

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 baptism.

[Printable/viewable PDF format to display Greek or Hebrew characters](#)

## Weekly Readings

### *For the Sabbath of January 31, 2015*

[Continued from January 24<sup>th</sup>]

*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.*

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For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at His coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For "God has put all things in subjection under His feet." But when it says, "all things are put in subjection," it is plain that He is excepted who put all things in subjection under Him. When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subjected to Him who put all things in subjection under Him that God may be all in all. Otherwise, *what do people mean by being baptized on behalf of the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized on their behalf?* Why are we in danger every hour? I protest, brothers, by my pride in you, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, *I die every day!* What do I gain if, humanly speaking, I fought with beasts at Ephesus? If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals." Wake up from your drunken stupor, as is right, and do not go on sinning. For some have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame. (1 Cor 15:21-34 emphasis added)

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*If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die*—the mantra of Boomers in the 1960s, early 1970s, the generation raised in the shadow of the Bomb; the generation that practiced *Duck and Cover* in grade school, that received Salk polio vaccines, that lived with the expectation the end of the age was at hand, that came not to trust anyone over thirty, especially national politicians that spewed disinformation as if lies were true and the truth was a lie. In one generation, the youth of America went from a third being regular *Christian* worshippers down to a single digit percentage as a *Zeitgeist* of rebellion swept the world. As Israeli tanks swept past Egyptian tanks, causing the Israeli foreign minister to suggest that the Soviet Union send tanks directly to Israel and avoid the middleman, the radio broadcast of the most energetic of the Sabbatarian Churches of God daily broadcasted *fear* to the English-speaking peoples of this world: fear of the Roman Church, fear of the European Union, fear of being excluded from a physical place of safety, fear of secular education, fear of the medical establishment; fear of thinking for oneself; fear of not being baptized and not receiving the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands following baptism.

*If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink*; let us live for the day; let us live in fear of tomorrow ...

The trappings of this world are seductive, but even when they are obtained, they don't satisfy. The wealth of this world isn't enough; the pleasures are not enough. The person who has achieved his or her earthly goals isn't long satisfied. The desire to do something different becomes overwhelming: becomes a desire to reengage the world, albeit in charity; perhaps a change of marriage partners; perhaps a change of vocations. And the individual joins with others as collectively they wander aimlessly from watering hole to watering hole, as if the person were feral livestock drifting south, pushed by the wind and an instinctive desire for more.

More comes and goes, but the wandering continues until finally as old folks, the collective becomes religious, initially for the moral stability religion provides in a period of declining morality, then for concern that God might actually exist and that they—as individuals in the collective—might escape from the death that is closing in upon them, circling them, poised to devour the good work they have done, poised to devour even memory of them.

In a period of uncertainty, a huckster selling “fear” makes many sales.

A great many Sabbath-keeping converts were dunked in stock watering troughs in deacons' garages and basements, especially just before Passover every year. And these converts were raised from tepid watery “graves” exactly as they were before being dunked. Males were still males, females were still females—neither skin color nor social status changed. Nothing changed. Nothing happened when there was an expectation of something happening.

But it was easy to believe that something had changed: the convert wanted something to have changed so the convert—not born of spirit—explained the nothingness that happened when dunked as being *begotten*, the person becoming

a divine zygote, a fertilized ovum, now growing in the womb of its mother, the former Worldwide Church of God.

The woman never knew the divine zygote was in her womb ... and the zygote died spiritually before the woman knew she was pregnant. For the zygote wasn't in the womb of the Church or in the womb of any church. If the convert truly received the indwelling of the spirit of God in the spirit of Christ, the convert had been *born* of spirit as a son of God, with the spiritual growth of this *son* in jeopardy, and at best stunted, for this newly born son of God wasn't receiving even the milk of the Word of God.

How can an infant grow in a watery grave, in John's baptism? And in retrospect, what happened in the former Worldwide Church of God was mass spiritual starvation, with the few thousand remaining physically alive severely malnourished spiritually.

The brain of a malnourished infant doesn't develop as it should; the minds of severely malnourished sons of God have not developed at all. And for withholding *spiritual milk* from infant sons of God, three hundred or more pastors ordained by the former Worldwide Church of God will pay with their spiritual lives, said by the authority Jesus left with His disciples (see John 20:23) ... this is not a time to play patty cake with the fat sheep that jostled and shoved the lean sheep, keeping starving lambs from thin ewes that, nevertheless, would have suckled them.

As for you, my flock, thus says the Lord God: Behold, I judge between sheep and sheep, between rams and male goats. Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture, that you must tread down with your feet the rest of your pasture; and to drink of clear water, that you must muddy the rest of the water with your feet? And must my sheep eat what you have trodden with your feet, and drink what you have muddied with your feet? Therefore, thus says the Lord God to them: Behold, I, I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. Because you push with side and shoulder, and thrust at all the weak with your horns, till you have scattered them abroad, I will rescue my flock; they shall no longer be a prey. And I will judge between sheep and sheep. And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the Lord, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them. I am the Lord; I have spoken. (Ezek 34:17-24)

In the ministry selling fear, the ministry capitalizing most on the Zeitgeist of living with the Bomb, newly baptized Sabbatarian converts were told that they had received the Holy Spirit; that if they continued faithful to the Church, they would escape to a place of *final training* as the people being prepared for the wonderful world tomorrow, where the figurative frosting would be put on the cake being baked in the tensions of war and rumors of war.

*If the dead are not raised, let them eat and drink and live for the day*—baptized members of the most energetic of the Sabbatarian Churches of God were told that they were not born of spirit, and the infamous pin test could be employed to prove the point. In reality, these baptized members were not raised from death through being born of spirit as sons of God. Baptism in water followed

by the laying on of hands and a prayer of faith did not give to these converts the Holy Spirit, said with a caveat: a few actually were drawn from this world by the Father and delivered to Christ Jesus to be nurtured as if they were in a marsupial's pouch, suckling hidden teats and growing in spite of the Adversary's best efforts to keep dumb sheep spiritually deaf and dumb, the equivocation here appropriate.

Throughout the Zeitgeist of rebellion against authority that produced potential converts to Sabbatarian Christendom, many christened members of the High Church were confirmed through the sacrament of baptism by sprinkling, wetting the previously christened member as clothes were moistened to be ironed in the age before permanent press garments.

Nothing happened when the christened person was confirmed: the person was the same person as before. Although the person now believed that he or she would, at death, go to heaven rather than be condemned to the fires of hell, doubts remained, and superstitions grew, these superstitions becoming little idols that governed [governs] the person's daily life.

Frankly, deceiving the generation raised in the shadow of the Bomb was too easy: in rebelling against authority, this generation came to believe nothing but *if it feels good, do it ...* live for the day, for tomorrow we all die—if we don't go to a place of *final training* (Seventh Day Adventists have a different wrinkle on this place of final training: for Adventists, the elect will spend the thousand years in heaven, then return after the thousand years).

The selling of fear became big business in the 20<sup>th</sup>-Century, as it was in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Centuries, when Christ was expected to return at the end of the first millennium following Calvary. It is actually more difficult to sell fear to Americans today in the 21<sup>st</sup>-Century than it was sixty, seventy years ago.

But climate change alarmists market an updated version of the Bomb. Their converts are useful idiots, a phrase borrowed from Lenin and Stalin. Unfortunately, the same phrase could be applied to the *dumb sheep* that faithfully paid tithes and gave offerings to the Christian ministers spawned in the shadow of the Bomb.

Global Warming alarmists, however, have a problem: there has been no global warming since 1998, and little before then, with the graph of accumulative temperatures rising from 1890 to the 1930s fairly sharply, then falling from the 1940s to the 1970s before turning around and slowly rising into the 1990s before again turning back ... it is actual thermometer readings that get in the way of computer projections predicting climate change, with these thermometer readings undercutting the fear global warming alarmists continue to sell into mostly niche markets of spotted owl and snail darter protectors.

Members of the former Worldwide Church of God know as much as anyone about the marketing of fear; so they should have great empathy for GenXers that have bit into the Climate Change sandwich, served cold without mayo or mustard. Unfortunately, they don't ... somehow the shadow of the Bomb seemed more "real" than global warming as winters across northern tier states return to being what

they were in the 1880s, when winter severity caused cattle to freeze in pastures. Western droughts occurred before California's largest export—the water in oranges and lemons, lettuce and bok choy, strawberries and asparagus—became scarce in the present dry period, with Delta Smelt closing irrigation gates to borrowed desert lands, temporarily turned green by public works water projects.

*If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die ...* where is there hope for this world other than in religion, with Christianity, Judaism, and Islam having this hope coming in the form of a deity interceding in the affairs of men, taking control of human governance and imposing upon humanity this deity's morality and governance? Where is there hope for humanity if the dead are not raised from death, with the dead presently ruling themselves—and with the dead knowing nothing (Eccl 9:5)?

The dead do not know that they are dead, the irony of zombie movies and even the Federal government's zombie emergency preparedness exercise ...

And when Jesus entered Peter's house, He saw his mother-in-law lying sick with a fever. He touched her hand, and the fever left her, and she rose and began to serve Him. That evening they brought to Him many who were oppressed by demons, and He cast out the spirits with a word and healed all who were sick. This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: "He took our illnesses and bore our diseases." Now when Jesus saw a crowd around Him, He gave orders to go over to the other side. And a scribe came up and said to Him, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." Another of the disciples said to Him, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." And Jesus said to him, "Follow me, and *permit the dead to bury the dead of themselves.*" And when He got into the boat, His disciples followed Him. (Matt 8:14–23 emphasis added and passage rephrased to better reflect the Greek text)

The disciple Matthew had not yet been called so if the author of Matthew's Gospel is *Matthew*, the historical reliability of Jesus telling the unidentified disciple to allow the dead to bury the dead of themselves has no witness with direct knowledge. Mark retells the story of healing Peter's mother-in-law (Mark 1:30–31), drawing from Peter having told this story, but apparently Peter never heard Jesus tell the one disciple to let the dead bury their own dead, or Peter didn't think the story was worth retelling ... most likely, the story is in the same category as Matthew's Jesus being mocked by Roman soldiers in a red [scarlet] garment rather than in a purple garment (Mark 15:17): the incident is told for theological reasons rather than for historical reasons.

It's difficult for the generation that didn't trust authority to accept the "authority" of Scripture—and that is understandable, especially when Scripture contradicts itself as it does, regardless of whether the Believer wants to believe this is so. But the unbelief of Boomers originated in this generation having a little knowledge, but not enough to resolve contradictions in society, in science, or in texts. In Boomers challenging authority, Boomers unwittingly prepared themselves

to be theological iconoclasts. Only one problem existed: the successful marketing of fear to Boomers.

Death has about it a finality that seemingly doesn't permit escape ... it is one thing to realize that a Jew washes hands to escape defilement of the flesh through contact with the commonness of humanity, but it is quite another thing to realize that a Christian baptizes in water to escape the commonality of death, which made marketing fear an easy sell until Boomers quit believing in a literal hell.

Boomers as youth reasoned that if there is no hell, there probably isn't any heaven. *What's to be gained by good behavior?* For if the dead were not raised from death—what has been taught through instruction in biological evolution—then why shouldn't Boomers in Western nations live for the day? Why should an educated person believe a text that has the devil involuntarily taking Jesus to the top of a very tall mountain from which all kingdoms on earth and their glory can be seen (Matt 4:8)? Where is this mountain from which the other side of the globe can be seen?

Unbelief is easy; has the same sort of scientific support as global Climate Change has. But unbelief comes from letting ignorance reign over the intellect, as if all that can be known is already known by someone—and this is simply not true, something Boomers more so than previous generations ought to know.

If the dead are not raised from death, the logical question to follow is, which *<dead>* is being addressed? The ones who are to be buried by the dead, or the dead ones doing the burying?

It is as presumptive to believe that human persons are the pinnacle of intelligent life, more presumptive than to believe that by human endeavors the earth's climate can be altered ... in calculating the existing energy in the universe, the energy released by every star, including our own sun, is ignored through being statistically insignificant: the background temperature in all quadrants of three degrees above absolute zero is so much greater than the energy released by stars, that the energy found in visible light will not significantly alter computations. And so it is with the "heat" of earthly human endeavors, with carbon dioxide as a greenhouse gas being "capped" long prior to the Industrial Revolution as Beer's Law establishes. Do the math. Check the claim that carbon dioxide is capped, now reflecting more IR energy than it permits to pass through the atmosphere. The only common gas not capped is methane [CO], meaning that if President Obama were really serious about Climate Change, he would quit farting.

The author of Matthew's Gospel establishes two categories of *<dead ones>*, the first category being those who are physically alive but spiritually dead and thus able to bury the dead of themselves. These are *dead* through not yet being born of spirit. The other category is the dead who have lost physical life, the *dead of dead ones*.

And which category of *dead ones* does Paul address when he wrote, *If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized on their behalf?* Or does Paul address both categories of *dead ones*?

Summer 1991, Idaho State University, Pocatello, offered a Doctor of Arts fellowship in English for the academic year of 1991-1992. I accepted the fellowship, left Fairbanks, and purchased an older, inexpensive house in the town of McCammon, twenty miles south of Pocatello. The town's welcoming committee consisted of a half dozen members of the local LDS bishopric; for somehow during moving in, it was noticed that I had a Greek copy of the New Testament. These members of the bishopric wanted to know if this was true. I assured them it was. And they wanted to know if Paul really wrote about baptizing for the dead. I knew he had (as cited in the head quotation reveals), and I showed them the passage in Greek, a passage that is adequately translated in their King James Bibles.

Latter Day Saints baptize for the dead; for dead individuals who were not baptized as Latter Day Saints while they lived physically. Many of these individuals are not personally known to the person being baptized for the dead one, but known through reading diaries and/or journals and family histories. So upon an appropriate amount of research, the Latter Day Saint—out of an act of love for the dead person—will undertake to retrieve the person from the second death via the sacrament of water baptism, while not understanding that baptism represents an appeal [a prayer] for a good conscience.

The practice seemed odd to me; seemed akin to the Medieval Church selling indulgencies because of how much righteousness the Church had stored up in its spiritual reserves. Even though there was some scriptural support for the practice, Paul wasn't addressing what Latter Day Saints do in their baptism for the dead: he was addressing an entirely different scenario. However, the Latter Day Saints' practice of baptizing for the dead has more scriptural support than does the Latter Day Saint practice of worship on Sunday.

Is not Judaism's practice of washing hands also a public prayer for spiritual cleanliness? Washing hands with water will not cleanse a defiled heart—and Judaism's scholars know this. Washing hands with water will remove physical dirt, but cannot *cleanse* hands that were already clean; so why repeatedly wash other than to often make public prayers?

On the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, the word of [YHWH] came by Haggai the prophet, "Thus says the Lord of hosts: Ask the priests about the law: 'If someone carries holy meat in the fold of his garment and touches with his fold bread or stew or wine or oil or any kind of food, does it become holy?'" The priests answered and said, "No." Then Haggai said, "*If someone who is unclean by contact with a dead body touches any of these, does it become unclean?*" The priests answered and said, "*It does become unclean.*" Then Haggai answered and said, "*So is it with this people, and with this nation before me, declares the Lord, and so with every work of their hands. And what they offer there is unclean.* Now then, consider from this day onward. Before stone was placed upon stone in the temple of the Lord, how did you fare? When one came to a heap of twenty measures, there were but ten. When one came to the wine vat to draw fifty measures, there were but twenty. I struck you and all the products of your toil with blight and with mildew and with hail, yet you did not turn to me,

declares the Lord. Consider from this day onward, from the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month. Since the day that the foundation of the Lord's temple was laid, consider: Is the seed yet in the barn? Indeed, the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree have yielded nothing. But from this day on I will bless you." (Hag 2:10–19 emphasis)

Touching what is holy does not make what is not holy, holy. Rather, touching what is defiled or unclean makes what is holy unclean/defiled ... the person who touches a dead body is ceremonially unclean/defiled—

When the dead bury the dead of themselves, the dead are defiled through having touched themselves. These dead ones do not need to touch *the dead of themselves* to be defiled. Rather, because their inner selves are spiritually dead, *their fleshly bodies as holy meat carried in the folds of their garments is unclean*. Israel is defiled through their ancestors' idolatry that caused the Lord to give to Israel statutes that were not good and rules by which the children of Israel could not have life (Ezek 20:25–26).

Because the children of Israel, on the plains of Moab, did not choose life and good when it was set before them, the Lord removed freewill from these children of Israel:

See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil. If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God that I command you today, by loving the Lord your God, by walking in his ways, and by keeping His commandments and His statutes and His rules, then you shall live and multiply, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, I declare to you today, that you shall surely perish. You shall not live long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to enter and possess. I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore *choose life, that you and your offspring may live, loving the Lord your God, obeying His voice and holding fast to Him, for He is your life and length of days*, that you may dwell in the land that the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them. (Deut 30:15–20 emphasis added)

And,

And I said to their children in the wilderness, Do not walk in the statutes of your fathers, nor keep their rules, nor defile yourselves with their idols. Walk in my statutes, and be careful to obey my rules, and keep my Sabbaths holy that they may be a sign between me and you. But the children rebelled against me. They did not walk in my statutes and were not careful to obey my rules, by which, if a person does them, he shall live; they profaned my Sabbaths. Then I said I would pour out my wrath upon them and spend my anger against them in the wilderness. But I withheld my hand and acted for the sake of my name, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations, in whose sight I had brought them out. Moreover, I swore to them in the wilderness that I would scatter them among the nations and disperse them through the countries, because they had not obeyed my rules, but had rejected my statutes and profaned my Sabbaths, and their eyes were set on their fathers' idols. Moreover, I gave them statutes that were not good and



rules by which they could not have life, and I defiled them through their very gifts in their offering up all their firstborn, that I might devastate them. I did it that they might know that I am the Lord. Therefore, son of man, speak to the house of Israel and say to them, In this also your fathers blasphemed me, by dealing treacherously with me. For when I had brought them into the land that I swore to give them, then wherever they saw any high hill or any leafy tree, there they offered their sacrifices and there they presented the provocation of their offering; there they sent up their pleasing aromas, and there they poured out their drink offerings. ... Therefore say to the house of Israel, Will you defile yourselves after the manner of your fathers and go whoring after their detestable things? When you present your gifts and offer up your children in fire, you defile yourselves with all your idols to this day. And shall I be inquired of by you, O house of Israel? As I live, I will not be inquired of by you. (Ezek 20:18–31 the divine determinative has been omitted for brevity)

The freewill offered to the children of Israel on the plains of Moab was maliciously used to offend the Lord, who had already told Israel that He was a jealous deity:

And He said [to Moses], "Behold, I am making a covenant. Before all your people I will do marvels, such as have not been created in all the earth or in any nation. And all the people among whom you are shall see the work of the Lord, for it is an awesome thing that I will do with you. Observe what I command you this day. Behold, I will drive out before you the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. Take care, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land to which you go, lest it become a snare in your midst. *You shall tear down their altars and break their pillars and cut down their Asherim* (for you shall worship no other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God), lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and when they whore after their gods and sacrifice to their gods and you are invited, you eat of his sacrifice, and you take of their daughters for your sons, and their daughters whore after their gods and make your sons whore after their gods. ..." (Ex 34:10–16)

Because of the children of Israel's idolatry, Israel became a defiled nation in the Promised Land. Whereas Israel entered into God's Rest as the chosen, the selected Passover lamb of God—entering on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the first month (Josh 4:19) and hence "penned" in the Promised Land—Israel was a blemished lamb, blemished by idolatry, and not a suitable sacrifice. Another lamb would have to be raised up, one that would not be tainted by the *bull cult* prevalent throughout region and beyond.

As a defiled nation, a defiled people, everything the hands of the children of Israel touched was unclean, no manner how much washing of hands occurred ... water simply will not remove idolatry. Water will not bring to life what is dead; baptism is always into death. Baptism cannot bring to life the person who is spiritually dead. Only the Father and the Son can bring life to the dead—"the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom 6:23).

It is not possible for the baptism or repeated baptism of a righteous person [that the person is righteous can be challenged] for an unrighteous person to save

the unrighteous person from spiritual death, the lake of fire? How would it be possible? In the same way that lit candles and purchased prayers are supposed to drag a person from purgatory and into heaven?

Both the dead sinner who sinned without the Law and the dead sinner who was under the Law remain as they were when they died, dust having returned to dust, their never-born-of-spirit inner self being a name remembered in a book, a name that will not live again until resurrected to judgment after the Thousand Years, that is in the great White Throne Judgment (Rev 20:11–15).

According to Paul's gospel, the sinner without the Law will perish without the Law (Rom 2:12), but the person who manifested love for neighbor and brother, thereby doing the *work of the Law*, will fare better:

[W]hen Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus. (Rom 2:14–16)

There is no need to go through the charade of being baptized for the dead as Latter Day Saints do; for either the person who has died manifested love for neighbor and brother—God, neighbor, and brother—and thereby will be judged by what the person did in this world, with nothing being said about knowing Christ Jesus or professing that Jesus is Lord (see Matt 25:31–46), or the person did not have manifested love for neighbor and brother and will thereby spiritually die for his or her transgressions; will perish without ever knowing the Law. And whether another physically living person gets baptized for the dead person [makes yet another prayer for the dead person] is immaterial: the dead person will be judged by what the person did when alive.

People will believe lies that make no sense at all. Consider, for example, political stump speeches.

Again, Jesus in Matthew's Gospel said, *Permit the dead to bury the dead of themselves* (Matt 8:22), thereby establishing two categories of *dead ones*, those that are physically living but spiritually dead, and those that were physically living but have since died physically. And Paul understood these two categories of dead ones ... the lie that human persons are humanly born with immortal souls hadn't yet devoured the mental landscape of 1<sup>st</sup>-Century Judea; thus for Paul, a person not yet born of spirit was spiritually dead, not begotten as a fetus; not in need of regeneration as if the soul were a dead car battery that needed a jumpstart to get the vehicle running. No, the person not born of spirit was inwardly dead, with life to come from this death if it were to come at all.

In the physical, life precedes death. In the spiritual, the chiral image of *life preceding death* will have death preceding life: the inner self will be dead before it receives everlasting life for once the dead inner self is resurrected to life, it will not die again. This dead inner self will not be given everlasting life if there is any doubt about whether the person will walk as Jesus walked in this world.

Baptism in water is a person's public prayer for the good conscience that comes with spiritual birth—and in which of the two categories of dead ones (the physically living but spiritually dead or the physically dead of those who remain spiritually dead) did the Apostle Paul address when he wrote, *What do people mean by being baptized on behalf of the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized on their behalf?*

On whose behalf is a spiritually dead person baptized? Not on behalf of another spiritually dead person, but on behalf of the spiritually dead person whose prayer is for the person's own inner self.

Should not a spiritually dead person's *prayer to God for a good conscience* be for him or herself? That would seem to make sense. The person not yet born of spirit ought to love him or herself enough that the person wants a good conscience. And if perchance the person is born of spirit through the indwelling of Christ Jesus, will this person who now has some degree of spiritual understanding pray for one particular person to have a good conscience; or will not this person pray as such,

Our Father in heaven,  
    hallowed be your name.  
Your kingdom come,  
    your will be done,  
on earth  
    as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread,  
    and forgive us our debts,  
    as we also have forgiven our debtors.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
    but deliver us from evil. (Matt 6:9–13 indented lines are spiritual portions of couplets)

The prayers of a person truly born of spirit will be for the end of suffering on this earth through petitioning God to hasten the coming of His kingdom. However, at the end of this present age—with the end in sight—a prayer to hasten the coming of the kingdom will do no good. The end is known, not something that even Jesus knew in the 1<sup>st</sup>-Century. Hence, the appropriate prayer is for laborers:

When He saw the crowds, He had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore *pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.*" (Matt 9:36–38 emphasis added)

As a spiritually living person, Christ Jesus baptized no one: "Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John (although Jesus Himself did not baptize, but only His disciples) ..." (John 4:1–2).

The Apostle Paul baptized few:

What I mean is that each one of you says, "I follow Paul," or "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Cephas," or "I follow Christ." Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you?

Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, so that no one may say that you were baptized in my name. (I did baptize also the household of Stephanas. Beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.) For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. (1 Cor 1:12–17)

If Christ didn't baptize and if Paul baptized few, with baptism in water representing a *prayer* to God for a good conscience (1 Pet 3:21), not a prayer mumbled by lips governed by a sleepy mind but a serious *appeal* to God for inner salvation [the salvation of the inner self through the spirit of God raising the inner person from death], then should not the person's prayer be for him or herself, with most of these *prayers* being answered with, *Not now! Or Not yet.*

If love for another wasn't involved in a Latter Day Saint being baptized for the dead, the practice would be a serious and unforgivable mocking of Christ Jesus.

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The Christian High Church baptizes by sprinkling proselytes with *holy water* (water from the baptismal font that has been blessed by priest or minister). The proselyte gets no wetter than if he or she were caught in a burst of rain. And for Christians, this absolution of sprinkling is analogous to the pious Jew washing hands that are ceremonially unclean but are not physically dirty ... a pious Jew doesn't ceremonially wash hands for the removal of dirt, but for showing separation from this world and its carnality.

But is washing hands necessary?

Now when the Pharisees gathered to Him, with some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem, they saw that some of His disciples ate with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. (For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands properly, holding to the tradition of the elders, and when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other traditions that they observe, such as the washing of cups and pots and copper vessels and dining couches.) And the Pharisees and the scribes asked Him, "Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?" And He said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, "'This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.' You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men." (Mark 7:1–8)

And,

Then Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said, "Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat." He answered them, "And why do you break the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? For God commanded, 'Honor your father and your mother,' and, 'Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.' But you say, 'If anyone tells his father or his mother, "What you would have gained from me is given to God," he need not honor his father.' So for the sake of your tradition you have made void the word of God. You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you,

when he said: "This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men." And He called the people to Him and said to them, "Hear and understand: it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but what comes out of the mouth; this defiles a person." Then the disciples came and said to Him, "Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?" (Matt 15:1–12)

A pious Jew, a Sabbatarian Christian doesn't eat pork because of how "unclean" swine are—chickens will eat what hogs will not—but for a very different reason: neither eats so they will be holy as the Lord is holy.

I am the Lord who brought you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God. *You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.*" This is the law about beast and bird and every living creature that moves through the waters and every creature that swarms on the ground, to make a distinction between the unclean and the clean and between the living creature that may be eaten and the living creature that may not be eaten. (Lev 11:45–47 emphasis added)

When Noah and his family exited the Ark, the Lord told Noah, "Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything. But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood" (Gen 9:3–4).

But Noah's grandsons did not continue in the righteousness of their grandfather. With shorter lives and things to do, they soon forgot about the Lord even though all knew the Lord. They began to worship those things they could see, could touch, could hold in their hands. And this is seen in the house of Laban, son of Nahor, brother of Abraham:

*Rachel stole her father's household gods.* ... And Laban said to Jacob, "What have you done, that you have tricked me and driven away my daughters like captives of the sword? Why did you flee secretly and trick me, and did not tell me, so that I might have sent you away with mirth and songs, with tambourine and lyre? And why did you not permit me to kiss my sons and my daughters farewell? Now you have done foolishly. It is in my power to do you harm. But the God of your father spoke to me last night, saying, 'Be careful not to say anything to Jacob, either good or bad.' And now you have gone away because you longed greatly for your father's house, but *why did you steal my gods?*" Jacob answered and said to Laban, "Because I was afraid, for I thought that you would take your daughters from me by force. *Anyone with whom you find your gods shall not live.* In the presence of our kinsmen point out what I have that is yours, and take it." Now *Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen them.* So Laban went into Jacob's tent and into Leah's tent and into the tent of the two female servants, but he did not find them. And he went out of Leah's tent and entered Rachel's. Now *Rachel had taken the household gods and put them in the camel's saddle and sat on them.* Laban felt all about the tent, but did not find them. And she said to her father, "Let not my lord be angry that I cannot rise before you, for the way of women is upon me." So *he searched but did not find the household gods.* (Gen 31:19, 26–35 emphasis added).

To what purpose did Rachel steal her father's household gods? What would she do with her father's gods once Jacob and his family arrived in Canaan? Did Rachel not intend to worship these household gods in the house of her husband as she had

in her father's house? There would have been no reason for her to have stolen them if she didn't intend to worship them.

Righteousness is a rare commodity, far too rare to be offered for sale on a futures contract, the practical reality of baptism for the dead or the selling of indulgences.

Greater Christendom takes what was said to Noah about meats and applies the Lord's words to themselves—and indeed, when the world was baptized into death via the waters of the Flood, all creatures were now subject to death by being killed for their flesh, the sheep, the goat, the calf, the pig. But the Lord made a distinction between Himself and the dead (but physically living) of this world, with denoting Israel's separation from the common pool of humanity by the meats His people would eat. ... To be holy as God is holy, the Christian will not desire to eat what is meat for common humanity but not for Israel. It doesn't matter what goes into the mouth and is expelled in bowel movements. It matters what is in the conscience of the Christian, with *lust* for commonality with common humanity defiling the Christian.

The Jew often washes his or her hands as prayers for separation, but a Christian isn't often baptized for one prayer is sufficient; three at the most, hence when the Kingdom is given to the Son of Man (*cf.* Dan 7:9–15; Rev 11:15–18; 12:7–12), Jesus' instructions to His disciples will pertain: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matt 28:19).

Today, there is but one baptism; but one prayer made for a good conscience. A Christian isn't to be baptized for many people, but to be baptized for the death of his or her own carnality.

Again, it isn't what goes into the mouth that defiles, but what comes from the heart [euphemistically used for the inner self] of the person. And if *lust* for *commonness* comes from the heart—as in a desire to feast on swine or lobsters or oysters or sturgeon caviar or greasy blue catfish—the Christian is defiled even if the Christian never eats any unclean meat.

Washing hands with water really has nothing to do with whether a person is defiled or “clean”; thus, washing the body with water also has nothing to do with a person being defiled. No amount of water poured over the surface of the outer person will cleanse the inner self: every person is humanly born defiled by being born consigned to disobedience. Baptism as a prayer made to God for a good conscience, while seeming to be a washing of the body in water, doesn't cleanse either the outer self or the inner self if God doesn't give to the baptized person freewill, returning the person to where Israel was when baptized into Moses (1 Cor 10:1–2). This person now is free to keep the Commandments, if the person will. And based on long experience, the person won't keep the Commandments unless the person is called by Christ Jesus, justified by Christ, and glorified by the indwelling of Christ. Hence, before the Second Passover liberation of Israel on a

certain day in the future, no one receives freewill. Every person will be as Paul would have them:

Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. (Rom 6:16–18)

There is an imbedded reality that has to be understood through its shadow: the children of Israel were given freewill on the plains of Moab, but these children of Israel lost their freewill through choosing death and doing what was evil ... by their unbelief, they were done-in.

When a Christian is baptized, the person is in a relationship with God analogous to the relationship the children of Israel had when they crossed the flooding Jordan River on dry land. The person is momentarily free to believe God as Abraham believed God and had his belief counted to him as righteousness (Gen 15:6) ... the newly baptized person has made him or herself known to God, and via being known to God, the person is as Abram was in the land of Haran (Gen 12:4). The person has to leave the mental landscape of spiritual Babylon [of spiritual Assyria/Haran, as the representation of death], and journey to spiritual Canaan, the shadow and copy of the spiritual Promised Land, represented by Sabbath observance, the Millennium, heaven itself.

So that this can be better understood: a person consigned to disobedience (again Rom 11:32) has no choice about presenting him or herself to sin which leads to death. This person has not been set free: the person will be free to keep the Commandments only if God the Father draws the person from this world (John 6:44) and gives the person to Christ Jesus to call, justify, and glorify (Rom 8:30) while the person's fleshly body continues to live physically. This person never receives freewill as the children of Israel had freewill on the plains of Moab when under the Moab Covenant, they had placed before them the choice of life and good, death and evil (Deut 30:15–20).

But there is another category of Christian disciples, the category analogous to the children of Israel on the plains of Moab. In this second category, baptism momentarily suspends being consigned to disobedience by being liberated from the Law of Sin and Death. But as the children of Israel abused their freewill so the Lord gave to them statutes that were not good and rules by which they could not have life (Ezek 20:25–26) thereby removing from them their ability to choose life and good, newly baptized Christian converts almost universally abuse their suspension from being consigned to disobedience by adopting the idolatry of those *Christians* with whom they fellowship.

Paul wrote,

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For *the law of the spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death*. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By

sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the spirit set their minds on the things of the spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the spirit is life and peace. For *the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot*. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. *You, however, are not in the flesh but in the spirit, **if in fact the spirit of God dwells in you***. Anyone who does not have the spirit of Christ does not belong to Him. (Rom 8:1–9 emphasis and double emphasis added)

If the spirit of God [*pneuma Theou*] doesn't dwell in the person, the person has not been truly set free from the law of sin and death. It is as simple as that.

In Moses; in the nation of Israel numbered in the census of the second year; in the children of Israel numbered in the census of Numbers chapter 26—three “categories” of Israel—is seen endtime *Israel*, the greater Christian Church after the Second Passover liberation Israel.

- In Moses is seen the Elect, those disciples foreknown by God the Father, predestined to be glorified as fruit born out of season, called by Christ Jesus, justified by Christ, and glorified by the indwelling of Christ in the form of His spirit, *pneuma Christou*.
- In the nation of Israel that left Egypt is seen greater Christendom today, sans the Elect.
- In the children of Israel is seen the third part of humanity (from Zech 13:9) that will be filled-with and empowered by the spirit of God [*pneuma Theou*] when dominion over the single kingdom of this world is taken from the Adversary and given to the Son of Man halfway through the seven endtime years.

Immediately after the Second Passover liberation of greater Christendom from indwelling sin and death, all Christians will have freewill given to them. All will be able to choose life and good, or death and evil, with unbelief of God representing evil that leads to spiritual death. And for 220 days, the choice of life or death will be open to greater Christendom ... most Christians will choose death as Israel (except for Moses and Aaron, Joshua and Caleb) chose death in the wilderness of Paran (Num chap 14).

The seven pairs of clean animals that entered the Ark and the single pair of every other species form the shadow and type of spiritual Joshua and spiritual Caleb. But as Joshua and Caleb went together to spy out the Promised Land—went with ten others who were unbelieving—Christians baptized today will be as Moses and Aaron were; as Joshua and Caleb were; or these newly baptized Christians will be as the ten unbelieving spies, with unbelief representing sin (Rom 14:23 — *pisteos*, translated into English as <faith> is equally well translated as <belief>; hence what is not of faith is unbelief, with <unbelief> being the spiritual definition of sin as transgression of the Law—from 1 John 3:4—is the physical definition).



In a window that is analogous to the 220 days in the Affliction when freewill is extended to greater Christendom and to the 250 days in the Endurance in Jesus when freewill is extended to the third part of humanity, immediately following baptism there is narrow window during which the newly baptized person has freewill, with (for practical purposes) the first decision made to either believe God or not believe keeping the window open or permanently closing this window. If the person continues to believe God for long enough that God truly knows the person, it might be that God chooses to deliver the person to Christ Jesus for spiritual nurturing as one of the Elect. If God doesn't so choose, the person will be as a righteous person of old, not receiving spiritual life until resurrected from death, but having this spiritual life awaiting the person as it awaits King David today.

The calling of Moses to deliver Israel from bondage to Pharaoh wasn't conditioned on what Moses did prior to being drafted to liberate Israel, but upon who Moses was—and so it was for David, and so it is for the Elect today. But this will not be the case for greater Christendom after the Second Passover; for greater Christendom will be as Israel was when Israel left Egypt. Christians will have the choice of living or dying spiritually, and Israel's history forms prophecy. It is therefore prophesied that greater Christendom will rebel against the Lord, refusing to enter into the Promised Land, represented by Sabbath observance, with only those Christians represented by Joshua and Caleb being willing to enter when entrance was available to all.

For who were those who heard and yet rebelled? Was it not all those who left Egypt led by Moses? And with whom was He provoked for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who were disobedient? So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief. Therefore, while the promise of entering His rest still stands, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it. For good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened. For we who have believed enter that rest, as He has said, "As I swore in my wrath, "They shall not enter my rest," although His works were finished from the foundation of the world. For He has somewhere spoken of the seventh day in this way: "And God rested on the seventh day from all His works." And again in this passage He said, "They shall not enter my rest." Since therefore *it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good news failed to enter because of disobedience*, again He appoints a certain day, "Today," saying through David so long afterward, in the words already quoted, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts." For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on. So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from His. Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. (Heb 3:16–4:11 emphasis added)

The damage done to Christians by their pastors within the greater Church is so extensive that recovery from this damage is barely possible—and all who recover will, most likely, lose their physical lives for all must undertake a first and a second

journey of faith, with the first journey getting the person into the representation of the Promised Land, and the second journey being a testing within the boundaries of the Promised Land.

Today, if the Father hasn't drawn the person from this world, the person remains consigned to disobedience. This person cannot understand spiritual things. This person cannot keep the Commandments. This person cannot walk in this world as Christ Jesus walked (1 John 2:6). For every person not born of spirit, these things are impossible until the Second Passover liberation of Israel, all said with a caveat: for the person consigned to disobedience, in a brief window following baptism, opens and this person is offered freewill. The window will close if freewill is used to return to disobedience. And after this window has closed, regardless of how many times the person is again baptized, or how many prayers are said on the person's behalf, the window stays closed until the Second Passover liberation of Israel.

Chiral images are reversed images as seen in a mirror, a point made many times but more difficult to grasp than it ought to be: the children of Israel on the plains of Moab had freewill extended to them before they crossed the flooding Jordan on dry ground, with only the priests getting their feet wet.

[YHWH] said to Joshua, "Today I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. And as for you, command the priests who bear the Ark of the Covenant, *'When you come to the brink of the waters of the Jordan, you shall stand still in the Jordan.'*" And Joshua said to the people of Israel, "Come here and listen to the words of [YHWH] your God." And Joshua said, "Here is how you shall know that the living God is among you and that he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Hivites, the Perizzites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, and the Jebusites. Behold, the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord of all the earth is passing over before you into the Jordan. Now therefore take twelve men from the tribes of Israel, from each tribe a man. And *when the soles of the feet of the priests* bearing the ark of [YHWH], the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan shall be cut off from flowing, and the waters coming down from above shall stand in one heap." So when the people set out from their tents to pass over the Jordan with the priests bearing the Ark of the Covenant before the people, and as soon as those bearing the ark had come as far as the Jordan, *and the feet of the priests bearing the ark were dipped in the brink of the water* (now the Jordan overflows all its banks throughout the time of harvest), the waters coming down from above stood and rose up in a heap very far away, at Adam, the city that is beside Zarethan, and those flowing down toward the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, were completely cut off. And the people passed over opposite Jericho. (Josh 3:7-16 emphasis added)

Christians today wash feet at Passover after the example Jesus left with His disciples, this example originating in the commands for Aaron and his sons to wash hands and feet to be ceremonially clean:

When they [Aaron and his sons] go into the tent of meeting, or when they come near the altar to minister, to burn a food offering to the Lord, *they shall wash with*

*water, so that they may not die. They shall wash their hands and their feet, so that they may not die. It shall be a statute forever to them, even to him and to his offspring throughout their generations. (Ex 30:20–21 emphasis added)*

And this example is reinforced by the children passing through the Jordan with only the souls of the priests bearing the Ark getting wet and thereby being washed in the waters of the Jordan.

The mirror image of the children of Israel receiving freewill prior to entering the Promised Land is the third part of humanity receiving freewill before entering into heaven or the Millennium, this third part receiving freewill through being filled with spirit when dominion over the single kingdom of this world is taken from the Adversary and given to the Son of Man halfway through seven endtime years of tribulation.

Today neither Jews nor Gentiles are humanly born with freewill; neither are born with the ability to not transgress the Law because of decisions their ancestors made that have remained with them in their epigenetic coding. Hence, life or death has not been set before either Jews or Gentiles ... unless a person is truly born of spirit, the person is a son of disobedience, consigned to disobedience so that God can have mercy on all (*cf.* Eph 2:2–3; Rom 11:32). And if consigned to disobedience, the person is not free to keep the Commandments but must transgress the Law in one or more of its facets, with usually the Sabbath Commandment being for Christians the easiest to break and the most frequently broken Commandment.

Billy Graham preaches so-called *decision theology*, which would have the person him or herself making the decision to come to Christ Jesus when Jesus told Jews (that grumbled because He said that He was the bread that had come from heaven) that no person could come to Him unless the Father draws the person (John 6:44, 65). And either Jesus in John's Gospel meant what He said or He spoke hyperbole. It is and it has been the contention of *Philadelphia* that Jesus meant what He said—and if what Jesus said is true, decision theology in all of its forms and mutations is false, a lie of the Adversary, with one exception: in the space between when a Christian covert is baptized in water as a prayer for a good conscience until the convert makes his or her first decision to not believe God, the convert has freewill and can keep the Commandments, if the disciple so chooses to bear fruit of the spirit when it isn't the season for fruit.

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