

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 the nature of love.

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

Weekly Readings *For the Sabbath of March 30, 2013*

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.

And from there He [Jesus] arose and went away to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And He entered a house and did not want anyone to know, yet He could not be hidden. But immediately a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit heard of Him and came and fell down at His feet. Now the woman was a Gentile, a Syrophenician by birth. And she begged Him to cast the demon out of her daughter. And He said to her, "Let the children be fed first, for it is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." But she answered Him, "Yes, Lord; yet even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs." And He said to her, "For this statement you may go your way; the demon has left your daughter." And she went home and found the child lying in bed and the demon gone. (Mark 7:24-30)

Continued from the Reading for March 23rd: Salvation through judgment has been a foremost concern of the Sabbatarian Churches of God for a century and a half. Striving to keep the commandments has imparted a sense of specialness to these Sabbatarian Christians who will, this year, take the Passover sacraments on the night when Jesus was betrayed. And this sense of specialness has caused some to disregard neighbors and non-believing family members, when "love" for neighbor, brother, God should be the defining characteristic of Christendom.

But what exactly is "love"?

Is it *love* to permit your neighbor to fall into a pit that your neighbor has dug? If you can you prevent your neighbor from falling into a pit he or she dug, should you? Should you compel your neighbor to stand back from the edge of the pit that is your neighbor's property? Or is your neighbor's property your neighbor's, with what your neighbor does on his or her own property none of your business?

Does it matter to you if your neighbor drinks soda pop, eats donuts, greasy French fries, whatever else seems good to your neighbor? Should you intervene, telling your neighbor that he or she needs to eat a healthy diet? Should you tell your neighbor to stop smoking? Should you tell your neighbor to keep the Sabbath and stop sinning? And there is the essence of intervention: should a Sabbatarian Christian tell his or her Christian brothers that Christ set them free from bondage to the Law of Sin and Death so that they can keep the commandments? Christ didn't set them free to break the Law of God.

The love of the Sabbatarian Christian who is unmoved by neighbors and brothers transgressing the commandments has grown cold—as soon as a Christian focuses on his or her own salvation, the Christian has lost salvation by having pulled away from Christ Jesus while the glorified Jesus was figuratively administering mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.

If a person has had his or her name written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, for what purpose does the person undergo the rigors of a lifetime of toil and misery, joy and pain? The person's fate at the end of his or her life is the same as his or her fate was at the beginning of the person's life. The person has received no benefit from having lived his or her life; however, those human persons who interacted with the foreknown and predestined person might have benefitted, meaning that the predestined person inevitably affects others ... would the world know that Christians are to keep the Sabbath if there were not predestined Christians keeping the Sabbath, walking in this world as Jesus walked? Now, does every Christian know that he or she is to keep the Sabbath? Name the Christian who doesn't know that the Sabbath is the seventh day of a weekly cycle that goes back unbroken to the days of Moses. The question really is whether Christians will believe "witnesses" that walk in this world as Jesus walked, or the traditions of their ancestors, with *tradition* winning almost all of the time.

So if you were to have the authority invested in the *State*, would you use it to compel good behavior in neighbors and brothers who place tradition ahead of Christ Jesus? Would you use your authority to compel good behavior because you *love* your neighbor? And probably you would; so if you would, why doesn't God do so? Why doesn't God intervene to prevent a man in bed from falling into a sinkhole and perishing? It wouldn't have taken much for God to have awoken the man and caused him to momentarily relocate himself to another room: what did the man do to cause God to ignore the impending calamity that befell the man?

Is it even possible for a Sabbatarian Christian to shut his or her mouth and permit the Christian's neighbor to fall into the pit the neighbor dug? Is it likely that a Christian can watch another Christian transgress the commandments and say nothing. James wrote, "My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins" (Jas 5:19–20).

How can you not attempt to keep your brother, your neighbor from falling into the pit he or she dug for you, an added wrinkle but not one that changes the scenario?

The question now becomes, is the Roman Catholic, the Latter Day Saint truly the brother of the Sabbatarian Christian, the brother that needs to be brought back into the truth, or is the Roman Catholic, the Latter Day Saint even called by God? And if not

called, can either come to Christ (John 6:44)? Neither can, can they? So is there a difference between a Muslim neighbor and a Mormon neighbor? What each believes is right in his or her own eyes ... do Sabbatarian Christians live isolated in a world that still belongs to the Adversary, live as islands in a turbulent sea.

If neither the Roman Catholic, the Latter Day Saint, the Sunni has been drawn from this world by the Father, none can come to Christ regardless of how badly the person wants or doesn't want a relationship with Christ.

Again, can you as a Sabbatarian Christian watch your neighbor do those things that are destructive to the flesh and to the spirit and keep your mouth shut? God can, but can you? God can resurrect from death and address problems then, but you cannot; so inevitably you feel like you have to become involved in your neighbor's affairs.

As a culture, Americans are involving themselves in each other's affairs, compelling school cafeterias to serve foods kids don't want to eat and won't eat, compelling citizens to purchase health insurance policies they cannot afford and don't want and in the case of many, will never use because they don't trust doctors ... a certain percentage of the American population self-medicates and will not employ the services of the medical establishment and its soon to be implemented death panels. The life expectancy of this section of the population is virtually identical to that of the majority section that relies upon the medical establishment for stool softeners and regular bowel movements—if your bowel movements are dependent upon a pill as the movements of some are, then you have fallen into a pit from which you cannot extract yourself; so should your Sabbatarian neighbor come to your assistance, or leave you in the hole you dug for yourself?

Last Sabbath's Reading cited a long passage from Jeremiah chapter 44, in which the Judeans who had escaped to Egypt promised Jeremiah that rather than obey God, they would return to their former ways, their ways before the reforms of King Josiah were implemented. And this remains the problem every reformer faces: it does no good to pull the reformer's neighbor out of the pit the neighbor dug and fell-into for once out, the neighbor will return to the pit. And while it's not true that you can lead a horse to water but cannot make the horse drink, it is true that you cannot compel your neighbor to keep the Sabbath. Oh, you can cause your neighbor to shut the doors of his or her business on the Sabbath, but you cannot dictate to your neighbor what thoughts will occur to your neighbor, and keeping the Sabbath means bringing thoughts and desires of the heart into obedience to the Sabbath commandment.

If a person doesn't truly desire to keep the Sabbath, permit the person to go his or her way: there is no love in compelling outward obedience when the heart rebels against God.

If a person has to be compelled to keep the commandments, it would be better if the person didn't keep the commandments; for all compelling does is cause the one-compelled to hate God, to rebel against God, to feign obedience while practicing disobedience. And this pertains equally to the children of Sabbatarian parents as it does to neighbors and acquaintances.

Children imitate parents and want to please parents and will keep the commandments when parents keep the commandments, but children can spot hypocrisy faster than they can ice cream in a shopping bag. Thus, if a parent wants his or

her child to keep the commandments when the child is grown, the parent has to live a life of keeping commandments that the grown child wants to imitate when the grown child can live however the grown child wants. And until the single kingdom of this world is taken from the Adversary and given to the Son of Man, every person is humanly born as a son of disobedience (Eph 2:2–3) consigned to disobedience (Rom 11:32), with the children of Sabbatarian Christians not being excepted.

In reality, you can watch your neighbor dig a deep pit, see that your neighbor has undertaken no safety measures to keep from falling into the pit, and you have to keep quiet, say nothing, other than perhaps offering to help your neighbor build a rail around the pit—and when your offer of help is declined, you have to return home and make sure you have enough rope to reach the bottom of the pit so you can pull your neighbor out when he or she falls in. And this is the status of *Philadelphia* today: willing to help pick up the pieces of humanity that remains after the Second Passover liberation of Israel, but understanding there are no words that will cause even other Sabbatarian Christians to take the Passover sacraments of bread and wine on the night that Jesus was betrayed.

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Regardless of how much it hurts, how much it seems like the wrong thing to do, love requires that you let your neighbor make his or her own mistakes, even when those mistakes will cost your neighbor his or her life. Without your neighbor having the option to keep the commandments, your neighbor will keep the commandments (if he or she does) for a wrong reason; for it isn't keeping the commandments that truly matters. It is having love for your neighbor and/or brother, with the commandments forming a codification of *love*.

Standing back and watching your neighbor destroy his or her life goes against everything that would seem to be the core of Christendom, but if God—out of respect for the Adversary, the enemy of God—can keep hands off of this present world that belongs to the Adversary and watch and remember the evil that is done without interfering, we need to do the same. We are to watch, to warn generically, and to do nothing more. We are to do good as the opportunity comes to us, but we are not be miniature Don Quixotes, sallying forth to joust with windmills and slay flocks of sheep while believing they are what they are not. We don't need a barber's basin for a helmet. We don't need to deceive ourselves: our time to intervene will come. There will be a day when we have the authority to speak and to compel good behavior, but that day isn't today, nor will it be tomorrow.

The Apostle Paul wrote,

Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. (1 Cor 13:4–8)

To tell what Paul wrote, let us examine the Lord in the wilderness: was He patient, enduring the unbelief of Israel time after time? Yes, He was, but there came a day when His patience ended:

And the Lord said to Moses, "How long will this people despise me? And how long will they not believe in me, in spite of all the signs that I have done among

them? I will strike them with the pestilence and disinherit them, and I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they." But Moses said to the Lord, "Then the Egyptians will hear of it, for you brought up this people in your might from among them, and they will tell the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that you, O Lord, are in the midst of this people. For you, O Lord, are seen face to face, and your cloud stands over them and you go before them, in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night. Now if you kill this people as one man, then the nations who have heard your fame will say, 'It is because the Lord was not able to bring this people into the land that he swore to give to them that he has killed them in the wilderness.' And now, please let the power of the Lord be great as you have promised, saying, 'The Lord is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, forgiving iniquity and transgression, but he will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, to the third and the fourth generation.' Please pardon the iniquity of this people, according to the greatness of your steadfast love, just as you have forgiven this people, from Egypt until now." Then the Lord said, "I have pardoned, according to your word. But truly, as I live, and as all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord, none of the men who have seen my glory and my signs that I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and yet have put me to the test these ten times and have not obeyed my voice, shall see the land that I swore to give to their fathers. And none of those who despised me shall see it. ..." (Num 14:11–23)

Moses tried to talk the Lord out of destroying Israel, but Moses was not more patient than the Lord. Rather, Moses understood what would be said by Egyptians, by the people of the Fertile Crescent if the Lord utterly consumed Israel because of the nation's unbelief/sin. So out of love for the Lord—not necessarily for Israel—Moses intervened on Israel's behalf; for the people of Israel were a plague to Moses, a constant annoyance, with the democracy of Korah being a form of rebellion that Moses was unable to address without the help of the Lord. Nevertheless, Moses did what he could to keep the people of Israel alive.

On repeated occasions, Moses had the chance to let the Lord destroy the people of Israel and let the Lord make from him, Moses, a mightier nation than Israel. But Moses wasn't having any part of the Lord destroying Israel; for Moses sought to enhance the reputation of the Lord over that of his own name: *the Son*, the meaning of *Moses*. Again, it wasn't in the Lord's best interests to destroy Israel. This Moses understood; this the Lord also understood. But Moses was being tested at a time when "testing" didn't seem to be apparent. And this is a lesson endtime disciples need to take from Moses: testing occurs at the most unlikely of times. Testing occurs when we are asked for our opinion. Do we have the authority to address a subject such as whether a person ought to buy only "organically grown" fruits and vegetables? Well, what role does "organic produce" play in salvation? Any at all? And if eating *organic produce* has no salvational value—it has none—what answer would you give to the person who sincerely believes that he or she should not eat genetically modified foodstuffs for salvational reasons? Remember, you are being tested as you answer the question.

Genetically modified crops (GMOs) are probably best avoided, but not for salvational reasons but because you don't need inner organs damaged by unnatural compounds. However, when you ask God to bless the food you eat, do you believe your prayer? If

you do, what happens to the GMOs? Will they pass through your body, doing you no harm? They will if that is your prayer.

The brain of a person who believes that God exists, even if this person is not called by God, differs from the brain of the non-believer in significant ways; for linguistic connections are made in the brains of believers that permit these believers to talk to God as if He were a real person. These connections do not exist in the brains of non-believers. Thus, when a believer prays silently, things actually happen in a way analogous to how vocalized language works. Prayers are heard because even silent prayers of believers function as vocalizations directed to an unseen entity.

So how will you address the person weak in faith when the person asks about buying *organic*? If you give to the person more information than the one weak in faith can handle? Will you remind the person that the fleshly body will not inherit the kingdom (1 Cor 15:50)? Or will you tell the one weak in faith that the person should do what seems right to the person?

What answer would you give to the person who wants to take the Passover but who is obviously not born of spirit? Remember, you are being tested with the question, *Can I take the Passover with you?* The former Worldwide Church of God had an easy response: *You have to be baptized in our water before you can take the Passover with us.* But this is not a good answer; for dunking 100,000 members of the former WCG did not produce 100,000 disciples for Christ. If anything, less than one-in-five members of the former WCG were actually born of God and thereby should have been taking the Passover sacraments on the night Jesus was betrayed. The others took condemnation upon themselves—it would have been better for them if they had not taken the Passover at all.

Every year at Passover a few dozen people with whom *Philadelphia* has had no previous contact inquire as to whether they can take the Passover with us. The answer is always, yes, but with a warning about examining oneself before taking the sacraments so that the person doesn't take them unworthily and thereby invite damnation upon the person. We have yet to have one of these individuals actually show up for Passover services.

Love is a difficult concept to address when a person asks for what the person is not entitled-to, such as taking the Passover sacraments of bread and wine:

And Jesus went away from there and withdrew to the district of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a Canaanite woman from that region came out and was crying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely oppressed by a demon." But he did not answer her a word. And his disciples came and begged him, saying, "Send her away, for she is crying out after us." He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." And *he answered, "It is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs."* She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." Then Jesus answered her, "O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire." And her daughter was healed instantly. (Matt 15:21–28 emphasis added)

Jesus called the woman a *dog*, but the woman took no offense but rather responded in a way that boxed Jesus into granting her prayer ... the woman was tested with a piece

of irrefutable logic: Jesus did not come to all the world, but to the house of Israel. The blessing and miracles Jesus brought to Israel were not for non-Israelites.

Although in Luke's Gospel Jesus granted the prayer of a centurion, Luke's Gospel is uninspired and not trustworthy so the story of the centurion is not to be believed without corroborating evidence (the testimony of two or three) ... Luke's Gospel is not, by its author's own admission, the production of divine inspiration or being a witnesses to events, but is the production of the author having examined the writings of others: "Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus" (Luke 1:1-3). Therefore, the only authenticated occasion when Jesus granted the prayer of a non-Israelite was in the case of the Syrophenician woman, with there being small differences between Mark's account and Matthew's account, these differences being a subject of discussion in *A Philadelphia Apologetic Volume 5*.

In Jesus' interaction with the Samaritan woman (John chap 4), she did not come asking for a miracle/sign from Him.

So it is in the story of the Canaanite woman that endtime disciples actually see Jesus' manifestation of love for non-Israelites—and this manifestation required that the Canaanite woman accept some verbal abuse without taking offense.

By being born of spirit, we feel compelled to intervene in the affairs of others when we need to learn from Jesus to say nothing for as long as possible, then to establish boundaries for interaction. The person who is not a Sabbatarian Christian must want what we have enough to truly seek it before we are to give to them the gifts we have through being the Elect. And this means in almost every case, we permit the person who has dug a pit to fall into it before we go to help ... the Coast Guard doesn't rescue the person who is not in trouble even if the person is in a small vessel in heavy seas. Rather, the Coast Guard rescues the person who has cried out for help, and some seamen perish because the Coast Guard doesn't get to them in time.

Philadelphia will not be able to save everyone who calls on *Philadelphia* for help, but *Philadelphia* must be willing to go forth, risking life, to search for those who have cried out for help. And it is this aspect of Christianity that must never be forgotten; for the world is about to enter a period of fiscal darkness that will produce cultural unrest and transformation. No place will be safe. Some places may be safer than other places, with inner cities being more dangerous than more rural locations. But it will be prayer that gets a *Philadelphian* through the Affliction—it will be prayers that takes *Roundup Ready* humanity with its black rifles and survivalist mindsets into the Endurance where Christ will change mindsets through baptizing the world in spirit (Joel 2:28). And it might be best if those who prepare to defend home and hearth with their black rifles while eating freeze-dried meals (MREs) were not today part of lawless Christendom that will rebel against God 220 days in the Affliction. It might be best if the black rifles were set aside and the hungry fed, even if it only cardboard-tasting MREs. It might be best if *Philadelphians* had on hand a soup pot large enough that neighbors can be fed without your neighbors having to pledge allegiance to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day

Saints, the organization that has plans in place to feed the hungry and give shelter to the homeless once civil society collapses.

Philadelphians do not need black rifles to defend themselves: eventually, a rifleman runs out of ammo, but there is never a shortage of words for a prayer ...

Philadelphia lacks the resources of larger organizations, and lacks the organizational structure to compel belief in exchange for a bowl of lentils. But *Philadelphia* has the power of prayer that will cause those things that Elijah did to be doubled by *Philadelphia* in the Affliction, the first 260 days following the Second Passover liberation of Israel. But this is a subject for another day.

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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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