

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 *faith*.

Weekly Readings
For the Sabbath of January 12, 2008

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.

Not long ago, a response on the *Ambassador Watch* blog questioned whether the Apostle Paul was of God, or whether he was a 1st-Century individual like present endtime cult leaders and religious charlatans. The evidence cited by the poster was that only Paul and Luke identify Paul as an apostle; that Paul refers to himself, using first person pronouns, more times than anyone else; that Paul brags of not taking instruction from other apostles and leading men; that Paul belittles the ministries of those who seemed to be leaders in Jerusalem. The poster could have used the internal evidence that all in Asia had left Paul; that Jews were trying to kill Paul; that the saints at Galatia had adopted the practice of physical circumcision contrary to what Paul taught; and that the saints at Corinth were judging Paul, evaluating his ministry.

The case against Paul being of God is at least as strong as the case for any Protestant Reformer being of God. And when trying to establish the validity of an argumentative claim, the claim itself does not serve as evidence of its truth.

Christianity ultimately is not about evidence but about faith. Even human existence is a matter of faith: the movie *The Matrix* raised the same question that the German philosopher Kant raised. How does any person know that which he or she experiences is not part of a dream? Dr Samuel Johnson, mid 18th-Century, kicked a rock and hurt his foot and said that by kicking the rock he had refuted Kant ... no, he hadn't. The discharge of pain sensors within the mind no more proves human existence than does the recollection of a memory falsely planted in the mind through suggestions made by another.

Human existence, scientific facts, everything a person believes that he or she knows—all is a matter of faith, with this faith based upon evidence that comes from the additional application of faith. The racial bigotry of generations came from faith. Hitler's hatred of Jews came from deep rooted faith. Those who venerate the Virgin Mary do so from faith, while those who advocate for democratic ideals and the equality of all humankind do so from faith. There is nothing a person believes that does not come from faith, with the person only partially able to perceive the quality of the faith establishing this thing or that thing.