

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 sons of God growing from infancy to adulthood.

Weekly Readings

For the Sabbath of January 2, 2010

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 word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: "Stand in the gate of the Lord's house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the Lord, all you men of Judah who enter these gates to worship the Lord. *Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Amend your ways and your deeds, and I will let you dwell in this place. Do not trust in these deceptive words: 'This is the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord.'*

"For if you truly amend your ways and your deeds, if you truly execute justice one with another, if you do not oppress the sojourner, the fatherless, or the widow, or shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not go after other gods to your own harm, then I will let you dwell in this place, in the land that I gave of old to your fathers forever.

"Behold, you trust in deceptive words to no avail. Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, make offerings to Baal, and go after other gods that you have not known, and then come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, 'We are delivered!'—only to go on doing all these abominations? Has this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, I myself have seen it, declares the Lord. Go now to my place that was in Shiloh, where I made my name dwell at first, and see what I did to it because of the evil of my people Israel. And now, because you have done all these things, declares the Lord, and when I spoke to you persistently you did not listen, and when I called you, you did not answer, therefore I will do to the house that is called by my name, and in which you trust, and to the place that I gave to you and to your fathers, as I did to Shiloh. *And I will cast you out of my sight, as I cast out all your kinsmen, all the offspring of Ephraim.*

“As for you, do not pray for this people, or lift up a cry or prayer for them, and do not intercede with me, for I will not hear you. Do you not see what they are doing in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? The children gather wood, the fathers kindle fire, and the women knead dough, to make cakes for the queen of heaven. And they pour out drink offerings to other gods, to provoke me to anger. Is it I whom they provoke? declares the Lord. Is it not themselves, to their own shame? Therefore thus says the Lord God: behold, my anger and my wrath will be poured out on this place, upon man and beast, upon the trees of the field and the fruit of the ground; it will burn and not be quenched.”

Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: “Add your burnt offerings to your sacrifices, and eat the flesh. For *in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, I did not speak to your fathers or command them concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices.* But this command I gave them: ‘Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people. And walk in all the way that I command you, that it may be well with you.’ But they did not obey or incline their ear, but walked in their own counsels and the stubbornness of their evil hearts, and went backward and not forward. From the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt to this day, I have persistently sent all my servants the prophets to them, day after day. Yet they did not listen to me or incline their ear, but stiffened their neck. They did worse than their fathers.

“So *you shall speak all these words to them, but they will not listen to you.* You shall call to them, but they will not answer you. And you shall say to them, ‘This is the nation that did not obey the voice of the Lord their God, and did not accept discipline; truth has perished; it is cut off from their lips.’ (Jer 7:1–28 emphasis added)

The splinters of the former Worldwide Church of God hold the prophetic understanding that the house of Judah, with Jerusalem as its capital, was a kingdom separate from “Israel” and the house of Israel, with Samaria as its capital. But this is not what the Lord said to the prophet Ezekiel in, using one passage as an example, 12:26–28. Nor does the Lord use the name “Israel” when addressing Jeremiah. Rather, He uses the identifying phrase, *all the offspring of Ephraim*, for the northern kingdom of Samaria that more than a century earlier had been taken captive by Assyria.

When the northern kingdom of Samaria was taken captive, it ceased being “Israel” ... the nation of Israel simply shrank in size from the land ruled by King Solomon to the land controlled by the northern and southern kingdoms, to the size of the southern kingdom alone, to no more than the polis of Jerusalem, and after the Babylonian captivity, to no more than the temple mount. Thus, “Israel” went from being all of the lands Beyond the River to being the temple mount then to being the restored temple, with the temple going from being a building of lifeless stone and timber to being the physical body of Christ Jesus, then to being the spiritual Body of Christ. And when a person is able to mentally see the physical shrinking in size and growing in spiritual size of “Israel” that goes from being a physically circumcised nation in captivity in Egypt to being a free nation in the wilderness of Sin/Zin, then to being the Promised Land that

the children of Israel [not Israel, which died in the wilderness] entered when crossing the Jordan behind Joshua, then to being Jerusalem, to being the temple, and finally to being “Christ,” Head and Body, with the Body of Christ now being a nation circumcised of heart that is spiritually as Israel was Israel physically in Egypt; i.e., the inner self that has been born of God as a firstborn son dwells in a tent of flesh that remains in bondage to indwelling sin and death--what’s seen is a spiral that has circled back on itself at a higher plane: the inner son of God is not born into bondage to sin and death, but until the Second Passover the tent of flesh remains in bondage to sin and death; therefore, the fleshly bodies of disciples need liberated in a similar manner to how the physical nation of Israel in Egypt needed liberated from physical servitude to Pharaoh, a human shadow and copy [as Nebuchadnezzar was] of the spiritual king of Babylon.

As a physically circumcised nation in Egypt, Israel needed to be liberated in the flesh from slavery. As a circumcised-of-heart nation dwelling in tents of flesh in this world, Israel needs the tents in which the nation dwells to put on immortality, thereby permitting Israel to wholly cross dimensions and enter into the heavenly realm. The circumcised-of-heart nation needs to be liberated from death, with Assyria forming the geographical representation of death as Egypt forms the representation of sin. Thus, Israel needs liberated from both Egypt (which has occurred) and from Assyria (which has not yet occurred). So the northern kingdom of Samaria [the physical house of Israel] being taken captive by Assyria and then disappearing into the annals of history serves as the model for Israelites dying physically; hence, the recovery of Israel from the north country (Jer 16:14–15; 23:7–8; Isa 11:11, 16) is the recovery of Israel from death; is a euphemism for salvation.

When the endtime disciple realizes that Egypt represents sin and Assyria represents death and Babylon represents this world, with the spiritual king of Babylon being the present prince of this world (the Adversary), then the disciple can see that Israel—the Land beyond the River—represents life. “Israel” now becomes a mental landscape, a state of mind, an ideology. It is a mental construct, not a physically circumcised people dwelling in Russia and certainly not the English-speaking peoples of this world. It is a construct built upon believing the writings of Moses and hearing the voice of Jesus (John 5:46–47), and it is the message [ὁ λόγος] Jesus left with His disciples that will judge those who do not receive His words (John 12:48).

Scripture is not difficult to understand when the disciple realizes that Jesus spoke the truth when He told His first disciples, “I have said these things to you in figures of speech” (John 16:25). The language of Scripture is metaphorical, with the visible, physically-circumcised nation of Israel representing the invisible circumcised of heart nation as the earthly temple constructed by Solomon represents the spiritual temple constructed by Christ Jesus. The money to construct the temple and the assembly of construction materials for the temple was done by David, and will be done spiritually by Christ Jesus during the Endurance, the last 1260 days of the seven endtime years. Thus, genuine disciples are today few in number; they are as the stones gathered by David when he was facing Goliath. They are “naturally” rounded and serviceable—but stones are not naturally round, but rounded by natural forces tumbling them over and over again. They have had no iron tool placed on them; they haven’t been sculpted off temple site. All such stone work will come later, during the Tribulation and Endurance.

If an endtime disciple contemplates the forces that it takes to round a stone so that it will fly true when hurled at Gentile giants, the genuine disciple can begin to understand

why events have occurred as they have in the disciple's life. And the endtime disciple can see how much work remains to be done in a very short period of time; can see how the seven years of tribulation will function as an iron tool to sculpt living stones into the building blocks of the living temple of God. Plus, the disciple in this present era will realize that as a round stone in the pouch of the Lord, the disciple will, most likely, not be "squared" by iron tools during the Tribulation but will be a weapon used by the Lord against the giants of the Adversary ... the two witnesses will not be "squared" by iron tools but will be slung against the man of perdition and the false prophet. They will find their mark, and in taking out these two, they will (when resurrected from death after three days) deal a death blow to Death himself.

The former Worldwide Church of God utterly lacked prophetic understanding, and its Sabbatarian splinters perpetuate the former's lack of understanding. The ministry could not think in abstract or metaphorical terms even though it did much to further Sabbath observance, for which it deserves credit. Hence, it was not a *ministry for the ages*, nor did it understand *the mystery of the ages*. It was simply the work of a man, a flawed servant of God, whose hubris caused him to be brought back from death or near death so that he might be saved by setting straight errors he had made in the previous two decades.

Judgment is not on a person until the person is born of God. Therefore, a Christian enters into judgment that this person actually makes after being born of spirit, with the person who hears the voice of Jesus and believes the words of the Father passing from death to life without coming under judgment (John 5:24), meaning that there is no second witness to testify against the person so judgment cannot occur. Moses is one witness against every Israelite (Deut 31:26; John 5:45), and the message that Jesus left with His disciples will be the person's judge. If Moses and the writings of Moses in the Book of Deuteronomy can bring no testimony against the disciple, the message Jesus left with His disciples has no basis upon which the message can judge the disciple; so the disciple (who knows that he or she has come short of perfection) passes from death to life without being judged.

If the Christian does not believe the writings of Moses and therefore cannot hear the voice of Jesus, the Christian, born of God as a firstborn son, will have Moses testifying against the disciple: the Christian will then be judged by the message Jesus left with His disciples, and most likely, the Christian will be condemned to the lake of fire, the reason why very few Christians have been born of God over the last 1900 years. When not truly born of God, judgment is not on the Christian even though Paul writes, "For all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. For *it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified*" (Rom 2:12–13 emphasis added). So Christians who have, over the past two millennia, sinned without the law will also perish without the law; for according to Paul, it is the Christian who is a doer of the law that is justified.

Sin is, in this present era, transgression of the commandments (1 John 3:4–10), but once disciples are liberated from indwelling sin and death, sin will be simple unbelief ... Paul writes,

The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.

Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness. (2 Thess 2:9–12)

The rounded stones that Christ Jesus will send against the theological giants of this world will all teach disciples to keep the commandments of God.

Paul told saints in Corinth that they were the temple of God (1 Cor 3:16–17; 2 Cor 6:16), an anticipation of John seeing New Jerusalem coming down from heaven after the thousand years (Rev 21:2; 9–11). But John saw no temple in New Jerusalem (*v.* 22): the temple, grown large, has become the city. Thus, God Almighty and the Lamb function as the temple ... Jesus prayed, “Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one” (John 17:11), and,

I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. (*vv.* 20–23)

Hence, New Jerusalem is a city of glorified disciples in whom is the Lamb, and in the Lamb is God Almighty, and in God Almighty is the Lamb, and in the Lamb are glorified disciples: disciples, Lamb and God Almighty function as one living spiritual entity as a human being is one physically living entity. So the temple and New Jerusalem become interchangeable concepts after disciples are glorified, with the greater light ruling over the heavens and with the lesser light ruling the night or darkness (the physical creation).

As the Body of Christ, disciples are the temple; for Christ is the living temple, raised up after three days. Disciples are *Christ*, for the Head and the Body are one—

Christians today trust in disciples being the temple of God. Even those Christians that look for construction of an earthly temple (the 3rd temple) before Christ returns take comfort in knowing that they are *the temple*, a mantra uttered without conscious meaning being attached to the utterance. If these Christians truly believed they were the temple, they would not look for another. Nevertheless, as the ancient house of Judah trusted in the deceptive words, *This is the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord*, as if nothing could befall Jerusalem because the temple was within the city, Christians trust that they are the temple and nothing will befall them because they are this temple.

But the Lord told those ancient Israelites not to trust in the temple; Christians are not to trust in them being the temple. For the Lord told Israel of Jeremiah’s day that the nation must amend its ways, execute justice, oppress no one, spurn idolatry, and keep the commandments—the Lord told Israel of Jeremiah’s day that the nation could not commit abominations, then call on the name of the Lord and expect to be delivered. This message translates from the physical realm to the spiritual as, *Christians cannot live as pagans, as people of the nations, then call on the Father and Son and expect to be saved.*

Returning to a concept from last Sabbath’s reading, a disciple is the inner new self, the son of God that is born through receipt of a second breath of life, the breath of the Father, and when born of God, the inner new self is “free”—sin has no dominion over this son of God (Rom 6:14). This inner new self is truly free to keep the commandments;

however, the tent of flesh in which this inner new dwells is not free to keep the law, and will not be free to do so until the Second Passover. Therefore, if this inner new self “marries” sin [lawlessness] through unbelief or not believing God, then this inner new self is no longer under grace but is again the bondservant of sin, which leads to death. John says the person is the child of the Adversary, not simply the slave.

The inner new self dwelling in a tent of flesh in this world is analogous to an Israelite dwelling in a house in Egypt, and needs to be understood by the model of an Israelite in Egypt. And as an Israelite in Egypt was circumcised on the 8th-day, the inner new self is circumcised of heart when the heart has been cleansed by faith, with the occurrence of this circumcision disclosing that spiritually the disciple is as an eight day old infant is physically.

An eight day old infant doesn't “marry” a wife—

When a circumcised of heart disciple begins to keep the commandments of God and do what is right in the sight of the Lord, the disciple has reached a spiritual age equivalent to when a human infant begins to walk upright as a biped; the disciple is spiritually equivalent to a human infant approximately a year old.

When a circumcised of heart disciple begins to understand dual referents, the disciple is spiritually equivalent to a human infant between 30 and 36 months old ... a human child doesn't usually marry at three years of age. Likewise, endtime disciples should not yet be marrying ideologies before they are able to grasp the concept of dual referents (i.e., of the visible things of this world revealing the invisible things of God).

However, in certain human infants that are born prematurely, brains do not develop as they should and the child is very late coming to understand dual referents. This also happens spiritually: in disciples born of God before it is the season for such birth, the infant son of God behaves as a severely premature human infant. This son of God cannot comprehend dual referents even when old enough to marry. And what's being seen across Sabbatarian Christendom is *preemie* sons of God are “marrying” ideologies while they are spiritually underdeveloped even though they should be old enough in the faith to marry.

For an Israelite, the only marriages permitted were to other Israelites. For Christians, the only marriage permitted is to Christ Jesus: disciples are to “marry” the mind of Christ. That is, disciples are to marry themselves to the ideology of Christ Jesus.

But throughout Sabbatarian Christendom, disciples are marrying the Sacred Names heresy, or the prophetic teachings of Herbert W. Armstrong or of Ellen G. White. Disciples are doing at a spiritual level what the remnant of Israel that returned from Babylon did on a human level. Whereas the visible Church has married the sacred to the profane in the holidays/Sabbaths they choose to observe, from Sunday to Christmas to Easter, Sabbatarian Christians have married the profane through open idolatry, transforming the name of Christ into an utterance made by the mouth or elevating the words of human beings to the stature of the words of Christ Jesus.

A son of God *marries* the philosophy this son of God believes in a union of two-becoming-one that is not easily broken.

When a son of God is first born of spirit, this spiritual infant really doesn't know what to believe. Many voices vie to be heard, but with only one of those voices speaking the words of Christ Jesus.

When Israel left Egypt, no command was given concerning animal sacrifices, for the law was not yet given so there was no need for sin to be “covered.” Disciples see this in a

comparison of Israelites transgressing the Sabbath before the law was given (Ex 16:27–30) and of an Israelite transgressing the Sabbath after the law was given (Num 15:32–36) ... the giving of the law made sin alive so that sin, as if a wild beast, could devour the nation that refused to listen to the Lord in Egypt (Ezek 20:8), or in the wilderness of Sin which lay between Elim and Sinai. Likewise, when a son of God is first born of spirit, no covering for sin is needed; grace is not needed. For this infant son of God is not yet circumcised of heart, nor old enough to spiritually walk uprightly before God.

Before the law was given Israel received manna, the bread that came from heaven. Before sin is made alive within endtime disciples, these disciples receive the indwelling of Christ Jesus, the vessel able to hold heavenly fire and the true bread of life. So a disciple who has been born of God and circumcised of heart and who has the indwelling of Christ Jesus is the reality of ancient Israel in the wilderness of Sin ... this is not difficult to comprehend, is it? It shouldn't be.

The giving of the law, now, typifies endtime disciples after the Second Passover, the 15th day of the second month—

What happened to Israel after the law was given? Did not Moses get caught up in the cloud and thereby separated from Israel for forty days? And during these forty days, did not Israel sin before the Lord? And did not the Lord prevent these Israelites from having eternal life by commanding them not to kindle a fire on the Sabbath? And has not the physically circumcised nation of Israel remained separated from eternal life ever since through its observance (without understanding) of kindling no fire on the Sabbath?

Sabbatarian disciples, by marrying ideologies that are not the mind of Christ, have separated themselves from Christ Jesus and have, because of this separation, been permanently cut off from God.

It is sad that so many Sabbatarian disciples, born of God before it was the season for fruit, have not developed spiritually but married ideologies and philosophies other than that disclosed in the writings of Moses and in the voice of Jesus when still infants. There is really nothing but their own hubris that stopped them from growing spiritually. But stopped they have been ... maybe they didn't grow because of the diet they ate, the subject of next Sabbath's reading.

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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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