

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. This Sabbath's selection continues a series about *spiritual birth and everlasting life*.

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## Weekly Readings

For the Sabbath of September 10, 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 Luke chapter 10, verses 25 through 37.*

**Commentary:** In the fifth chapter of the Gospel of John, Jesus said that the person who heard His words and believed the One who sent Him has eternal life. So the answer to the lawyer's question is hearing the words of the Son and believing the Father, whose words the Son spoke. Therefore, in reading the answer that Jesus gave when answering the lawyer's question, disciples see what hearing the Son and believing the Father means.

Jesus asked the lawyer, *What is written in the Law? How do you read it?* (v. 26). Thus, in answering the question of what a person must do to inherit everlasting life, Jesus pointed the lawyer back to Moses in the same way that He pointed other Pharisees to Moses in John 5:46-47. These Pharisees (in John chap 5) had diligently searched the Scriptures to find eternal life (John 5:39), but they did not have the love of God within them (v. 42) so they never found that for which they searched.

The lawyer answered Jesus' questions: *You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself* (Luke 10:27). Jesus then said, *You have answered correctly. Do this and you will live* (v. 28). Thus, what it means to hear the words of Jesus and believe the One who sent Him is found in the words of Moses—is found in the Law! But this lawyer had no love for his neighbor; this lawyer did not have the love of God within himself. Therefore, although this lawyer had searched Scripture to find everlasting life, and had actually found it, this lawyer lacked having acquired everlasting life for he did not have the love of God within him.

*The reader should now read Romans chapter 9.*

**Commentary:** Note especially verses 30-33. Circumcised Israel pursued a law that would lead to righteousness if pursued by faith rather than by works. This doesn't mean that Israel was not to keep the law. Rather, it means that faith must be involved.

*The reader should now read Luke chapter 18, verses 18 through 30.*

**Commentary:** As did the lawyer, this rich young ruler asked Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life. Jesus didn't answer with a question that would have included keeping the Commandments as part of its response. Instead, He names Commandments, which the young ruler assures Jesus that he had kept since his youth. So again, Jesus brings Moses into what it means to hear His words and believe the One who sent Him.

Although most commentaries and most Bible teachers focus on the omitted Commandments to show that the young ruler had not made God first in his life, and that he coveted his wealth, Luke's account actually focuses on the young ruler selling all he had and following Jesus. Selling and giving away his wealth would have been for this young ruler an act of faith that revealed the love of God within him for both the poor and for the Father. And what Scripture records is this young ruler's lack of faith—and without faith, no one can please God.

The question is thus asked and answered: what must a person do to receive eternal or everlasting life? A person must hear the words of Jesus, words that Moses also spoke, and believe those words by implementing them. The sacrifices testify of Jesus, who is their reality. The annual Sabbaths testify of Jesus, again their reality. And the journey from Egypt to Judea is the journey every glorified saint will have made. The person who stopped or stops along the way, or who looked or looks back as Lot's wife did will not be glorified. Just this simple. The person who receives everlasting life will walk uprightly before God through keeping the Commandments that are written on his or her heart and mind, and this person will have the love of God manifest in his or her life. This love of God translates into love for neighbor and love for righteousness.

Will God make allowances for someone who has love, but practices lawlessness—or are “love” and “lawlessness” opposing mental paradigms that preclude the other? Again, what did Jesus say to the lawyer: *You have answered correctly. Go and do.* Love requires doing, requires implementation, requires works. The lawyer had found the answer in Scripture, but possessing this answer isn't enough. It has to become the person's life. And it becomes life when by faith a Gentile begins to live as a physically uncircumcised but spiritually circumcised Judean. Love of God requires a disciple to live as Jesus did, to live as a Judean. Thus, the person who practices lawlessness does not love God, does not know God (1 John 2:4). The person who abides in Christ Jesus will walk in the same walk that He walked (v. 6).

*The reader should now read Psalm 119, all.*

**Commentary:** The testimony of Scripture is that David will be resurrected to be king over all Israel. David had the Spirit of God, and had the faith to see God instead of Goliath.

The person who fasts to see the Church liberated from “legalism” is a worker of iniquity, one of Satan’s disguised ministers of righteousness—this person fasts to see the spiritual slaughter of newly born sons of God. This person will seem so pious, so righteous, but this person is a wolf who has slipped into the sheepfold to prey on the carnality of the old man, still alive though crucified in Christ. This wolf tells the newly born son of God that the old man had it correct all along, that this child of God need not keep the Commandments of God but should erase this law of condemnation from his or her heart and mind. This wolf tells the child that he is no longer under the Law, but has been liberated from bondage to legalism. And in doing so, this wolf lures an infant son of God out of the sheepfold, and into barren hills where even more wolves will feast on this child of God.

The person who hasn’t seen a pack hunt should consider the following poem, for the person is no different spiritually than a lamb or a fawn is physically:

#### ALONG A SAGGING FENCELINE

in silence & fear  
a doe surrounded  
by fangs  
slashing  
devouring  
but not killing  
feels entangled  
in bowels  
she carried close  
to her heart  
& in dark memories  
hears ageless howls  
of hunter & hunted  
as she feels warmth  
gush from now cold flanks—

I lower my binoculars  
when only two forelegs  
& a stain of blood  
remain above a fence post  
& for a moment  
feel less guilty

about a deer wounded

but lost.        *By Homer Kizer from Upriver, Around the Bend*

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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