

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 about who Jesus was.

Weekly Readings For the Sabbath of March 22, 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.

The person conducting the service should read or assign to be read Genesis chapter 1; followed by John chapter 1, verses 1 through 14.

Commentary: If Genesis 1:1 is to be believed, *In the beginning, God filled the heavens [plural] and the earth ...* what portion of the heavens were not created and filled in the beginning? What star did not exist in the “filled” heavens before light came on day one? What portion of the earth did not exist when Adam was created on the day when God made the earth and the heavens (Gen 2:4)? In the dark portion of one day, God made and filled the heavens and the earth with living creatures, beginning with the first Adam. And either a person believes this or the person rejects God and all of Scripture, substituting myths and tradition for the words of God. There is no middle ground, no third position.

Absolutes are either true or not true. They take no modifier or qualifier. A woman is either pregnant, or she is not pregnant. She is not almost pregnant, or mostly pregnant, or nearly pregnant. Either there is a life in her womb, or there is no life in her womb. Likewise, Scripture is either true or it is not true. Scripture is not almost true, or mostly true, or nearly true—for every movement away from being true, regardless of how slight, makes Scripture false and not the authentic word of God. And if Scripture is not true, then the deity that it purports to describe is also false.

The test of the Bible is in Genesis, and in John, where the book describes the beginning. If there are two distinct and irreconcilable creation accounts—or if there is falsity of any kind—then the Bible [i.e., *the books*] is the writings of earlier generations that are of no more importance than Homer's *Odyssey*.

Most of humankind does not believe that the Bible is true. Most Christians don't believe the Bible. In fact, very few people believe Scripture is true. Oh, there are many who believe that Scripture contains valuable truths and considerable ancient wisdom, but they do not believe that, “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness” (2 Tim 3:16). They believe that Scripture is merely the writings of many wise men who were men like themselves. Or they believe that what God wanted to convey got twisted and distorted by

translation, or was lost, or was deliberately tampered with so as to mutilate the truth. They will believe most anything other than Scripture. And they receive anyone coming in the person's own name, but they will not receive Christ coming in the Father's name.

Admittedly, God has not done much in the past nineteen hundred years to establish His credibility with the masses of humanity. It has not been time. Literally, there will be a time when He acts to restore His credibility, but that time, while not far in the future, is not yet.

It would seem like God should be concerned about His reputation, His integrity, His ability to get things right. To human beings, it would seem that God should intervene to prevent misunderstandings, mistranslations, misteachings of all sorts. Why would God allow error to stand? Why would He allow someone such as Diotrephes (3 John 9) to remain in a leadership position in the Church? Why not strike such a person dead as happened to Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:5, 10)? He has that power. He has so stricken others such as Nabal (1 Sam 23:37). So why has God not intervened to correct error and protect His integrity for a very long time?

Elijah mocked the prophets of Baal when their god did not respond to their pleading: he called out, "Cry aloud, for he is a god. Either he is musing, or he is relieving himself, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened" (1 Kings 18:27). Is the deity that visible Christendom worships like the god King Ahab's prophets taught the people of Israel to worship? Is the deity of visible Christendom relieving himself, or has this deity been asleep for the past nineteen hundred years? Or maybe this deity has fallen asleep while relieving himself and is now too embarrassed to answer the pleadings of the televangelists although they pretend that their prayers are heard ... in Scripture, a person touched by God falls forward, onto the person's hands and knees with the person's face against the earth from which the person was taken as base elements. But on television, a person touched by a spirit falls backwards, face to the sky—this person has not been touched by God or by an angel of God but by a false spirit, a demon, if he or she has been touched by any spirit and hasn't simply collapsed from exhaustion.

Is the deity of visible Christendom like the god King Ahab caused the house of Israel to worship? Where is the evidence that the god of Christendom is not like the god Ahab caused Israel to worship? To what Scripture can a "Christian" point for proof that the Christian should worship his or her deity on Sunday? To what Scripture can this Christian point to prove that Jesus brought peace to this earth? The god Ahab caused Israel to worship could do the same "tricks" as the gods of Egypt could do; could do the things that the gods of surrounding nations could do. The prophets of Ahab apparently thought they could call fire down from heaven, or why would they have agreed to Elijah's challenge? Perhaps they thought that no one could call fire down from heaven, neither they nor Elijah, so a "draw" between them would be a victory for them, giving to them the legitimacy Elijah had in the eyes of the people. After all, Islam and Judaism and even Christianity claim to worship the same deity, the one that cannot bring peace to any portion of this world, the one that cannot end bickering between Baptist and Mormon or between Lutheran and Jehovah Witness or between Shi'a and Sunni or between Muslim and Jew—the one that cannot agree on whether he is one, two, or three personages; on whether he has a mother or doesn't have a mother; on whether the Pope is or isn't his representative here on earth. This is a god that is more confused than Rip Van Winkle was when he awoke from twenty years of sleep.

Maybe the deity of Christendom is not a deity at all, but the traditions of men, some of good intentions, some law abiding, some scoundrels of the worse sort, all without understanding coming from spiritual birth. Maybe visible Christendom worships itself, giving great honor to its history, to its thoughts and teachings. Maybe both Mohammad and Joseph Smith were correct when they contended that Judaism and traditional Christendom distorted the revelations of God by altering texts and introducing false interpretations. Maybe Herbert Armstrong was correct when he claimed that the gospel of Christ had not been preached for nineteen hundred years. Maybe God has hidden His face from all of humankind to “see what their end will be” (Deut 32:20) while waiting until the midnight hour of one long spiritual night that began at Calvary before He intervened in the affairs of humankind. Maybe God simply does not care what men today say about Him, for He knows how little time remains for these men to speak before He will act.

The reason why God has not intervened to correct error is actually too simple to believe: the person who does a thing by compulsion employs no faith when doing the thing. A cow can be driven into a pasture where its hunger causes it to eat grass, then lie down and chew its cud. The cow acts without faith. Likewise, through force or intimidation, a person can be compelled to good behavior, to attend church (religious) services, to honor agreements, to give to the poor, to walk uprightly before God even though anger and rebellion lies hidden in the person’s heart. So when no God stops bad behavior, stops the teaching of error, stops the swindler from scamming another, God gets to see (as do the angels) what is in hearts of men and women. They walk naked before him, clothed neither by their obedience nor by the garment of Christ’s obedience. They are as Adam and Eve were after forbidden fruit was eaten, and they are proud of their nudity. They are marching in a universal “act out” parade, with nothing hidden and nowhere to hide. And any intervention by God will send them scrambling for the cover of good deeds to conceal their nakedness as Adam and Eve attempted to cover theirs with fig leaves.

In this era, the person who will live as Jesus lived does so only because of the person’s faith that Jesus is the Son of the Most High and the person’s elder sibling. There is no other reason why a person believes Moses’ writings while professing that Jesus is Lord (add John 5:46-47 to Rom 10:6-9). There is no other reason why the person will return to Genesis without skepticism and with understanding that does not come from human intellect to read again two creation accounts, one about the first Adam, a man of mud, and one about the last Adam, a life-giving spirit, with the first being last and the second being first.

If Genesis 1:1 is believed, then in the beginning, before anything else, *Elohim* [the plural of *Eloah*, linguistically the Hebrew equivalent to the Arabic *Allah*] filled or made fat or created [*bara*] the heavens and the earth. There is here no mention of when *Elohim* did this creating or making fat or filling other than it was done in the beginning, a period that precedes the coming of “light” on day one, with this light coming in the face of Christ Jesus (2 Cor 4:6).

Late in the 1st-Century, the Apostle John, to disclose what had not been previously revealed and to correct errors that had entered the Church, wrote, “In the beginning [the same period as when *Elohim* filled the heavens and the earth] was the *Logos* [λόγος], and the *Logos* was with God [θεόν], and the *Logos* was God [θεός]. He [this one] was in

the beginning with God [θεόν]. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made" (1:1-3).

Therefore, in the beginning were *Theos & Theon*, who together formed *Elohim* or *YHWH Elohim*, and *Theos* as the *Logos* made all things that filled the heavens and the earth. He would have also made the heavens and the earth, for matter [mass] is a thing created, and space-time can be written as a mathematical function of mass, so even space-time is a thing created.

Here is a challenge to Christians: Scripture has *Theos* entering His creation has His only Son (John 1:14; 3:16). Scripture does not have *Theon* entering *Theos'* creation as anyone's son. And if a disciple believes Scripture and not tradition or myth, then the Son of the One who created all things is the man Jesus of Nazareth. But neither the Son, Jesus, nor *Theos*, His Father before the Breath of God [πνεῦμα θεοῦ] descended upon Him as a dove, is *Theon*, the Most High God, the Ancient of Day, the One who raised Jesus from the dead, and the one whom the resurrected Jesus identified as His Father. And how can this be if God is one?

Jesus said that in His Father's house are many rooms or stays [as in a legal staying] (John 14:2), that He would go ahead of His disciples to prepare these stays as if they were adoption papers, so that when He came again, His disciples could be with Him where He was. He also said that He and His Father were one, that His prayer was that His disciples could also be one with the Father and Himself (John 17:20-23). And what is seen in Scripture is that the house of the Father is God, a house in which the Father now dwells with Jesus seated at His right hand. God is "one" as in one house in a manner analogous to the House of Chanel, a fashion icon synonymous with elegance, wealth, and the French upper class, being one house. Yes, there is only one House of Chanel even though Coco Chanel passed away more than thirty years ago. There is only one House of God, and this is the Father's house to which Jesus went to prepare many stays nearly two millennia ago. And as every designer, every seamstress, every sales person involved with the House of Chanel are included in the simple linguistic icon, "Chanel," every son of God who has a staying in the Father's house is included in the linguistic icon, "God."

In the house of Israel were many priests of Baal that dwelt in the temples Jeroboam had built on high places (1 Kings 12:31) from Bethel to Dan, temples that Ahab maintained; for the "people of Israel walked in all the sins that Jeroboam did. They did not depart from them until the Lord [*YHWH*] removed Israel out of his sight, as he had spoken by all his servants the prophets" (2 Kings 17:22-23). The many priests of Baal had stays of execution granted them by the kings of Israel, for they should have been slain for their idolatry. However, when these prophets of Baal were removed from the temples the kings of Israel had constructed on every high place, Elijah slew them. Their stays of execution were not recognized on Mount Carmel.

The stayings that Jesus has gone to His Father's house to prepare for every disciple are not recognized in this world, or in spiritual Babylon, where disciples will die. Only in the house of the Father are these stays recognized. So if a disciple is not one with the Father and the Son, the disciple will perish as the prophets of Baal perished on Mount Carmel.

From Jeroboam to Ahab and on to Hosea, for two centuries the house of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, with the degree or amount of evil waxing and waning from king to king. All of these idolatrous kings were of the house of Israel, the "house" that

gave them the authority to reign over the Northern Kingdom. This house of Israel was spiritually lifeless: it served sin and the prince of this world, and it was abolished, slain as if it were a man, with the king of Assyria capturing Samaria and taking the peoples of the ten tribes north into the cities of the Medes where they disappear as a “house” until the new covenant is implemented after the second Passover liberation of Israel.

The house of the Father [i.e., the house of God], built with living stones with Christ Jesus being the cornerstone, is a spiritual house (1 Pet 2:5). Again, as the House of Chanel is identified by the single word, “Chanel,” the house of God is identified by the single word, “God.” And this house of God is the temple of God—disciples are the temple for the spirit of God dwells in and enlivens disciples (1 Cor 3:16-17; 2 Cor 6:16).

But New Jerusalem is “the Bride, the wife of the Lamb” (Rev 21:9), and in this New Jerusalem is no temple, “for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb” (v. 22). This heavenly city is the house of the Father, the house in which the Father and the Son dwells. It is the house of God, or simply God. And glorified disciples will dwell in this city that is God.

Disciples will be either in New Jerusalem, or they will have perished in the lake of fire. They cannot be off hiding in some corner of heaven, doing their own thing, having love for one another but refusing to be ruled by the Father and the Son. New Jerusalem is the Father’s house grown large; it is “God,” and all who dwell in New Jerusalem dwell in the house of God. All will be of this house, this glorious Bride adorned for her Husband, with all—Bride, Son, and Father—being one house that is known in this world as, “God.”

What too many have refused to recognize for too long is that God is not a personage, like President Bush, but a house as a person’s body is a house composed of many cells, all formed with a single DNA molecule at their core, all having difference determined by proteins that turned on or turned off portions of this one DNA molecule. The spiritual equivalent to a person’s DNA molecule is the divine breath or spirit of the Father [πνεῦμα ἅγιον]: it is this spirit that, by being turned on or off, forms every single disciple into whom or what the disciple is or will be within the house of God, with every disciple taking his identification from the house. Thus, every disciple will be God as the glorified Jesus is today God, for God is one—one house—and the fleshly body of every disciple is the lifeless shadow of the one divine house [New Jerusalem] in which the glorified disciple will dwell with his brethren, elder brother, and Father. All will be *The*—, but only the Father will be *Theon*.

If a person will believe Scripture, the person will never say that the Father created all that is unless the person also adds the qualifier, *through Jesus Christ*. It was the one who entered His creation as His Son that created all that is, then entered His creation as the light of day one.

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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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