

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 *Parakletos*.

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

Weekly Readings *For the Sabbath of February 7, 2015*

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 elder to the elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth, and not only I, but also all who know the truth, because of the truth that abides in us and will be with us forever: Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us, from God the Father and from Jesus Christ the Father's Son, in truth and love. I rejoiced greatly to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as we were commanded by the Father. And now I ask you, dear lady—not as though I were writing you a new commandment, but the one we have had from the beginning—that we love one another. And *this is love: that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, so that you should walk in it.* For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist. Watch yourselves, so that you may not lose what we have worked for, but may win a full reward. *Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. **If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting, for whoever greets him takes part in his wicked works.*** Though I have much to write to you, I would rather not use paper and ink. Instead I hope to come to you and talk face to face, so that our joy may be complete.

The children of your elect sister greet you. (2 John 1:1–13 emphasis and double emphasis added)

1.

Written on one sheet of papyrus paper, the length of the letter (245 words) governed by the size of the sheet (roughly 10 inches by 8 inches), the author of 2nd John doesn't identify himself by name but by a descriptive title: the Elder [*O Presbuteros*], the

Hellenistic world's title for *one that can rightly judge a matter* [a magistrate] as opposed to an apostle, *one sent forth*, with "apostle" having been a wrong identifier considering the subject matter of the letter, a warning against false apostles who have "gone ahead/beyond" the teaching of Christ and were headed for the Elect Lady and her children. And in the letter's formulaic introduction (verses 1 through 3), more information is available to the auditor than usual; for the identifier "the Elect Lady and her children" when coupled to the equally formulaic conclusion of the letter ("The children of your Elect Sister greet you") strongly suggests that both the *Elect Lady* and her *Elect Sister* are congregations, and "children" are members of the two congregations, some geographical distance apart—far enough apart that a warning message cannot be immediately delivered in person.

There is a qualifier in the greeting that precludes heresy: "whom I love *in truth*, and not only I, but also all who *know the truth*, because of *the truth that abides in us*" ... if a disciple holds to sound doctrine, especially in Christological matters—Jesus came in the flesh as a fleshly man, not as a spirit that was fully God—then the "truth" abides or resides in the disciple in a manner analogous to the Jesus of Matthew's Gospel telling Peter, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven" (Matt 16:17), with Peter telling Jesus in John's Gospel that about the same subject, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and *we have believed, and have come to know*, that you are the Holy One of God" (John 6:68–69 emphasis added).

To *know the truth* doesn't necessarily mean that *the truth abides* or resides in the person. Likewise *to love in truth* doesn't necessarily mean that *the truth resides* in the person as the spirit of Christ resides in the person genuinely born of spirit ... for the truth to abide or dwell in the person, *the truth* needs ephemeral presence, as in *the spirit of the truth*, the *Parakletos* (John 14:16–17). But receipt of this *spirit of the truth* differs from receipt of the spirit of God [*pneuma Theou*] in the spirit of Christ [*pneuma Christou*] that gives spiritual life to a human person when the spirit of Christ enters into [penetrates] the spirit of the person [*to pneuma tou 'anthropou*] that is in the soul of [*psuche*] of the person, thereby raising the soul of the person to life, this soul previously being humanly born "dead" through being consigned to disobedience (Rom 11:32), thus making the human person at birth a son of disobedience (Eph 2:2–3) and serf of the Adversary and not free to choose life and good, or death and evil.

The physically dead person knows nothing (Eccl 9:5); the spiritually dead inner self of the person knows nothing spiritually ... but is this true. Certainly it would seem to be true, but this doesn't square with Scripture.

Peter tells Jesus that he and the others have come to know [have come to realize] what Matthew's Jesus says had been revealed to Peter by the Father.

[Jesus] said to them [His disciples], "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. ..." (Matt 16:15–17)

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After this many of His disciples turned back and no longer walked with Him. Jesus said to the Twelve, "Do you want to go away as well?" Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and *we have believed, and have*

come to know, that you are the Holy One of God." Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the Twelve? And yet one of you is a devil." He spoke of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the Twelve, was going to betray Him. (John 6:66–71 emphasis added)

The spirit had not yet been given; yet Matthew's Jesus said that God the Father had revealed knowledge to Peter, apparently this knowledge coming with being called as a disciple, with this knowledge abiding in Peter through Peter (and the other disciples) having come to know—to realize—what Matthew's Jesus said had come to Peter via divine revelation.

Those who left Jesus but who had previously followed Him didn't understand what Jesus said about eating His flesh and drinking His blood; those who left didn't "know" that Jesus was truly the Christ, the Holy One, the Son of the living God. So where was the difference between disciple and disciple? For none of those who followed Jesus were born of spirit so it cannot be said that those who left were not born of spirit but the Twelve were; for Judas Iscariot was never born of spirit for he is of the Adversary.

What makes the Father's revealing a matter to Peter through revelation via realization rather than revelation by vision or by more direct messaging possible? If Peter would have at this time been born of spirit as a son of God, the easy answer would be the indwelling of the *Parakletos*, the spirit of the truth ... why would Jesus have to ask the Father to send to disciples the *Parakletos* so that they will not be orphans?

"And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper [*allon parakleton*], to be with you forever, even the spirit of the truth that the world cannot receive, because it neither sees it nor knows it. *You know it, for it dwells with you and will be in you.* I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. *Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.*" Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?" Jesus answered him, "***If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.*** Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me." (John 14:16–24)

Two points central here to all Christians: a spirit of truth [no definite article] already dwelt in Jesus' disciples before they were born of spirit, so spiritual birth is not directly related to receiving *the Parakletos*. Rather, being foreknown by the Father seems to be the qualifier for receiving an indwelling spirit of the truth.

Second (and perhaps of primary importance), the person/disciple who truly loves Christ Jesus will keep His word [*o, logos mou—the word of me*], the word that He left with His disciples, the word that will judge unbelieving disciples (John 12:48), with Paul having written:

For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. *For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ.* (1 Cor 10:1–4 emphasis added)

The Rock that followed Israel across the Sea of Reeds; the Rock that spoke the Ten Commandments into existence from atop Mount Sinai was Christ ... are not the codified Commandments represented in how Matthew's Jesus answered Pharisees?

But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. And one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question to test Him. "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?"

And He said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets." (Matt 22:34-40)

Christian theologians have constructed elaborate but fallacious arguments for not keeping the Commandments, especially the Sabbath Commandment, with their arguments merely proving that they are without spiritual understanding; that they have yet to receive <'allon parakleton>; that they have not yet received any spirit of the truth ... the arguments of greater Christendom lack merit and are easy to dismiss, the failing of the former Worldwide Church of God, in which parents didn't instruct children about why greater Christendom was without spiritual understanding, but instead merely assumed that teaching children to keep the Commandments would be sufficient. Such instruction wasn't sufficient in the 1st-Century; so why did we assume that such instruction would be sufficient in the 20th-Century? Arrogance, I suspect. And in particular, the arrogance of a heavy handed ministry that insisted all knowledge had to come from and through Herbert Armstrong, tasked with ending the second attempt of the last Elijah [Christ Jesus] to breathe life back into the dead Body of Christ. This is correct: as the first Elijah lay over the body of the son of the woman of Zarephath three times before life returned to the child, the last Elijah in figurative mouth-to-mouth resuscitation will breathe life back into the Body of Christ three times before "breath" returns to this son of God, with the Sabbatarian Church presently dwelling in the third and successful attempt.

Truth would have resided in Peter through Peter having come to know a matter that was revealed to him by the Father, the juxtaposition of revelation with realization that is characteristic of the indwelling spirit of the truth, which delivers to the disciple spiritual knowledge even prior to when the disciple is truly born of spirit.

What is it that causes a son of disobedience to cease being a son of disobedience? Is it not the Father drawing the son of disobedience from this world (John 6:44, 65) and delivering this person to Christ Jesus? And how those the Father draw a son of disobedience away from "disobedience" that is unbelief? Does He not do this through giving to the disciple the "earnest" of the spirit?

To be born of God is a linguistic absolute: a person either is born of God, or isn't born of God. There is no *almost born of God*, or *nearly born of God*. A person either is born of God through receiving the indwelling spirit of Christ [*pneuma Christou*], or the person doesn't have the spirit of Christ:

For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to 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 spirit, if in fact spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the spirit of Christ does not belong to Him. (Rom 8:5–9 emphasis added)

In English translations, the *<spirit of Christ>* seems to be a non sequitur to the *<spirit of God>* even though Trinitarian Christendom treats both as the same third-personage of a triune deity ... the spirit of Christ is not the spirit of God even though both Christ and the Father are one Spirit as Adam and Eve were one flesh, with breath only given to Adam (Gen 2:7) but with this same breath then given to Eve through taking a rib and its flesh from Adam and from this rib constructing Eve:

So [YHWH] God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that [YHWH] God had taken from the man He made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. (Gen 2:21–24)

The breath Adam received from *Elohim* [singular in usage] was placed by the Lord God in the Woman so that the Man and the Woman shared the same breath, the same life, and were truly one flesh. Likewise, the breath that God the Father breathed onto the man Jesus—that is the Holy Spirit [*pneuma 'agion*] that is the breath of God [*pneuma Theou*—entered into [*eis* — from Mark 1:10] the man Jesus, and became the spiritual core of the breath of Jesus [*pneuma Christou*] that He breathed onto ten of His disciples, saying, “Receive spirit holy [*pneuma 'agion*]” (John 20:22) when they received His breath that thereby gave to each spiritual life in the form of the indwelling of the spirit of Christ [*pneuma Christou*].

The Acts chapter 2 account of receiving the Holy Spirit is fictional, part of the Second Sophist novel written by the author of Luke’s Gospel, a historical novel loosely based on the travels of Paul as he described his travels in his epistles—and probably the only Sophist novel most Christians will ever read.

But Acts contains most of the narrative motifs characteristic of Second Sophist novels, so in one “book” Christians will experience the essence of an early Greek novel, episodic and predicable, so much so that Acts’ missing ending scene can be reproduced if anyone is interested.

If a Christian doesn’t have the indwelling spirit of Christ, the Christian is not born of God as a younger sibling of Christ Jesus (see Rom 8:29)—and this leaves disciples and potential disciples in spiritual limbo between when the disciple as a son of disobedience begins to turn from disobedience [unbelief] and turn toward God, Father and Son. It has been this state of spiritual limbo that has caused a stampede of potential disciples to flee from Christ Jesus and run as fast as they can into the arms of the Adversary.

In all things, the visible physical things of this world reveal the invisible spiritual things of God ... Herbert Armstrong denied that any Christian—and certainly none of his disciples—were born of spirit; for every Christian in his perspective remained the fleshly body that was visible in this world. Yet, in Armstrong insisting that not one of his converts was truly born of spirit, that all were merely begotten [conceived in the womb of the Mother Church], Armstrong convinced many that Jesus had come in the flesh, and that converts were to keep the Commandments out of love for God, Christ, and one another. And in what Armstrong taught, he did not go ahead of what 1st-Century disciples were taught. However, he also didn’t teach all that 1st-Century disciples knew.

He taught a gospel more akin to the gospel of the Circumcision Faction than the gospel taught by Paul, by Matthew, by John, by Peter; for Armstrong placed importance on the surface of things, from personal appearance to skin color; from displaying evidence of prosperity in the lives of converts to the evidence of prosperity in personal giving to the Church. And in placing importance on surfaces, Armstrong revealed that he was without true spiritual understanding. Nevertheless, he taught over fifty years roughly a quarter of million converts to keep the Commandments, the High Sabbaths, and the dietary laws that separated Israel from common humanity.

Without being born of spirit, Armstrong had a small amount of spiritual understanding, which returns us to what Paul wrote: “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” (Rom 8:7).

The only reasonable explanation for Armstrong teaching his converts to keep the Commandments—as Ellen G. White did before him, and as Andrew Dugger also did—is that Armstrong had received a [indefinite article] spirit of the truth, with those who would be born of spirit to receive <*allon parakleton*>, *another Paraklete* in addition to receiving the mind of Christ ...

Peter received revelation from the Father through realization prior to when Jesus told His disciples that He will ask the Father to send to them the *Parakletos*, the spirit of truth.

Yes, truth resided in Peter before Peter received “another” indwelling spirit of truth, the *Parakletos*, making *the truth that abides in us* not the Holy Spirit but a spirit received from the Father, with knowledge revealed by the Father to Peter coming via realization as basic, pre-spiritual-birth knowledge that would draw a person from this world and overcome a “natural” loathing of eating Jesus’ flesh and drinking His blood in in symbolism.

Truth resided in the Elder and in some of the children of the Elect Lady—and it is here where we shall resume in the next Sabbath Reading.

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