

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 the readings for this Sabbath is *rebellion against God*.

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## Weekly Readings

For the weekly Sabbath of December 31, 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 Numbers chapters 13 & 14.*

**Commentary:** The setting for sending the twelve spies into the Promised Land is the wilderness of Paran, the ancestral home of Ishmael, the firstborn natural son of Abraham, the father of the faithful. The greater Christian Church is, today, the firstborn spiritual son of God the Father, and of Christ Jesus, first of the firstfruits. And as the liberated (from servitude to Pharaoh) nation of physically circumcised Israel sent the heads of the clans into God's rest (referencing Ps 95:10-11 & Heb 3:19) to spy out the land, so too will the liberated (from the law of sin & death presently dwelling in the flesh of every disciple — Rom 7:25) spiritually circumcised nation send the heads of denominations into the Sabbath rest to spy out and explore this promised mental landscape.

Moses sent the twelve heads or representatives of the twelve clans into Canaan with instructions to see what the land is, and whether the people who dwell in the land are weak or strong, few or many, and whether the land is rich or poor, timbered or not. Moses also told the twelve representatives and soon-to-be spies to bring back some of the fruit of the land, for it was the season of the first ripe grapes, the firstfruits of that year's wine harvest.

The spies didn't return immediately, but forty days later, a number representing the conclusion [or death] of a matter. And they brought with them a single cluster of grapes large enough that it was carried on a pole by two of the spies. This cluster, however, was a representation—a month or more after the first of the grape crop had ripened (Num 13:20)—of the main crop. The firstfruits would have already been harvested.

The spies reported that God's rest was, indeed, a good land, flowing with milk and honey. It was everything God had promised, but...and here is where the faith of ten spies fail: there were giants in the land. These giants, according to Caleb, could be defeated; Israel should immediately go up and possess the land. But ten spies said that the physically circumcised nation of Israel could not defeat

the peoples that occupied the Promised Land, and they brought to the holy nation of God an evil report concerning God's rest.

Two hundred and twenty days into the [seven endtime years of tribulation](#), ten [or more] representatives of Christianity will bring to the spiritually circumcised holy nation of God an evil report concerning God's rest. About this time of that calendar year in which the Tribulation begins, the representatives of the greater Church will formalize Christianity's rebellion against God by declaring that keeping the Sabbaths of God would, indeed, be a good thing to do, but obedience to the laws of God is not necessary, and would actually be a negation of Jesus' sacrifice. Therefore, these representatives will declare that obedience to God is too large of a giant to defeat even though disciples have been empowered by the Holy Spirit. Because of their empowerment, these representatives will commit blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, and they will cause the vast majority of Christians worldwide to commit unforgivable blasphemy. This will be the great falling away (2 Thess 2:3) when the lawless one or man of perdition is revealed—and this great falling away is absolutely needless, but prophetically certain.

When moving from the physical preceding the spiritual, and from the visible revealing the invisible, the physically circumcised nation forms the spiritually lifeless shadow of the spiritually circumcised holy nation of God. The physically circumcised nation yet remains loved by God because of its forefathers, but today the holy nation of God consists of disciples of Christ Jesus who have received actual spiritual birth through receipt of the Holy Spirit. These disciples are not in one denomination, nor are they unified by dogma. Rather, they are as divided as were the twelve clans of the natural nation of Israel.

Physical circumcision could not be detected on a clothed or robed Israelite male except by the actions of this natural firstborn son of God (Exod 4:22). Likewise, within the greater Christian Church, spiritual circumcision is not detectable except by the actions of the son of God. All "Christians" are presently robed in the righteousness of Christ Jesus. This garment of grace cloaks the flesh of both genuine spiritual Israelites, upon whom judgment presently resides, and pretenders, self-identified Christians through physical birth or infant baptism or the acceptance of clever arguments. And herein lies an aspect of Christianity that has escaped apologists and skeptics: as a mixed multitude left Egypt with the natural nation of Israel, so too is there a mixed multitude of spiritually uncircumcised *Christians* within the Church.

*The reader should now read Exodus chapter 12, verses 29 through 49.*

**Commentary:** The institution of the Passover separated the natural nation of Israel along with its circumcised slaves and proselytes from the mixed multitude that left Egypt (v. 38) with this firstborn son of God (Exod 4:22). The uncircumcised stranger male could not eat the Passover. Thus, a division

was decreed by the Lord [YHWH]. This division was between the physically *Circumcised* and physically *Uncircumcised*, and this division was abolished at Calvary.

*The reader should now read Ephesians chapter 2.*

**Commentary:** Every disciple, though physically living, was spiritually dead, a son of disobedience, prior to when the disciple was called or drawn by the Father (John 6:44, 65). The person, literally, had no spiritual life, or life that did not come from the oxidation of sugars within the person's body. The person was as a beast, what Solomon writes: Eccl 3:18-21. Yes, God has been testing humanity. The lie the first Eve swallowed before she sampled forbidden fruit was that she would surely not die (Gen 3:4). The last Eve, the Church, swallowed in the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> centuries CE, the Hellenistic version of this same lie. Human beings are not born with immortal souls that are in need of regeneration. Rather, human beings are like beasts, with no life but that which comes from their physical breath until they are born anew or born-from-above or born again through receipt of divine breath [*Pneuma 'Agion*], the Holy Spirit. Human beings go from consisting of *psuche* and *soma*, the Greek words for the components of the twelve disciples when Jesus sent them forth (Matt 10:28), to being *pneuma*, *psuche*, and *soma* when the Apostle Paul wishes the born anew Thessalonian disciples good health (1 Thess 5:23).

The lie the last Eve believed has effectively concealed from humanity the nature of spiritual birth. Divisions of humanity according to the flesh are only physical divisions, which foreshadow the spiritual division that was to come with the *Logos* being born as the man Jesus (John 1:1-2, 14). Circumcision of the foreskin formed a separation that was not based upon skin color or ethnic lineage although ancestry certainly entered into the decision of whether to circumcise an infant. Rather, circumcision formed a division of who was of God, and who could care less about the God of Abraham. Likewise, circumcision of the heart (i.e., birth from receipt of the Holy Spirit) forms a physically invisible division of humanity between those who are today the spiritual children of God the Father, and those who have not yet received spiritual life. All will receive such birth, for God is not a respecter of persons. But most of humanity will receive this second birth when resurrected from death—the essence of resurrection from death to life is a second birth. But those disciples who have been born ahead of time, or in this era as early figs, presently have judgment upon them (1 Pet 4:17). They will, if they hear the words of Jesus and believe the One who sent Him, pass from death to life (John 5:24); for they already have spiritual life. They are today working out their salvation by doing those things that they know, from the law of God being written on their hearts and placed in their minds, are right. They are not hypocrites, knowing to keep the law of God which is neither too difficult to keep nor far from them (Rom 10:5-8 coupled with Deu 30:11-14) but not doing so. If they are hypocrites, their righteousness does not exceed that of the Pharisees and they will in no way enter the kingdom of heaven (Matt 5:20). However, if they have not yet been born from above, they are not presently under judgment. Their judgment will come in the great White Throne Judgment following a thousand years of Jesus' reign over humanity.

As the twelve spies could enter the Promised Land of God's rest and pass throughout the land for forty days without their physical circumcision being observed by any Canaanite, so too can *Christians* enter into keeping God's laws and pass through keeping the Sabbaths of God without their spiritual circumcision being observed, sad as that is to say. When these *Christians* return to a mental wilderness of Paran, the land of Ishmael, Abram's firstborn son of bondage, those who have a different spirit such as Caleb had will return to occupy God's rest. The remainder will bemoan leaving bondage to sin. But when they realize that they have come under judgment, they will "repent," acknowledging that they have sinned before the Lord (Num 14:40), and they will attempt to enter God's rest on the following day, an act of rebellion against God.

The prophesied great falling away that is certain to occur will be spiritually circumcised disciples, 220 days into the seven endtime years of tribulation, determining that they will keep their traditions and will not enter into God's rest on the Sabbath, but on the following 8<sup>th</sup>-day. This determination to reject keeping the laws of God, and especially the Sabbaths of God, will occur seven plus months after the [second Passover](#). And instead of *Christians* being raptured from the evil of the Tribulation, they will be humanly responsible—as Cain was for slaying righteous Abel—for the persecution and martyrdom of those individuals who keep the laws of God, especially the weekly Sabbath.

Rebellion against God will not look like rebellion to those who come under the delusion God will send over disciples who do not love the truth (2 Thess 2:11-12). Rebellion didn't look like rebellion in the wilderness of Paran when the natural nation of Israel believed the ten witnesses rather than the two (Caleb and Joshua). Rebellion by the natural nation didn't look like rebellion in the days of Samuel.

*The reader should now read 1 Samuel chapter 8.*

**Commentary:** There were plenty of reasons for Israel not to want Samuel's sons as their judges, but the natural nation's desire to be like other nations was absolute rebellion against God—rebellion that seemed logical, rebellion that seemed reasonable. So too will the spiritual nation of Israel's rebellion against God seem logical and reasonable. After all, Christianity cannot have been mistakenly worshiping the Lord on the wrong day since the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries CE? Why not? When the first Eve ate forbidden fruit, she and her husband were banished from the garden of God. When the natural nation of Israel repeatedly sinned against God (Ezek chap 20), the Lord gave the nation statutes with which the nation could not live (vv.25-26) before sending Israel into exile in Babylon. The Lord drove the natural nation of Israel out of His rest for seventy years. Likewise, the Lord drove the spiritual nation of Israel out of His rest by sending the nation into spiritual Babylon, that great city represented by the humanoid image King Nebuchadnezzar saw in vision. And the spiritual nation's exile from the Jerusalem above can be tracked by when Christianity quit keeping the Sabbaths of God, and when a remnant of Christianity returned to keeping the Sabbaths.

Rebellion against God will seem innocent enough to those disciples who have never attempted to live by the laws of God written on their hearts and minds. Additionally, every fellowship, every sect, every denomination has tares that have been sown among the wheat—these tares look like wheat, grow faster than wheat, and produce no useable crop. But because the spiritual nation of Israel consists of invisibly circumcised human beings that all were at one time sons of disobedience, separating the wheat from the tares at a distance is a virtually impossible task for disciples. Only when disciples have been around each other for long enough that the usually unobserved actions of each disciple become known to others can any reasonable separation be made. Too often, though, the tares (because of their rapid growth) have taken leadership positions within fellowships, and cannot be easily dislodged.

The history of Christianity is that which John records in his third epistle: the behavior of Diotrephes (v. 9), unfortunately, has occurred over and over again. The name changes, but the tare putting himself first and excluding genuine disciples is what brings greater Christianity to where the great falling away is certain. It has also brought the remnant that left spiritual Babylon in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century to rebuild the spiritual house of God in the Jerusalem above to its slivered state in which every disciple does what is right in the son of God's eyes. This remnant has journeyed over a mental landscape, with the return to keeping the weekly Sabbath marking when it crossed the Jordan to again enter God's rest. But this remnant, presently busy building its own houses, left off rebuilding the house of God more than forty years ago. It is time for this remnant to get back to work. But today it has little with which to work, other than the truth. Unfortunately, there is no recognized judge in spiritual Israel... all of the remnant are spiritual Levites, and most are as Korah was (Num chap 16).

America's interest in Christmas this year foreshadows how difficult it will be to persuade even a portion of the greater Church that the giant of obedience to the laws of God can be defeated. For when the greater Church ventures into God's rest and sees how the remnant that returned to rebuild the house of God bickers and truly displays no love one for another, the witnesses of the greater Church will say that obedience to the laws of God has caused this splintering and jousting with slivers. The remnant itself must be slain—and will be. Only a remnant of this remnant will enter the second half of the seven endtime years. Only a spiritual Joshua and a spiritual Caleb cross into God's rest to lead the third part of humanity to victory.

How many *Christians* are actually spiritually circumcised (i.e., born from above) cannot be determined from a distance. How many are willing to live by the laws of God cannot be determined. For the spiritual nation remains in Egypt/Babylon, remains living through the long spiritual night of watching that began when the Lamb of God was sacrificed at Calvary, remains waiting for the death angels to pass throughout all the land, [slaying firstborns not covered by the blood of the Lamb](#). This one spiritual night is nearly two millennia old. It occurs midweek, with the daylight portion to return when the kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of the Most High and His Christ halfway through the seven endtime years. The first three and a half years of these seven years will represent the morning hours [post-midnight hours] of this single long night of watching, and as in the natural world, it is

always darkest just before dawn. It will be during these three and half years that spiritual Abel will be slain by his brother.

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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