uprightly before

God. Change occurred within the life of every glorified saint, and this type of change or maturing in righteousness is only possible within the creation

The creation didn't *become* dark after an unrecorded period of being in light as proponents of the so-called gap theory [a teaching that has a gap in time occurring between Genesis chapter 1, verses 1 & 2] propose. Rather, the earth and all creation were/are constructed of physical elements that lacked/lack life in the heavenly realm; they were created spiritually lifeless, therefore in darkness. Hence, night precedes day as death precedes life, for "light" (or true light) is of God, and is, specifically, everlasting life in the heavenly realm. Darkness is the absence of such life.

Passing from death to life occurs in resurrection, the promise of Holy Writ. (John 5:25-29; Dan 12:2; Ezek 37:12-14).

Jesus said that the Pharisees "searched the Scriptures because [they thought] that in them [they] would find eternal life" (John 5:39)—today, disciples search the Scriptures to find eternal life. Jesus said that these Scriptures bore witness of Him, but the Pharisees refused to come to Him that He might give them life (v. 40). Today, the greater Church does not accept the witness of Scripture, which would have all disciples living by the commandments of God that have been written on two tablets of flesh [the heart and mind] and placed in a temple of flesh [the body of a disciple]. These are the same commandments that were inscribed on two stone tablets and placed in a stone temple. But it isn't the flesh that is under these commandments; rather, these same ten commandments now govern the desires of the hearts and the thoughts of the mind. They are to cleanse the inside of the cup—and when the inside is clean, the entire cup will be clean.

The witness of Scripture is: "If you believed Moses, you would believe me [Jesus]; for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?" (John 5:46-47), and "He said to him, "If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead"" (Luke 16:31). Today, greater Christianity does not believe that the writings of Moses pertain to Christians, nor will it hear Moses and the Prophets. Rather, it actively teaches against "legalism," which it defines as keeping the commandments of God. It doesn't realize that Moses was a visible representation of the invisible Son.

The reader should now read Exodus chapter 4.

Commentary: The *Logos* or Spokesperson of *YHWH* would speak to Aaron and would put words in Aaron's mouth, and would be with both Moses and Aaron to teach them. Aaron would then speak to the people as the mouth of Moses, and Moses would be as a god to Aaron (vv. 15-16). And this visible relationship of Moses being as god to Aaron, and Aaron speaking the words of Moses and by extension the words of *YHWH* to circumcised Israelites foreshadows the visible/invisible relationship of Jesus speaking the words of the Father to circumcised Israelites during His earthly ministry. Plus,

the relationship of deity, Moses as deity, and Aaron as spokesman also forms the lively shadow of the invisible, spiritual relationship between Father, Son, and the truly called out ministry speaking the words of the Father given to this ministry through receipt of the Holy Spirit.

As the Church began to grow in the 1st Century, many individuals who were not born of Spirit, or born-from-above listened to the message and taught it without truly understanding it. The problem in one fellowship became serious enough that the Apostle John mentions it and names an individual in his third epistle. The Apostle Paul mentions a similar problem in his epistle to the Galatians: teachers coming from the church at Jerusalem insisted that Gentile converts needed to be physically circumcised and become physical Israelites before they could become spiritually circumcised. The teachings of this so-called circumcision faction caused the situation that resulted in the Jerusalem Conference recorded in Acts chapter 15.

Following the Jerusalem Conference, the circumcision faction didn't quit teaching that converts need to first become physical Israelites. The Apostle Paul battled this particular teaching throughout his ministry. His instructions to Timothy given in his first epistle to the younger man must be placed in context with his epistle to the Ephesians: the circumcision faction was still causing trouble in Ephesus, and would continue to cause trouble to this day. As the circumcised nation divided into two houses following Solomon's death, the Church also divided into two houses: the school at Alexandria, and the school at Ephesus. The southern school obtained political dominance over the Church following the Council of Nicea (ca. 325 CE), but the northern school [Arian Christianity] ideologically and militarily contested this dominance, with its last military success occurring when the Vandals sacked Rome (ca. 600 CE). It will again achieve military success in the first half of the tribulation, when it will become the active face of Death, the fourth horseman (Rev 6:8).

The problem of false prophets and a false priesthood in the physically circumcised nation of Israel forms the lively shadow of the problem in the Church of false teachers and false ministries. Both the shadow and the reality that casts this shadow have all but one here and a few there being false, being of their father, Satan the devil. Jesus addressed this problem when He said, *Many are called but few are chosen* (Matt 22:14), and in His Sermon on the Mount (Matt 7:21-23). The good works that false teachers and false ministries do in the name of Christ have no meaning when they teach disciples not to keep the commandments (Matt 5:19), for if the righteousness of a disciple doesn't exceed the righteousness of the Pharisees, who were hypocrites in that they had the Law but didn't keep it (John 7:19), the disciple will not enter the kingdom of heaven (Matt 5:20).

The reader should now read Ezekiel, chapters 33 & 34.

Commentary: The timeframe for when God will recover His sheep is during the [seven, endtime years of tribulation](#). David will be their king following the resurrection when the Messiah comes.

The reader should now read 1 Peter chapter 5, verses 1 through 11, and 2 Peter, chapters 2 & 3.

Commentary: The surest way to identify a false prophet is if the person inserts Rome, the Roman Empire, or the Roman Church into the person's explication of endtime prophecies. If the person does, the person is false. And this assertion of fact is made without apologies and without qualifiers.

The other means of testing for genuineness is whether the person or the ministry teaches for financial gain: does the person or ministry live and work on the same terms that the Apostle Paul lived and worked?

The reader should now read 2 Corinthians chapter 11.

Commentary: Paul had the right to the tithes and offerings of the saints at Corinth, but he didn't accept or demand them, for he was establishing a precedent by which future disciples could identify genuine ministers.

The mantra of the American Watergate scandal of the early 1970s was, *Follow the money*. This is equally true for testing the works of a ministry: if the money somehow finds its way into elaborate houses and goods for the ministers of a ministry, then that ministry isn't of God, regardless of the good works that the ministry does. Those disciples who support the particular ministry will, of course, disagree, but the Apostle Paul, reaching forward in time through his words, doesn't disagree. Instead, he labels such ministers and ministries as false apostles and deceitful workmen, the servants of Satan who have disguised themselves as servants of righteousness.

Disciples need to realize that the teachings of historic organizations, particularly of dogma developed in the 3rd through 5th Centuries, is askew, the reason the endtime Elijah must restore all things (Mal 4:5). Because false ministers had crept in among the sheep, a still persistent problem, disciples end up blown about by every wind of doctrine, for most doctrines seem correct to some disciples for a while.

The reader should now read John chapter 10.

Commentary: If Jesus' words were actually heard by the Church, the first half of the condition necessary to receive everlasting life, the Church would divide between those who would pick up stones to kill their Savior, and those who would actually believe. This is the situation that will be seen when the Tribulation begins. The last Eve will bear two sons, and the first will kill his righteous brother...the first will be first (or Cain) because he continues the present practices and continues to believe the present dogma of the greater Church. The second will, when empowered by the Holy Spirit, believe the Father and will begin living as Jesus lived, which means living as a spiritual Judean.

The greater Church polishes a worrisome spot on the outside of the cup, the earthenware jar that is the flesh, and it teaches newly born sons of God that they are not under the laws of God. Today, it spiritually slays infant sons of God as Pharaoh would have had the Hebrew midwives slay the male children of the circumcised nation in Egypt.

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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